

Globalized Flows, Housing and Metropolisation Issues

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Abstract: It's very instructive to analyze urban space-time during globalized metropolisation 1990s-2025s, and their real and virtual sped flows, involving conservation, precariousness or reconversion of housing, and their new conditions of livability. We explore this problematic in four metropolises New York, Rome, Paris and Bordeaux.

Key words: Cities, metropolitan space-time, housing problems and demiurgic masterpieces, hand in hand common projects and social networks communities, tourism and selfies, screen and housing decoys.

1. Introduction and Methodology

Through several scientific research concerning globalized metropolisation since 1990s, I observed the real and virtual flows' acceleration effects on housing and travel conditions, in suburbs and city-centers.

My approach was an anthropological and sociological inductive process: observations on the fields, attentive to the designers, deciders and citizens' point of views, and attentive to tensions and articulations between globalized virtual and real flows, and citizens' ways of life in metropolises.

For the present *J.C.E.A.* article, I conducted my anthropological and sociological inductive approach in three stages and steps:

*With the Rome's third subway line, and policy of new links between suburbs and historic center: how Coliseum new subway station converts World heritage of Rome into XXI's Metropole;

*New York and its always delayed housing space-time: Nobody lives in popular New-York one of the most rich cities in the world such as behind Manhattan skyline screen;

*Paris and Bordeaux housing architecture confronted

and combined — or not — with globalized virtual and real flows and citizens' ways of life. Masterpiece, art as experience or decoys of way of life?

2. Housing and Flows Management, Roma, Historic City-Center and Metropolitan Palimpsest

In Rome, the Third *Subway line, C*, was imagined since 2000 Jubilee, designed in 2005 as the first fully automated subway. With the goal of connecting the East-South isolated and disadvantaged Suburb to the City center. Commissioning from the east-south end, the first stretch has been inaugurated in 2014, between *Compatri et Parco di Centocelle*. In 2015, it was extended towards *Lodi*, and *Appio Latino* boroughs. And in 2018, *San Giovanni Station* was opened, connected with *A Line*. In 2025, *Colosseo-Fori Imperiali station* finally connected with *B Line*.

This new subway, *supposed to connect two worlds whose everything opposes and separates*", as *Centocelle* citizens complain or laugh at, shows how this "*urban revolution between Downtown and suburb, Center and periphery*" relates, joins during its timing, *Roma the eternal City* and its history, through its two

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new famous stations, *Porta Metronia* and *Colosseo - Fori Imperiali*.

Dugged, 30 meters (~100ft) underground in order to respect archaeological stratigraphy, the workers have discovered *Romain barracks* and the *Commander's Domus*, with their frescoes and relics, Second Century after J.C., and remains of *Thermal Baths*. After the work, the *barracks and the Domus* have been replaced where they had been discovered, and the relics have been put in windows in the subway station.

The next date of this subway script, the deadline for the next station, *Piazza Venezia*, is 2033.

Thirty years have been necessary so that citizens and tourists enjoy this new metropolitan palimpsest, with these new downtown subway stations.

Therefore, it relegates to the bottom of the agenda the links with the outlying districts and their citizens. The Coliseum, amphitheater built on the ruins of Neron's Palace by Vespasien, with the spoils of Jerusalem sack, in 70 after J.C, and inaugurated by Tibere, in 80, was an evergetism gift. Show and fights memories, glorious triumphs offer not only a legacy of past but also, with its subway station, a new draft of present and metropolitan future [1].



Fig. 1 Under Colisseo di Roma, a new subway station, photo M.A.C.



Fig. 2 The Chrysler Building needle in mist photo R.S. Architect William Van Allen 1930.

Town space contracts when globalized metropolitan time dilates and when flows management favors satellization and orbitation of outskirts by city centers. Their prosperity and posterity are thus celebrated and protected much more than the suburbs citizens' ways of life. We can notice that technological innovations do not involve automatically cultural and social changes.

Architecture and Civil engineering posterities don't design the same questions than housing issues: *Demiurgic Masterpieces* consecrated or not by the *World Heritage of Humanity* or *Art as anthropologic experience* [2].

For like of anything better, citizens can always design their selfies or their posts like sped masterpieces! Decoys serve as arts and ways of life.

3. New York, Housing Space-time Alloted and Deferred Completion

Even during crises, emergency disaster or election campaign, in New York, Rome or recently in France, when housing problem becomes a pole of political and mediatic attention, it is never a center of gravity, to explore political, economic, social and human issues.

On the contrary, when space is determined by flows management, time is determined by their delaying effects, in spite of the political commitments for popular housing.

New York, between the 1930s and 1970s, with Robert Moses, the town planner who modernized or compromised, according to the different points of view, her future, has been known for an exceptional multiplication of urban freeways. But New York has also, with her citizens and Establishment, saved her *Central Park*, surrounded by skyscrapers, offering us the landscape setting as a true urban gift.

Housing crises are usually focused around two problematics, translated in two political and professional issues. On one hand, after the housing shortage, the necessary supply shock of new housing sale, to protect professions and building business. On the other hand, the question of construction and emplacement of affordable and quality housing. With their different issues and challenges: popular housing mutation, rent and financialization regulation, skills renewal in order to build our cities and improve urban life.

Lower the cost of rents in New York, the most expensive metropolis in the world, was often one of election campaign issues. Another issue was to reduce building time. The question of social housing quality arose. Which represents in New York 5,8% of the total fleet, 17% in Paris, 13% in Bordeaux, 21% in Bordeaux Metropolis, 52% in Amsterdam.

Social housing provider in New York has long time ago looked to rent to workers, to the detriment of the poorest, relegated to boroughs at the mercy of slumlords, since the beginning of social housing in 1934 in New York. In 1937, the President Roosevelt *Housing Act*, voted by Congress, has payed housing programs.

For Robert Moses, to build tall towers instead of slums allowed to carry out urban renewal in order to offer affordable housing to White workers, and demote Black workers who had fled the South after 1960s in

precarious housing. He had also invited middle classes to buy a house in residential suburbs, soon set as *urban sprawl*, “l'étalement périurbain” in France at the same time.

Two consequences can be noticed: standardization of housing projects, and segregation of wealth and poverty of American heritages and ways of life.

In New York, everyone lives his American dream: vertigo and fascination for fans, admiration of the masterpieces of art and architecture for tourists and journalists, worthwhile investment for managers, worthy sentiments for cinema actors, situation management for information specialists. The times of arson, in abandoned buildings, squats and real estate speculation, eviction and community demonstrations, fine-art installations, graffiti and protest performances by militant artists are long gone. Place for hip hop and rap. New York worships its *Survivor Tree* in front of the *Freedom Town*, first name of reborn *One World Trade Center*. Tourists contemplate the *Statue of Liberty* and replay the mass immigration in the *Ellis Island* museum. Moving towards *Times Square*, everyone steps out game with the memes of his influencers. But, visiting Manhattan is in no way living in New York. Surely, every one lives as he can.

Every Town Mayor has done his job by implementing a politic concerning organized crime, or gentrifying New York as a tourist and architecture sanctuary. The New Yorkers think that United States of America are a country of immigrants, with a flag on every street corner

which is enough for their star-spangled banner. Once the welcome done with, bridges built and avenues opened, they have to control their flows, if they don't want to spoil their sense of hospitality. Especially, when people widen their imaginative and digital horizon. However, they are also a country of pioneers and of space conquest, with a new frontier to breach, from the Far West to Outer Space, with their now inter-planetary heroes. How design a new Space-time Odyssey for Housing issues?

In 2025, New York's budget deficit rose to 12 billion dollars. The Town cut spending for essential services: housing aid, education, night shelters, whose the most vulnerable people depend upon. New York has given in 2022, 68 billions \$ to New York State, and received only 47 billion from Albany. Two consequences: taxes increase for the New Yorkers and an inefficiency of the City Hall management. 25% of New Yorkers live below the poverty line

Collective housing remains one of the most complex challenges in urban planning and contemporary architecture, not so much in terms of design but due to constraints that surround it regulatory frameworks, budgetary requirements timelines and the diversity of metropolitan changes and personal uses. We observe, during all the metropolisation, a mismatch between citizens' demands and what is feasible with infrastructures of urban mobility.

We can see also recurrent delays of ecological cities' policy, not as flexible as needed which penalize reallocation of unoccupied offices and housing and speculative inflation regulation. In order to understand why housing problematics are always treated in emergency, we have to take notice of satellization phenomena which exist in cities in their process of globalized metropolisation. We would be able to understand why selfies display heritages' emblems (Fig. 2) more often than possible warmth and hospitality symbols, and metropolitan skyline more often than cities' lifes (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Tourists migration and Manhattan's skyline, Photo R.S.

Certain housing projects overcome these constraints and the barriers they face, and offer sustainable achievements of budgets and urban designs. If they are Award winners of *Collective Housing Awards*¹, they have also to be appreciable by the citizens and to answer their ways of housing which change over and over. Otherwise they risk becoming habitability decoys that our addictions to the screens cannot compensate. Space-time of metropolitan living and housing issues don't fit within the policy scope and theater stage design. Paris and Bordeaux, in France, set two examples. .

4. Housing Decoys Inappropriate in Paris and Bordeaux Metropolises

What's new concerning these new metropolitan space-time, good quality at an affordable price — or not — and appropriate — or not — to citizens' ways of life, in front of steady flows of images and virtual housing projects? What's new concerning social mix and urban diversity that establishment, institutions, mass-media and experts advocate?

What have we noticed during thirty years of globalized metropolisation, in Paris and Bordeaux?

With urban star networks, the flows pass through the center of the metropolis, at the risk of being overexposed media spotlights and internet buzz. In the same time, the metropolises outskirts risk medical and social desert and thrombosis beltways.

The effect is not only social, urban and cultural divide, of gentrification, urban sprawl and relegation, as the pragmatist US philosophers and interactionist sociologists of Chicago School taught urban planners all over the world [3]. Metropolisation process is also like a true washing machine which creates housing model bubbles and segregated ways of life. As we have empirically noticed, in France during these 2020s, with Establishments, Mayors and Ministers, Architects, urban professions and citizens' points of view.

¹ *European Collective Housing Award, Arc-en-rêve Bordeaux and Institut d'architecture du Pays Basque, San Sebastian*



Fig. 4 *Tours Duo*, J. Nouvel architect.
Multifunctions Towers and Multimodal Flows?
Photo Christian Sallenave

The satellisations of peripheries by centers prioritize flows of cars, tramway, bus, subway, bicycle, hoverboard, wheelchair create street settings as public spaces. They dilute also city time with predominant flows' management. Consequences with this globalized metropolitan management: a new model of urban planning and standardized housing conception. With metropolisation flows acceleration and social networks addictions, new housing decoys appeared in our street decors and behind our screens.

In Paris, the *Tours Duo*, (Fig. 4) Jean Nouvel architect, overlook the ringroad, overhangs multimodal avenue, make dream of housing, panoramic restaurant and offices, when there are already 10 Million m² (107M ft²) of unoccupied offices, and so many praised or denigrated skyscrapers all over the world.

In *Bordeaux Euratlantique*, the new “district for 2030”, the new *Tower Hypérion* (Fig. 5) innovation

with wood and concrete, Jean Paul Viguier architect, overlooks the streets as warmth selfies and viral news stories, more virtual than real, where urban places and street furniture are seen empty of visitors or citizens who only go or come home from work.

Do these housing architectures succeed to humanize our metropolises and urbanize our homes with their street decor and metropolitan theater opened on ring roads and beltways?

Between hurried taxi-drivers, confined cyclists and pedestrians, pack tightly tramways and subways and their metropolitan rodeos, the neighborhoods are segregated and functional. The families change their housing into echo chambers behind their screens, deaf, blind and mute to their neighbors. “Yesterday, Society was beginning at the family; today, it finishes at her door” [4].

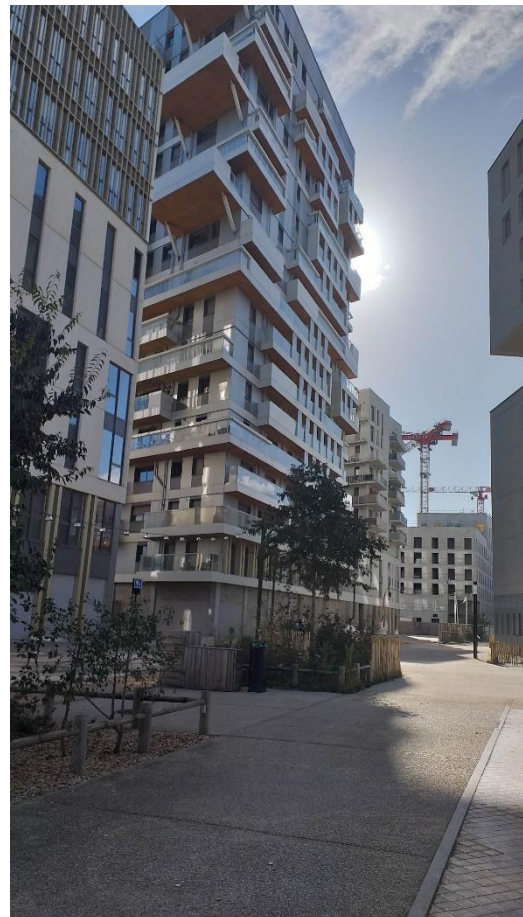


Fig. 5 *Tour Hypérion* Jean-Paul Viguier architect.
Virtual and real metropolitan place and housing?
Photo Christian Sallenave

In this point of view, the people lose their hand in hand common project [5]. Confined behind their screens and their home doors, they shoot their opinion on social network, more instructive than educative, more convinced than persuasive, more self-centred than meeting agreed !

Corollary of these observations, because of computing revolution, global warming and sustainable development, the innovative ideas and the multi and interdisciplinary approaches must be clearly established and be constantly questioned and renewed [6].

Political approaches try to answer real estate pressure, by building new housings and improve public transportation. Citizens may live at one hour of their workplace, where housing prices are less expansive. But, these metropolitan management decisions risk to increase pollution and metropolitan saturation, and “unpredictable” consequences on housing metropolisation.

Code lock buildings enforce safety measures to the detriment of urbanity. Architects utopic ideas do not resolve this urban problem. Like Nicolas Michelin’s concept of *negotiated urbanism* for the renewed district *Bassins à flot* in Bordeaux. The building’s covered atrium, inspired by *familistère of Godin, in Guise, France XIXth Century*, has been lived by his tenants, as a sociocultural anachronism and an anthropological bubble not user friendly. It separates building and street and forbids in corridors noise nuisances and degradations of kids’ games. Can common projects avoid architects’ utopic egocentricity and citizens’ bandwagon effect?

Policy announces social priority and human agreement that popular housing extends its space life and takes the time to live it’s conviviality. Without delude oneself of the sale and production shocks, nor overlook subcontracting shocks with their frequent defects and so many unoccupied housing because of touristic and speculations housing.

But individual heritages lose their *genius loci*, *Genius space-time*, confused with accelerated urban

travels and social networks compression. Video games, internet meetings and buzz of social networks do not make social life but identity circumstances communities. They decoy our urbanity just like Artificial Intelligence invests, in its new screen technology, our globalized cities and individual lives.

In Paris like in Bordeaux, satellisation of metropolitan peripheries involve to much expansive housing in city-centers, and increase over and over metropolitan inequalities. “*Rent Party Blues*” [7] in small group or popular festivals for all, are small comfort for Citizens’ broken dreams.

5. Conclusion

Social mix, friendliness and eco-district neither political dictate nor computer designs. Citizens live it together with professions and establishment, local service and convenience stores, as contribution to a live together public policy, in globalized metropolisation.

Every day, everything is acting with permanent tensions and articulations between square meadows as own corner, and the flows which set their environment in motion. As professions or authorities which are threatened in their job, housing design or skill delimitations, by their environment changes and new conditions of their art and crafts, the square meadows complain and extend in the same time their job to the limits of their skills, pretending organize what escapes them.

Between centers which are considered as summits, and their peripheries which find themselves degraded and precarious, the metropolises present and future are at stake, with their housing conditions and our space-times as disputed as shared.

During our research hike, we have discovered that the housing question is both urban and metropolitan, between two choices: The first One, confined compressed by the algorithms of meetings more virtual than real, functional housing and precarious heritages, accelerate or brake in vain flows of unqualified jobs and of urbanity decoys.

The second choice, rather than brake, is to use and enrich, as we can, our urban warmth keys and history memories with our neighbors and birds of our trees, as an intelligence of city, networks and flows that should not be just artificial.

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