

les ateliers

maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

Les Ateliers Internationaux de
Maîtrise d'Oeuvre Urbaine de
Cergy-Pontoise

36th International workshop of
Urban Planning and Design

QUELLE VIE DANS LES MÉTROPOLES AU XXI^e SIÈCLE ?

LIFE IN METROPOLITAN AREAS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE GREATER PARIS TERRITORIES
AND LIFESTYLES

The question of Rescaling

By Bertrand Warnier, workshop mentor

The Ateliers's partners for the 2018 session :



MINISTÈRE
DE LA TRANSITION
ÉCOLOGIQUE
ET SOLIDAIRE

MINISTÈRE
DE LA COHÉSION
DES TERRITOIRES

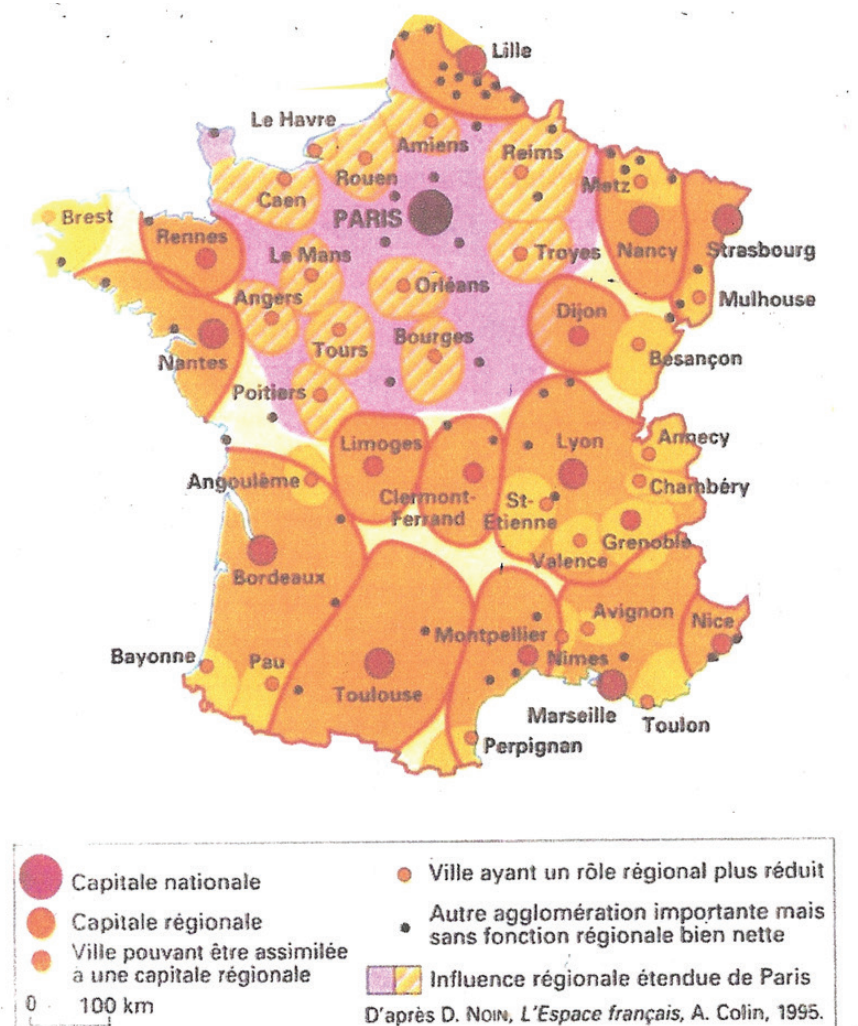
A NEW HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

The CAPITAL REGION has, TODAY, a LIVED SPACE that gives it new dimensions.

This is due to the existence of major infrastructures, broad local and regional balances and imbalances, residential and occupational catchment areas, and the presence of important metropolitan facilities providing resources for various categories of interested parties (notably for housing and travel costs).

When considering the CAPITAL REGION, the focus of the workshop (2018 report), is it:

- a CITY of 2.2 million inhabitants (set within the limits of the ring road)?
- a metropolis of 7 million urban dwellers contained in the vague perimeter of the immediate suburbs of PARIS?
- a region, that of the Île-de-France, defined by an administrative and political boundary that includes 12.1 million inhabitants and 6.2 million jobs?
- a territory, located 1.00–1.30 hours from PARIS, whose population is around 18 million inhabitants, or more? But, what will it be in 2050 or 2070 with 3 to 5 million additional inhabitants?



The zones of influence for France's major cities (Noin, 1995)

TIME

This refers in particular to personal time.

In a single century, the time devoted to WORK has dropped from 40% to 10% (J Viard report, May 2018).

SOCIAL and FAMILY TIME has become the main AVAILABLE TIME.

PRODUCTION, WORK are overtaken by the CULTURE of HOLIDAYS and LEISURE, in other words to GOOD LIVING.

«After the France of the fields and cathedrals, followed by that of the castles and Versailles; after the France of the mines, the Prefectures and PARIS City of Light; a France of the territories is born, reorganized by the culture of tourism and deindustrialization.»
(J Viard)

We have become a society of long life and short work. We lead individual adventures based on stages and breaks in our lives (love, housing, employment, convictions, etc.).

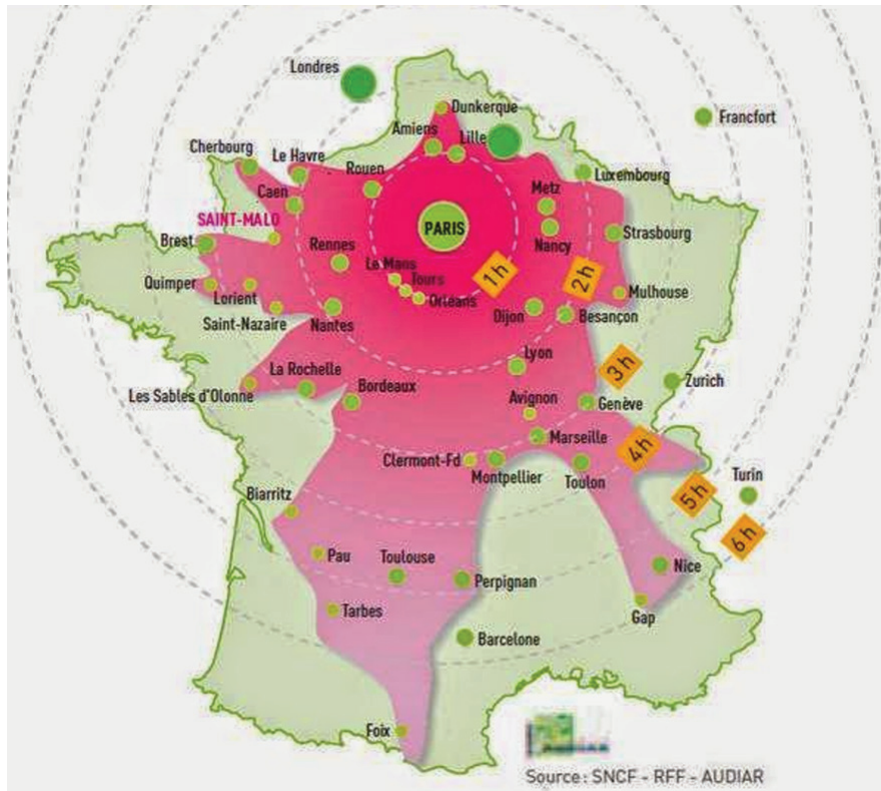
MOBILITY AND MOVEMENT

Each French person over six years old travels on average 50 kilometres per day (in the USA, it is 70 km/day). In 1960, it was 5 km/day.

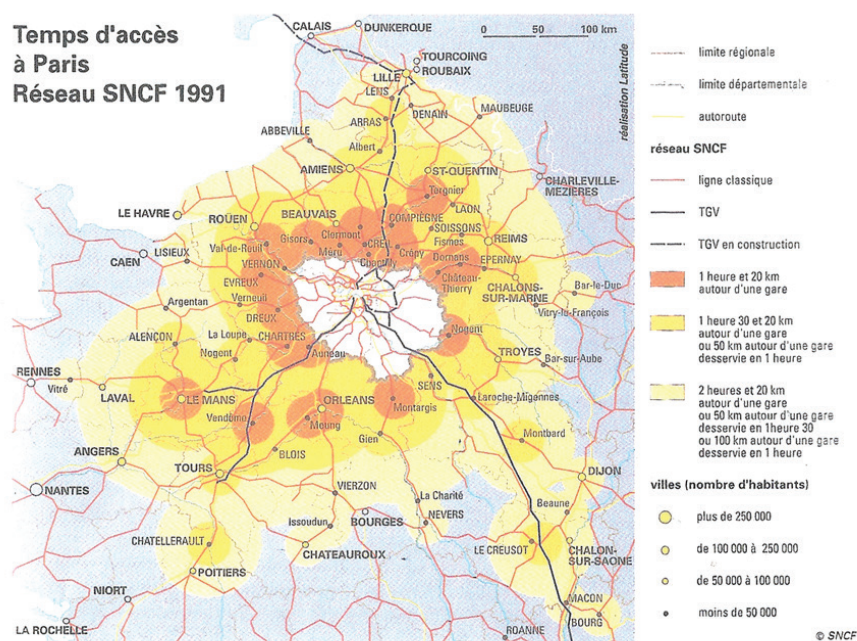
Forty years ago, it took 1 hour by RER to get from CERGY-PONTOISE to CHÂTELET. It's the same today.

The difference is that our conception of an hours' journey time has changed: it now takes a little less than 1 hour to come from REIMS to the Gare de l'Est; 1 hour to come from LILLE to the Gare du Nord, from ROUEN to Gare Saint-Lazare, from ORLÉANS to Gare d'Austerlitz; and 45 minutes to go from VENDÔME to Gare Montparnasse.

The isochrone map of France as country demonstrates the profound changes in behaviour that occur when one is led to look for a place of residence due to new modes of working.



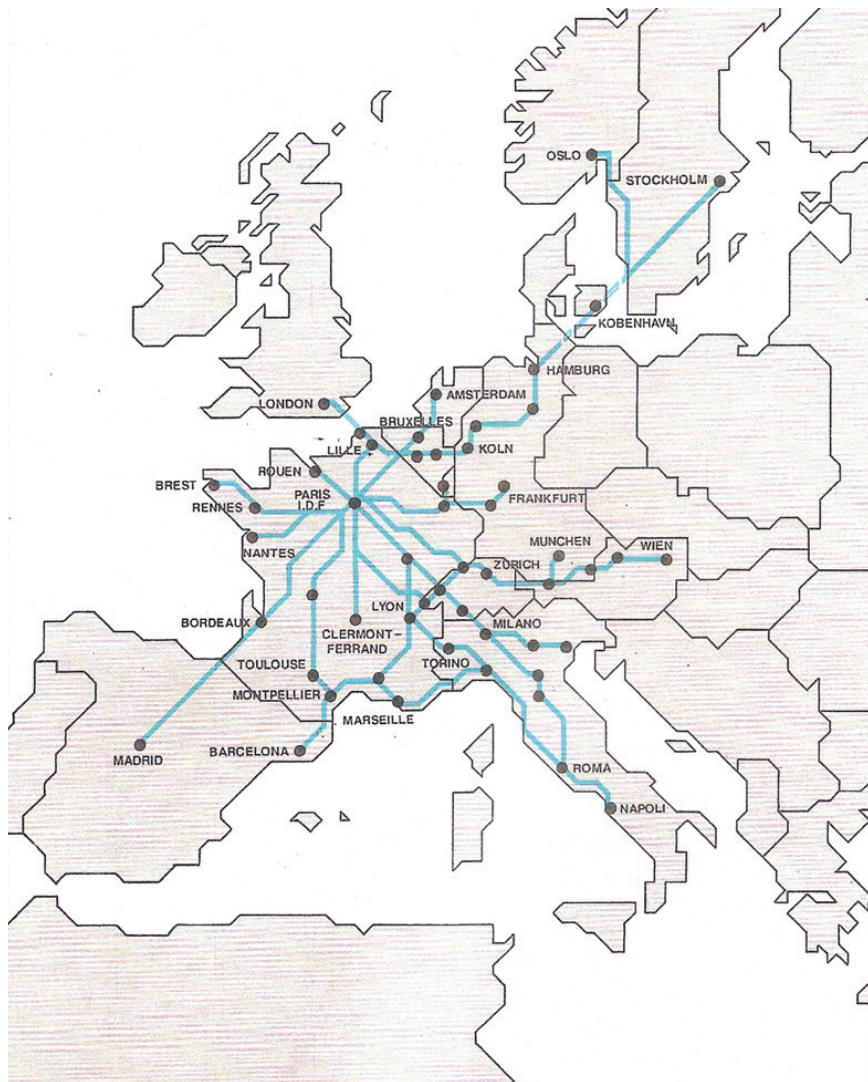
Isochrone map of the French TGV network in 2015 (SNCF-RFF-AUDIAR)



Journey time to Paris - SNCF train network 1991 (SNCF)

Connection times with the rest of Europe have also been shortened.

They represent what World Cities could be . Nevertheless, they remain expensive. This, however, is not the case for air travel which offers low cost trips which allow for extended weekend travels to different areas of neighbouring continents (notably from the three airports in the Île-de-France Region: ORLY, CDG and BEAUVAIS).



European rail network (IAURIF, 2000)

EXPANSION OR DENSIFICATION

GOOD LIVING, is it the City and in particular the Giant City? the Metropolis? the SKYSCRAPERS? the URBAN SPRAWL? the DENSITY? the COUNTRYSIDE?

A DIGRESSION on the question of URBAN SPRAWL:

This URBAN SPRAWL, responsible for all the misdeeds of urbanization, is also a MODE of LIVING which corresponds to the demands of the majority: that of living in a calm and quiet place (a demand reaffirmed in a recent study on lifestyles in Alsace and Switzerland).

Experts, on the other hand, believe that the only reasonable response to demand pressure and good urban organization is densification (i.e. living in buildings close to public services and transportation); that it is a good social response to LIVING TOGETHER and that it is an ecological imperative to protect quality agricultural land and allow for sustainable development.

So, what's the problem when the question is SETTLED IN ADVANCE?

I have had the occasion to cross SHANGHAI at night to go to SUZHOU, 90 kilometres to the north, during which I passed through a vast allotment of medium-sized plots, totalling around 1000 m², at the end of which were fairly tall houses (about 3 storeys high). Astonished by these enormous areas devoted to individual housing, I soon learned that these were not residential areas but AGRICULTURAL ZONES consisting of highly productive farms spread over small areas. After a few inquiries, I learned that, 25 years later, they are still agricultural zones.

I have had the occasion to live in the territory of SUNDGAU, where the textile industry, among others, required a lot of labour. There were only small towns there or many small farms set in scattered villages. These were places where the labourers were also farmers, and as such had adapted organizational structures to facilitate going between the factory and the field.

I have had the occasion to live in a single detached house (after residing in a Parisian apartment, a large complex in Rouen, and a LOGECO modular unit (low-cost housing option) in Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône) and found that some of my neighbours – also in single-family houses – raised a few chickens, while others cultivated gardens on small plots (around 200 m²). Together, this created a village.

I have had the occasion to know the life of Parisians – a good number of them – who had, for some, a second residence (one in town, the other in the countryside). There were those for whom it was a residence far from Paris, which led them to group their professional activities over periods of 2–2.5 days; while there were others who would leave systematically for the weekend, which could be spread over two and a half or even three days. These modes of living apply only to the wealthy, who in return are trending towards becoming the majority in inner Paris.

I have had the occasion to examine the statistics supplied by INSEE and to draw the conclusion that we have CONCRETED OVER everything to the detriment of agricultural lands. I also noted that these same statistics considered that individual houses and their green gardens contributed to this effect. In other words, all green gardens were, statistically, considered concreted over; whereas it is these gardens that allow birds to live far from the fertilizers and pesticides of agricultural areas that are deadly for them.

In France, the degree of landscape modification can be calculated at 5.4% of the territory when the term artificialisation is used, since it also applies to the territory's 56% share of individual houses and their adjoining gardens, which nevertheless contribute to biodiversity, permeability, non-pollution of the soil and hidden productivity (vegetable gardens, hen houses, etc.). In this context, the agricultural zone of northern Shanghai could also be considered a concreted-over area.

I have had the occasion to be scandalized by the mediocrity of these enormous parcels of land – all identical – which make up the wealth of those who design and market them, as they extol their heavenly advantages to those who only wish to hear the dream that is sold to them.

I have had the occasion to know entire regions of DISPERSED SETTLEMENTS, where, looking at a map, one can only be surprised at the enormous space occupied by housing. Whereas in places like Pays de Caux, it is a perfectly adapted response to the harsh climate and to farming, in which the best conditions for agricultural yield are produced by lands, occupying only minimal areas, that are protected by hedges acting as windbreaks. This also creates an exceptional inhabited landscape. And, on the other hand, it could also be read as "a reason why it is the time to move on to an isolated, ecological model of life, where everyone produces their own energy and some of their own food. An isolated individual home/household that creates its own energy to power its own car is not necessarily an absurd model, especially since living in such a pleasant setting often means goes on holiday less."

"The idea that the big city is a place where huge investments in energy have been made, often espoused from an ecological point of view, deserves demonstration." (J Viard)

I have had the occasion to read (on Météo-France) that the microclimate created by extremely dense urban areas already translates (and increasingly so in the future) into nighttime temperatures nearly 2.5°C higher than those of neighbouring rural areas (such as the Vexin), the difference being around 10°C in hot weather. I have also read that the price/sq m of living space in a R-2/R-3 construction was half that of R-7 or R-8 buildings; and that the overall density between individual and collective housing did not lead to obscene amounts of additional surfaces areas (maybe a third or a quarter more, when taking into account essential social facilities such as those for education, sport and health).

I have also had the occasion to witness and to learn that the most modern ZOOS have since rid themselves of their old MONKY CAGES (Desmond MORRIS) and that the territorial imperative is a balancing factor shared by all the living species.

And finally, I have had the occasion to notice that some cities ask themselves, in their own way, the question of urban development.

Alors, que faire ?
Renverser la vapeur...
 Empêcher, par tous les moyens possibles,
 ce phénomène irréversible
 de la tache d'encre sur le buvard,
 de la tache d'huile sur la nappe.
 Eviter à tout prix
 cette espèce de congestion cérébrale
 dont sont atteintes la plupart des grandes villes.
 Et pour cela, faire circuler le sang,
 jusqu'aux extrémités.
 Se donner de l'air.
 Voir loin,
 Essaimer, en quelque sorte.



(Brochure from SCOT-GRENOBLE)

This digression has no other purpose than to show that there are different ways of thinking about the metropolitan transition and its territorial effects. In other words, it is a WORK TOOL.

THE FORCE OF NATURE

It is a rediscovery.

We want to put an end to floods, mudslides and other natural disasters that happen without warning, and invade, damage or even demolish homes. Is this exceptional? (The same goes for heat waves)

Forecasting models predict little change (Météo-France). But extreme rainfall, those that generate floods, should become 1.5 to 2 times more frequent than at the end of the last century. This however will not prevent a significant drying of the soil, no matter the season, to the detriment of vegetation and rain-fed crops.

Paris is on red alert – but not only – as the entire hydraulic network is concerned. The major water retention structures built in the past are no longer sufficient.

It is therefore a massive large-scale problem whose solution lies in the multiplication of microscopic punctual interventions. Interventions which adapt to natural cycles, those that have been dictated over the long term and that respect the requirements of a reconsidered nature.

It is no longer the solutions provided by an ENGINEER that are needed, but those of common sense led by professionals of diverse origins (USA, Canada); and in this case, of the American continent: Phil Enquist, Drew Wensley, Meiring Beyers. The following maps show the potential efficiency of a large natural park spread across the Seine and its tributaries. It could be an example of how the complicity between human will and natural systems can contribute in bringing together the great works of the 20th century with the ecological needs of the 21st century.

Principle of specific interventions at each place to regulate the waterways (ex: AISEY-sur-SEINE)

