

# Suburban residential developments: an international model of production?

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► **To cite this version:**

Delphine Callen. Suburban residential developments: an international model of production?. 5th International Conference of the Research Network "Private Urban Governance & Gated Communities" - Redefinition of Public Space Within the Privatization of Cities, Mar 2009, Santiago de Chile, Chile. halshs-00651271

**HAL Id: halshs-00651271**

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Submitted on 13 Dec 2011

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**5th International Conference of the Research Network  
Private Urban Governance & Gated Communities**

**Redefinition of Public Space Within the Privatization of Cities**  
March 30th to April 2nd 2009, University of Chile, Santiago, Chile

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Paper proposed for panel 3 : (Production and systemic impacts of suburban residential enclaves)

Title: Suburban residential developments: an international model of production?  
Keywords: Residential enclaves, suburban developments, international developers, real estate  
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Paper N°:  
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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper explores the production of suburban residential developments in the urban region of Paris at the turn of the 1990-2000's, with a special focus on residential enclaves.*

*In France, the influence of the US models (i.e. New Urbanism) on contemporary processes of suburban privatization and enclosure has been widely discussed by the academics and by the media. Comments on this trend often focus on increased social or racial segregation, as a threat against a largely mythic "European urban model" based upon social mixity and inner-city open public and civic spaces. Globalization and global firms would explain the rise of such pattern.*

*This paper analyzes the existence of a global and standardised model of suburban residential developments, and it aims at getting a better understanding of its diffusion process.*

*Using a geodatabase that characterizes all new suburban residential schemes planned in "Ile-de-France" between 2002 and 2007, this research aims at discussing:*

*- the suburban residential programs (morphological characteristics, spatial contexts, leisure facilities, residents' social level, ...). Does a specific type of international suburban residential programs produced by international developers really exist?*

*- the interaction between the actors involved in the suburban residential developments, examining especially the strategies of the international developers (like Kaufman and Broad, Nexity, Bouygues, Bouwfonds International, ...) and their negotiations and partnerships with local and public authorities.*

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## **Suburban residential developments: an international model of production?**

Suburban residential developments with a standard architecture, small gardens, and "culs de sacs" are common in periurban landscapes both in European and North American metropolises.

A substantial fraction of such developments are produced by developers who integrate all stages of the production, from the land-division to the marketing of the houses. But, these Planned Unit Developments (PUD) are often considered as the usual pattern of urban sprawl. They are blamed for standardizing landscapes and strengthening social homogeneity and spatial segregation, not only at the French national scale, but beyond that, globally, in most urban fringes of major metropolitan areas.

Such trend seems to coincide with important transformations which concern the suburban production sector, more specifically the concentration of production, dominated by a few global developers.

The assumption that will be confirmed or invalidated is whether the intervention of global developers, multinational development firms, is as a new feature in the context of globalisation and metropolisation, whereas this branch of industry is traditionally considered as very "local". One particular issue partly discussed in this paper is the existence of a standardised, international pattern of suburban residential developments, which would be produced by global property developers, particularly from a morphological viewpoint. This leads to study the localisation of the developments, their architectural types, and the social characteristics of residents.

We also try to understand how global development firms interact with the other actors (public and private) in the suburban areas production.

This paper focuses on the principal issues raised by our research and presents the first results of a data processing concerning the developments built in the "Ile-de-France" between 1999 and 2002.

### **1. A research about global suburban developments**

In France, the expansion of suburban areas and the development of recent suburban landscapes are often compared to the American phenomenon of "urban sprawl" which also concerns all the global metropolitan areas.

The developments are particularly criticised: they would tend to increase the spatial fragmentation, the urban "dispersion", in a context of suburbanisation. Yet, this urban shape (which is also a juridical "tool" for urban planners) is far from being new and is not much studied in social sciences, especially in their morphologic aspects.

#### *1.1 The diffusion of an American suburban model?*

Comparisons between the development of suburban areas in Europe, especially in France, and the urban sprawl in North America, are recurrent both in the media and in scientific literature in social sciences.

The influence of an American or a global model of urban sprawl, has often been discussed. Globalisation and metropolisation would go hand in hand with the development of suburban standardised patterns areas at a global level, leading to a standardisation of landscapes and ways of life.

In this way, the fast expanded suburban areas are often compared to american planned unit developments, particularly in the media. The views expressed about the suburban residential developments close to the "ville nouvelle" of Marne-la-Vallée can illustrate such trend: "Twenty years ago, Bussy-Saint-Georges (Seine-et-Marne), 30 km from Paris, was still a village of 500 souls, surrounded with meadows. Nowadays it is a large area of individual houses, like in America, with more than 20 000 inhabitants." (Vincent, 2007).

Some specialists in urban issues sometimes make the same observation, as Chiarra Barratucci highlights: "Some specialists of urban issues underline, often with concern, important similarities between European dispersed urbanisations and the north-American "urban sprawl", particularly Los Angeles as a dispersed metropolis." (Barratucci, 2004, p. 40).

Since the end of the 90's, the increase in the number of studies and of articles in newspapers and magazines about the gated communities and the proliferation of residential enclaves as well in the USA and in France, has tended to spread the idea that an American peri-urbanisation model is being diffused in French suburban areas.

Architectural triteness and social homogeneity are the characteristics of these "banlieues" and are often denounced and presented as a threat against French or European periurban areas. Generally speaking, contemporaneous individualism and trends to the diffusion of "club communitarianism" and urban secessions would be imported from the USA. (Jaillet, Donzelot, Ghorra-Gobin, 1999 ; Mangin, 2004).

This comparison is often combined, in the views of some specialists of the urbanisation, with the observation of a decrease in the urbanity of the French towns and periurban areas. Recently, the researches on urban sprawl essentially focused on the social and political consequences of this phenomenon. Recent researches on periurban areas, produced as well by academics as by journalists and politicians, consider the town as one of the most segregated place, as a place where the "urban secession" would be very strong.

A recurrent issue in urban geography or in sociology can be noticed by reading some titles: we can find "The divided city" (Fourcaut, 1996), "The fragmented city" (Haumont, Lévy, 1998), and a collection of scientific articles published in the review "Esprit" in 1999 is entitled "When the city is defeated" (Donzelot, 1999). The city seems to be just about to burst, in particular under the pressure of, on the one hand, secessionist trends by the most well-off populations who entrench themselves on their neighbourhoods, and on the other hand, the poorest people who seem to withdraw into their deprived estates.

Concerns are far from being only French: the issue of "urban sprawl" and of planned unit developments is also very appreciable in North America. Some North American authors, like the couple of architects A. Duany and E. Plater-Zyberk, do not hesitate to describe the urban sprawl as a "cancerous growth" (Duany, Plater-Syberk 1992), followed in this direction by P. Calthorpe or T. W. Bressi (Calthorpe 1994, Bressi 1994). These are the same authors who developed the proposals to renew, in the United States, with the density and functional mix in the periphery in order to reduce the "urban sprawl" in the context of a "New Urbanism".

### *1.2. Residential subdivisions: anti-urban patterns? The importance of a systemic research concerning the production of suburban residential developments....*

In this context, the suburban developments are often blamed because they would highlight extremely social inequalities and segregation (Lévy, 2003, Donzelot, 1999). G. Burgel, in a collective book (*Fragmented city, recent and former developments*), evokes and

discusses the fact that "by the land parcelling which creates it, by the morphologic or architectural discontinuities it generates, by the socio-demographic characteristics of its residents, the development is a "non-city". This lack of urbanity is denounced by all the observers." (Burgel, 1989). Thus, suburban residential developments would constitute a factor of fragmentation of periurban areas, particularly because of the social homogeneity they contribute to produce.

Sometimes, the pattern of the suburban developments private roads is questioned because it would create enclosing against the rest of the city ; it would reveal a rise in security concern, as O. Mongin underlines : "The will of protection, which concerns both public and private spaces, encourages the construction of a "loops and lollipops urbanism", in the image of the "street in loops" which was considerably developed in the PUD". (Mongin, 2005).

Nevertheless, even if such observations are recurring, there is only few researches led specially on the private urban developments in geography (the book directed by G. Burgel appears as an exception). Most researches are juridical or practical (developments law, co-owners regulations, ...). Some historical researches exist too : they focus on the archaeology of the developments and argue that the forms of such kind of urbanisation endure, event if they date back at the Middle Ages (Pinon, 1989) ; other ones focus on the "defective developments" (*lotissements défectueux*) denounced in France at the end of the 20's and in the 30's (Yapo-Yapi in Burgel, 1989). But the majority of the researches about PUD usually concern the periurbanisation in general; they do not discuss the specificities of such residential patterns. More specifically, researchers particularly studied the detached housing (Haumont, 1966) but without discussing the fact that in the PUD the houses are integrated in a well known and strictly defined legal framework.

Besides, it seems it does not exist any research supporting the hypothesis of the diffusion of an international model of suburban residential developments coming from the US.

Above all, the way these periurban lands are produced, with particular patterns, for particular residents and in particular places, is hardly discussed. The relations between the public authorities (public institutions in charge of the "New Towns", persons in charge of the public facilities, municipalities, local authorities) and the private actors (developers, international firms like Kaufman and Broad, Disney, ...) are still barely known. The issue of the production of land, and especially of urban (or periurban) land seems to be dated. As A. Bourdin (2005) asserts, the reference to the production evokes the Marxism which put forward a radical determinism which was sometimes simplistic, for instance the idea that the city would be the image of the society projected on the soil. Opposite arguments could also be indisputably pertinent maintaining the idea of the complexity and the contingencies of the processes which continuously creates and breaks up the city, emphasizing the difficulty to find and isolate some peculiar producers of the city.

But yet the analysis of the production of the city and its edges as a system of relations, of interactions between different actors, both public and private, still appears essential. It permits to elaborate a coherent analysis and avoids falling in a "very vague discourse which doesn't mean anything because of taking into account a too large complexity and movement". (Bourdin, 2005, p. 157).

Such "vague discourse" is particularly extensive concerning the recent suburban areas, peculiarly about one of the most important and visible element of their expansion: residential developments.

### 1.3 Principal issues concerning the production of suburban residential developments

A detailed inquiry must be led on recent (from the middle of the 90s) suburban residential areas to answer the issues raised by the previous remarks:

- Does a standardised pattern of recent periurban developments really exist? Does such pattern distinguish the developments produced by global firms from developments produced by national or local firms?

- What is the role of the different actors who take part in the production of the PUD (global firms, persons in charge of local policies, residents, associations ...)? Do the structure and the importance of the global firms (financial weight, integration of the different sectors of the real estate activity in only one international firm) take a part in the expansion of such suburban residential areas?

- Is there a standardisation of the practices, the procedures, the types of negotiations, the partnerships, linked to the emergence of new global actors producing urbanism?

To answer these questions this paper focuses on the production of suburban residential developments in the metropolitan region of Paris (Ile-de-France). Inquiry is based upon an exhaustive database on planned unit developments on the outskirts of the Ile-de-France. It presents precise information concerning newly constructed planned unit developments since more than 10 years. Such data base does not exist on other French towns.

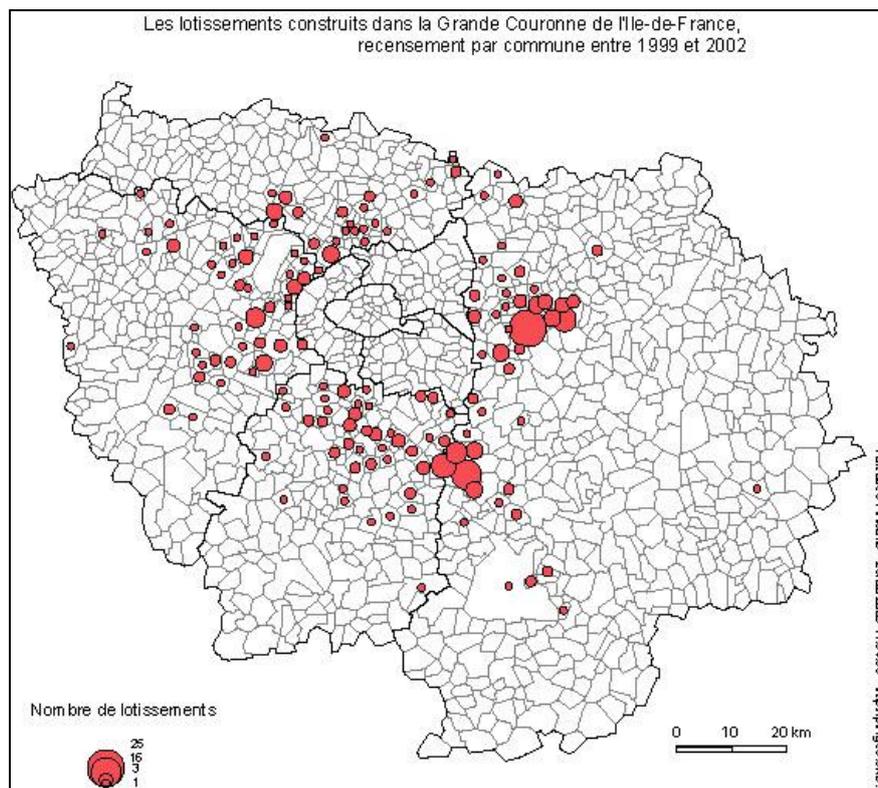
## 2. Sources and data

In France, there is no public national census concerning the planned unit developments which could provide information on the characteristics both of the houses, the plots and the whole residential developments. But the Urban Planning and Construction Business Research Group (GRECAM) leads such census for the metropolitan region of Paris. It is a private consulting society whose clients are essentially some urban planners, real estate developers, the public authorities and the institutional investors... To analyse the new housing market the GRECAM created, in 1978, a real estate and housing research institute which manages a database on new housing operations produced in Ile-de-France. It makes a census of every operation from the administrative planning permission to the marketing by inquiring the property developers. The database is updated twice a year, in March and September.

<b>LE CLOS VILLAGE</b>				N° 9394							
<b>RUE DU CLOS LANGLET</b>				Permis de construire n° 91521 00C1007							
<b>RUE DE COPERNIC</b>				<b>RER D SNCF : Grigny - Centre à 0,5 Km</b>							
<b>91130 RIS-ORANGIS</b>											
Promoteur : <i>PROMOGIM</i>						01.48.25.46.25		BV 01.69.43.25.50			
Commercialisateur : <i>PROMOGIM</i>						01.48.25.46.25		Logement témoin			
		Début com.		Livraison		Nbre loq.					
<b>Programme total</b>		<b>9/2000</b>		<b>6/2002</b>		<b>55</b>					
Type	Modèle	Surf. hab.	Surf. utile	Caractéristiques		Prix		Total	Vendu	dont sem.	Dispo.
4P	AZALEE	68	82	JU ET GR		138 000 / 141 000 € (905 / 925 kF)		20	17	9	3
4P	CAPUCINE	77	91	JU ET GR		142 000 / 155 000 € (931 / 1 017 kF)		16	9	3	7
4P	IRIS	76 / 77	90 / 91	JU ET GR		147 000 / 152 000 € (964 / 997 kF)		15	9	1	6
5P	MAGNOLIA	103	117	JU ET GR		186 000 € (1 220 kF)		4	3	1	1
								<b>55</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>
Parcelles de 130 m <sup>2</sup> à 290 m <sup>2</sup> .											
								Prix unitaire moyen			
Rythme de vente mensuel global <b>2,19</b>								Initial ( 9/2000 )		134 057 € (879 359 F)	
Taux d'écoulement <b>3,98%</b>								Actuel ( 25/2/2002 )		149 471 € (980 463 F)	

The database is organised as follows: each new suburban development is described by a table. Each table presents some information concerning the name of the property developer in charge of the suburban residential development and the name of the marketing firm. The localization of the residential development and its accessibility are specified: address, name of the nearest train station and distance to the station. Information is given on the sales rate (dates of starting and ending sales, monthly sales rate...) and on the prices of housing (initial and final average prices). Finally, the individual houses are described: the number of houses of the suburban development, types of housing (isolated houses or not), the number of rooms, the names of the different houses, the living space and the parcel dimensions. If the suburban development is associated with some apartments it is noticed.

This paper focus on an exhaustive census of the new suburban residential developments produced in the four periurban departement of the metropolitan region of Paris (Essonne (South), Seine-et-Marne (East), Val d'Oise (North), Yvelines (West)) between 1999 and 2002.



Among the property developers who produced some suburban residential developments in the metropolitan region, five are considered as "global" ones<sup>1</sup>. Global property developers are global construction firms which produce suburban residential developments in various countries and present subsidiary companies in different countries.

These global property developers are: Bouygues Immobilier, Nexity (and Féréal and Domaines Féréal, integrated to Nexity during the period), Kaufman and Broad (with Breguet and Bati-Service), les Nouveaux Constructeurs and Bouwfonds Marignan.

<sup>1</sup> This selection may be not absolutely exhaustive: property developers with a very few activities were not considered.

### **3. A few global property developers dominating the property development market.**

#### *3.1 Who are the global property developers?*

In order of importance, in terms of number of planned unit developments built in the Ile-de-France between 1999 and 2002, the first developer is Nexity. This is a French real estate group created from the Arnault family building company. The building activity took the name of Ferret Savinel in 1974 and then was called "Groupe George V". This one was sold in 1995 by the Arnault family to the Compagnie Générale d'Immobilier et de Service; it is one of the pillars of the future Nexity group. This group realizes office real estate, shopping malls and residential buildings in different European countries (France, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Czech Republic, Poland) and houses in village in Italy.

The second developer is Kaufman and Broad. This firm was created in 1957 in Detroit (USA); it exists in France since 1968 (the first house was built in France by K&B on 1970) and it specialized in building apartments and offices even if its reputation is based on the building of "individual houses in villages" (Kaufman and Broad states they "introduced in France a concept coming from California: "individual houses in villages"<sup>2</sup>). The firm is present on the Paris Stock Exchange since 2000 and has expanded by taking over several French property development companies since the 80s: Bati Service was taken over in 1985, Breguet Immobilier was acquired in 1995 after it was put into receivership and Arthur Frank, Sefima, First Promotion and Sopra Promotion in 2000, Foncier Investissement and Lotibat in 2004. In 2007 PAI Partners acquired 80 percent of Kaufman and Broad SA.

The third property developer is Bouygues Immobilier, a subsidiary of the Bouygues Company. Bouygues Company was firstly a building and industrial works firm (created in 1952) but it took advantage of the post-war rebuilding context and of the important public building projects (public housing projects, highways, international airports). The firm is present on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1970, but it started its international development essentially during the 80s when the firm started to diversify its activities (off-shore oil ring building, water distribution, medias and telecommunications) and when it started its activities of property developments (the first Bouygues property development subsidiary company was created in 1956). The majority of Bouygues property development activities is realised in France and the activities in foreign countries principally concerns office real estate but since the end of the 90s the company has developed residential development programs in Europe (Spain, Belgium and Poland).

One of the main characteristics of these three firms is that they integrate various activities linked to real estate and building: property development, building, marketing, financial plans. Thus they have a very significant weight in the negotiations with other actors of the urban areas production: State, local authorities. Moreover they have considerable financial capacities to realise important property reserves.

The fourth property developer is Bouwfonds Marignan (or Marignan Immobilier, taken over by Bouwfonds). This global firm is the result of the taking over of the French property development company Marignan Immobilier by a Dutch property development company Bouwfonds in 2001. It is specialised in both office real estate and residential real estate and it is going into partnership with Rabobank. This firm builds suburban residential developments both in France and in the Netherlands.

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<sup>2</sup> Kaufman and Broad French website, message from Guy Nafilyan, president of K&B France, 01/03/2009

Finally, the firm "Les Nouveaux Constructeurs" appears as a global one because it produces suburban residential developments both in France and in Spain. In this last country the subsidiary company is named "Premier".

In the context of the metropolitan region of Paris an important concentration of the main economic actors of the public buildings and works sector can be noticed. In this sector the international finance seems to play an important role influencing the localisations and the characteristics of the products.

### 3.2. Global developers' strategies of regional preferences.

Global property developers are not very numerous in comparison with the number of national or local ones. The property development sector appears as very fragmented: 260 planned unit developments were built between September of 1999 and September of 2002 by 89 property developers. But there is significant domination of big "global" property developers. The five global firms (or seven, adding the two Kaufman subsidiary companies) built 118 suburban residential developments, that is to say 45.4% of the whole production of suburban residential developments. The domination is clearer concerning the number of houses produced: 6308 houses were built and 3245 houses were built by global developers, that is to say 51.4 % of individual houses built in planned unit development. This observation stresses the importance of global developers in the production of landscapes...

#### *Production of suburban developments by each type of property developers, between 1999 and 2002*

	Seine-et-Marne	Yvelines	Essonne	Val d'Oise	Total
Kaufman and Broad	14	7	5	13	39
Bouygues	14	4	11	4	33
Nexity	18	10	6	5	39
Marignan	2	2	0	0	4
Les Nouveaux Constructeurs	3	0	0	0	3
"National developers"	52	36	37	17	142
Total	103	59	59	39	260

#### *Production of suburban developments by each type of property developers in % of the total, between 1999 and 2002*

	Seine-et-Marne	Yvelines	Essonne	Val d'Oise	Total
Kaufman and Broad	13,6	11,9	8,5	33,3	15,0
Bouygues	13,6	6,8	18,6	10,3	12,7
Nexity	17,5	16,9	10,2	12,8	15,0
Marignan	1,9	3,4	0,0	0,0	1,5
Les Nouveaux Constructeurs	2,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,2
"National developers"	50,5	61,0	62,7	43,6	54,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

#### *Repartition (in %) of global developers' activity of suburban developments in different departments, between 1999 and 2002*

	Seine-et-Marne	Yvelines	Essonne	Val d'Oise	Total
Kaufman and Broad	13,6	11,9	8,5	33,3	15,0
Bouygues	13,6	6,8	18,6	10,3	12,7
Nexity	17,5	16,9	10,2	12,8	15,0
Marignan	1,9	3,4	0,0	0,0	1,5
Les Nouveaux Constructeurs	2,9	0,0	0,0	0,0	1,2
"National developers"	50,5	61,0	62,7	43,6	54,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

The international activity of property developers varies from one department to another: they are the majority (56.4% of residential subdivisions) in the north of the region (Val d'Oise); their activities represent approximately 50% of suburban developments in the East (Seine-et-Marne) and just under 40% in the South and West (Essonne and Yvelines)

*Property developers specialisations, constructions built between 1999 and 2002 (standardisation)*

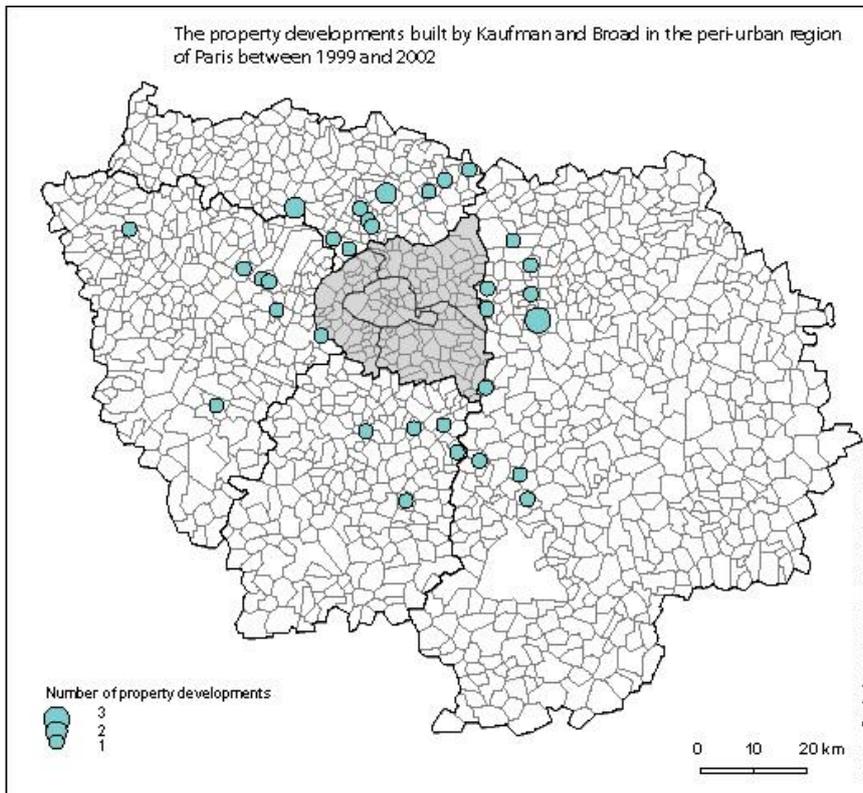
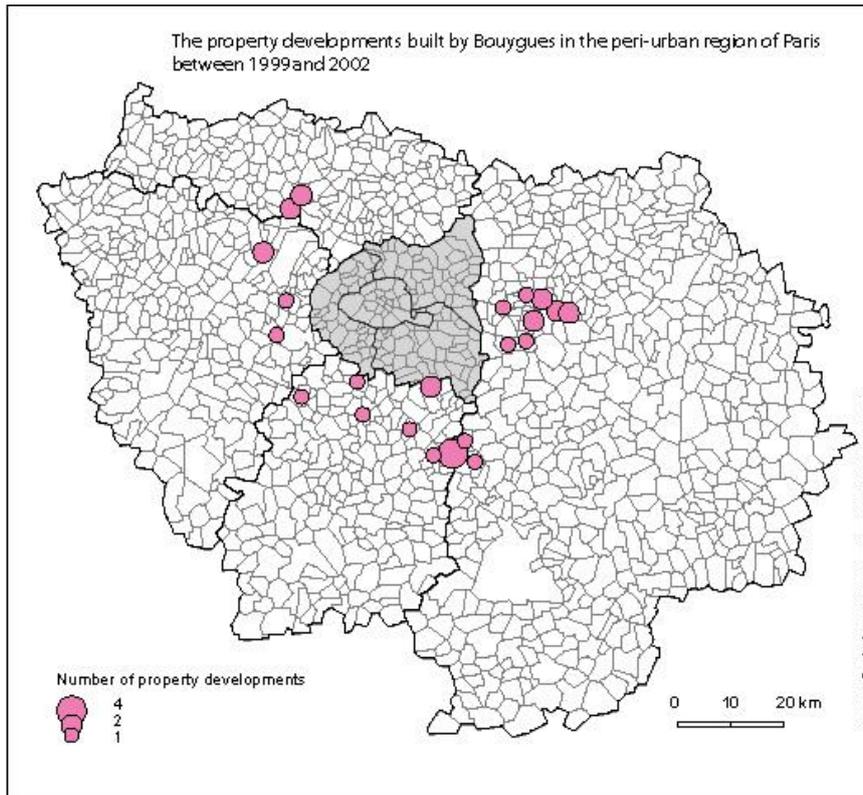
	Seine-et-Marne	Yvelines	Essonne	Val d'Oise
Kaufman and Broad	-0,7	-0,3	-0,1	1,9
Bouygues	-0,4	-0,6	1,5	0,0
Nexity	-0,3	0,2	0,1	0,1
Marignan	-0,1	1,8	-1,2	-1,1
Les Nouveaux Constructeurs	2,2	-1,4	-1,2	-1,1
"National developers"	-0,7	0,2	0,9	0,0
<i>Average</i>	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
<i>Standard deviation</i>	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00

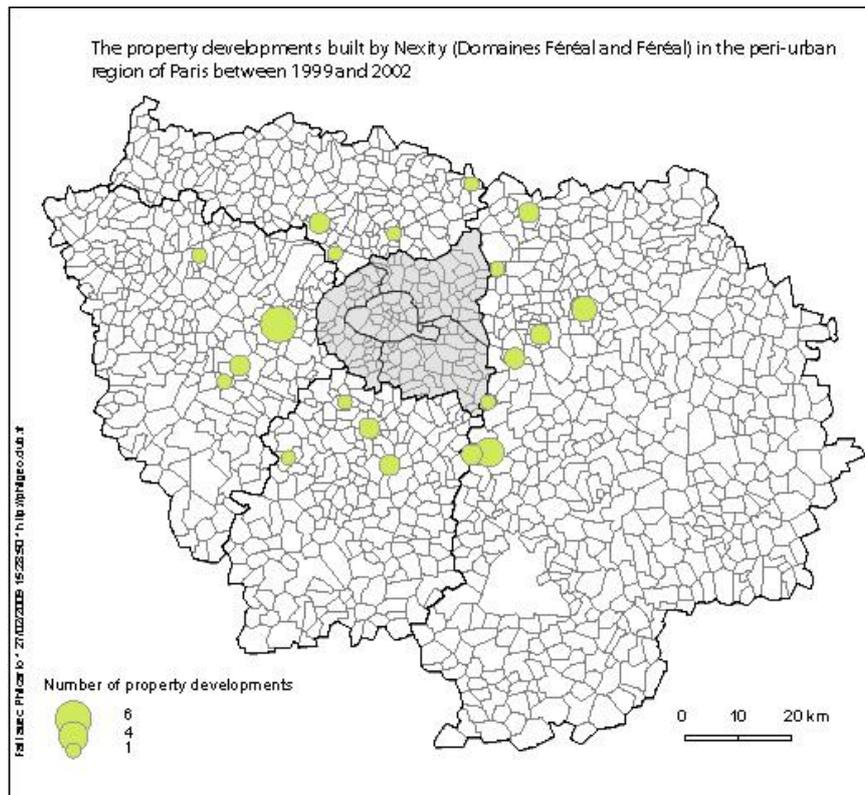
The data processing concerning the location of residential divisions built by different property developers allows to notice relatively clear specialization: for instance, Kaufman and Broad favours production in the Val-d'Oise, Bouygues seems to favour the Essonne, Marignan prefers the Yvelines and Les Nouveaux Constructeurs are particularly present in the Seine-et-Marne (for the latter two property developers the total number of residential subdivisions is very low, such figures should be treated with caution), while Nexity has a location quite close to the average profile of the whole developers.

The comparison between the three main global property developers is interesting; such comparison is possible because these three developers have a very similar volume of production: Bouygues produced 33 residential developments, Kaufman and Nexity both built 39.

It permits to distinguish separate profiles: for example Bouygues prefers a pretty clear South and East crescent, close to the dense suburban area, with remarkable "attachment points" (near Marne-la-Vallée, Corbeil-Essonnes). Kaufman, however, has an activity that dominates rather a crescent in the north of the city with 13 achievements in the Val d'Oise, which represent a third of the residential subdivisions built in this department where the property developers are in majority local or national. Nexity has an activity that is more similar to the general activity of all developers, divided among the four departments studied. Nevertheless its characteristic could be to develop residential subdivisions further from the centre of Paris than the other global property developers.

First of all, the assumption of a "division" of the metropolitan region between the main property developers can be considered.





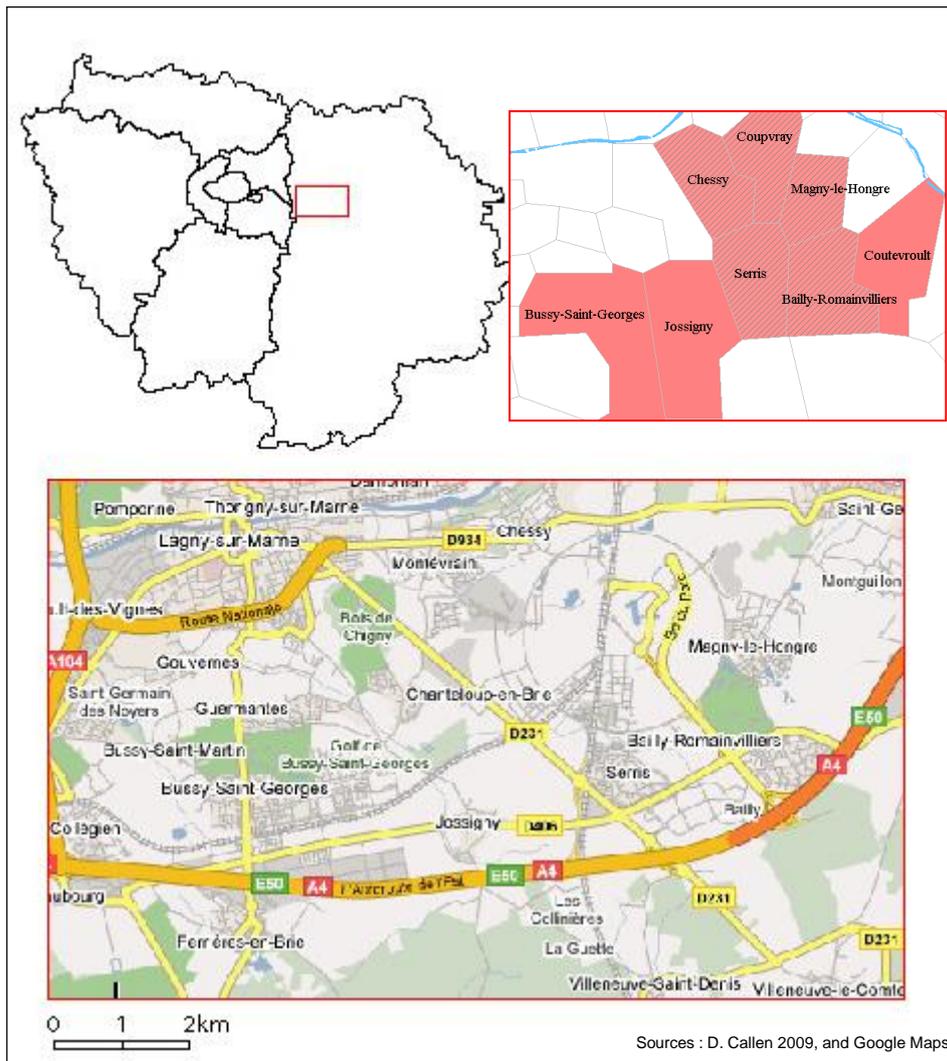
Moreover these remarks permit to highlight other points to consider. Firstly the remarkable presence of Bouygues in the various sectors of the new town of Marne-la-Vallée, in particular in the sector 4 developed close to Disneyland Paris, should be studied more in depth. Secondly, the localisation of an important number of Kaufman's property developments in the north of the metropolitan region of Paris could appear as a paradox. Indeed, in comparison with the other suburban departments, the Val d'Oise appears as hardly underprivileged.

#### **4. Two case studies: Bouygues in Marne-la-Vallée, Kaufman in the Val d'Oise. Works in progress...**

##### *4.1 The presence of Bouygues' property developments in Marne la Vallée*

The presence of Bouygues' property developments in the new town of Marne-la-Vallée appears clearly, particularly in the "central sector", close to the highway and to the main train stations (see localisation map). Such specialisation is interesting and could possibly be explained by studying the conditions of negotiations between this firm and the local and national authorities in charge of the expansion of the new town.

*Localisation of Marne-la-Vallée (Val d'Europe) main municipalities*



The municipalities which constitute the new town of Marne-la-Vallée, also called "Val d'Europe" are one of the most dynamic sectors concerning the building of individual houses in the metropolitan region of Paris. These municipalities are Chessy, Serris, Coupvray, Magny-le-Hongre and Bailly-Romainvilliers. Some of these municipalities have experienced very high population growth during the 90s. Thus, we observe that the population of Serris was multiplied by 2.6 between 1990 and 1999, that of Magny-le-Hongre was multiplied by 5.4, of Bussy-Saint-George by 5.9 and that of Bailly-Romainvilliers by 5.5. The increase in population of Chessy and Coupvray is less important between 1990 and 1999 but it was earlier.

The conditions of the creation of "Val d'Europe" could partly explain the importance of Bouygues company in these municipalities. Indeed, it is both a very "political" project and an economic matter.

Val d'Europe was born in 1987. Jacques Chirac (Prime Minister) and Michael Eisner (president of the Disney Company) signed an agreement which referred not only to an amusement park (Disneyland, which opened in 1992 in Chessy) but also the concession of 1943 hectares (the surface of Chartres) which Disney would manage as a real estate developer. This agreement, concluded for thirty years, is a first in France: a public-private partnership for public urban planning. The state bought the land, serviced them, and sold at Disney, which chose to keep them (the supermarket, parks, hotels) or to sell them to property

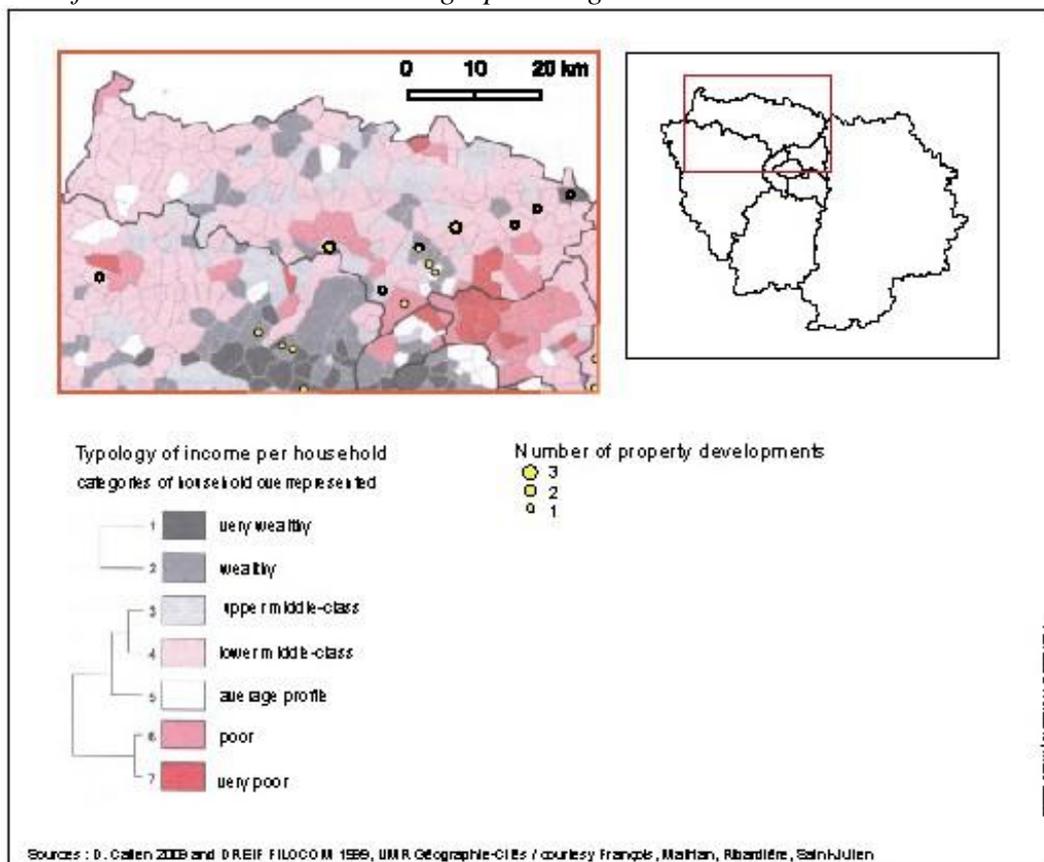
developers for housing or offices. The Syndicat d'Agglomération Nouvelle (SAN), which includes five municipalities of the sector (Coupvray, Chessy, Serris, Magny-le-Hongre, Bailly-Romainvilliers), finances public facilities (schools, child care center, libraries, ...) through taxes paid by Disney, the largest taxpayer in the region. And the state, via Epamarne-Epafrance (Etablissement Public d'Aménagement), is responsible for infrastructure (highways, railway stations).

The conditions of negotiations between Disney, the French state and private real estate developers should be studied. Indeed, the existence of political links between the Bouygues company and some public authorities is well known. The question of the consequences of such relations on the localisation of Bouygues' developments could be asked. Moreover, this firm is principally specialised in civil engineering. Such specialisation could have been a convincing argument for local authorities who will to develop their transport infrastructures.

#### 4.2 A brief analysis of sociological neighbourhoods: Kaufman and Broad in the Val-d'Oise

A brief analysis of sociological contexts could be interesting. The map linking the localisation of Kaufman's property developments and the income patterns at a municipal level permits such analysis.

*Kaufman and Broad socio-demographic neighbourhoods*



At a departmental level, Kaufman seems to be particularly present in a relatively poor department. But, an analysis at a municipal level shows that Kaufman's developments are localised in "lower middle class" or in "upper middle class" municipalities with a quite poor neighbourhood. One hypothesis that should be studied is that Kaufman and Broad could have a strategy of real estate speculation, based on the possibility of a rise in real estate prices in

these municipalities which are close to Paris and near the Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle international airport.

#### **4. Conclusion and prospects**

The first results of this research highlight the importance of the global property developers in the production of suburban areas and suburban landscapes. They show that global firms dominate the property development market and seem to have real regional strategies.

The reasons for differences in localization of activities in the different departments between the local real estate developers and the international ones should be studied more in depth. Within this framework the remarkable presence of Bouygues close to the new town of Marne-la-Vallée and Disneyland Paris and the negotiations between this firm and the public actors (national and local) could be thorough. Our assumption is that political and economic links exist between this firm and these actors, and have consequences on the distribution of different building markets. The preference of Kaufman and Broad for the north of the metropolitan region of Paris could be studied too.

From another viewpoint we could wonder what the role of public actors (local, national actors) is in this distribution and we could also study, for instance, different operations driven by institutional players. Similarly, the role of private actors should be thorough, studying for instance the proportion of local and old well-established property developers in the departments where international developers are less established.

Lastly, the morphological study of the international suburban residential developments is not yet completed. The localization of these property developments at a local scale, their socio-demographic characteristics and their precise morphological characteristics (number of houses of the suburban development, types of housing (isolated houses or not), number of rooms, living space and parcel dimensions) must be detailed to answer the question of the existence of an international model of suburban residential developments.

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