Metropolis or City? Metropoles and Cities with Their Citizens

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Abstract: Through the specific examples of two very different metropolises, not compared but evoked, *New York City* and Bordeaux Métropole, since globalization from mid-19th and to the beginning of the 21st century, we can observe how metropolitan flows acceleration change cities and citizens heritages. How can we achieve metropolization and globalization of our cities?

Key words: Town, city, metropolises, metropolization, globalization, flows acceleration, urban sprawl, melting pot works, crossbreeding, civil engineering and architecture, plural and singular metropolitan space-time.

1. Introduction

If we deemed it as relevant to confront two metropolises as different as Bordeaux (750,000 inhabitants) and New York (8.5 million inhabitants) it is because we are not comparing two metropolises but confronting two process of metropolization in their respective themes of globalization and acceleration of world flows specific to the second of the 19th century and to the beginning of 21st. We draw useful information toward a multidisciplinary knowledge as well as for the conditions of social and town planning.

2. 19th Century: Space Conquest in Metropolization Time

2.1 Bordeaux Métropolization 1850-1920 Urban Growth and Expansion

In 1853, when the first train went from Paris to Bordeaux after a journey of thirteen hours (53 hours by stage coach), Bordeaux knew its first process of metropolization acceleration. Demographic growth made of Bordeaux one of the principal French metropolises and the most cosmopolitan city through

many immigrations. The upper-classes thereby overcame difficulty slave abolition in 1848. Wine and the vineyard, Bordeaux harbour and Landes forest exploitation made the wealth of the city up to mid-20th century.

Through acceleration of flows of immigrations and transport, we observe:

- several expansions of the town of Bordeaux which annexes a part of neighbouring cities from the two banks of Garonne river. Right bank beyond the only one bridge, built in 1822, the *Pont de Pierre* (Cenon, Lormont, Floirac), and left bank (Talence, Bègles, Pessac) beyond new town-ring, built since 1853 up to 1880;
- a diversification of wealthy and fashionable districts of Bordeaux, and the new heritages of popular districts of working classes, with its famous shops for residential use “échoppes bordelaises”;
- an heritage renewal that the populations live differently:

For somebody, modernize tradition. As two famous architect from Bordeaux, Pierre Ferret and Cyprien Alfred-Duprat, from the end of 19th to the beginning of 20th century, balance and reconcile arts and crafts that many historians and architects contrast: *modern style, design and modern art, style beaux arts and landscape*

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and urban design.

For somebody else, a risk of heritage wasted. As Victor Hugo, during his visit to Bordeaux from 20 to 23 July 1843, has written in a famous text:

“There are two Bordeaux: the new one which is as grand as Versailles, and the old one which tells us history like in Anvers. [...] The Bordeaux Versailles tends to devour the Bordeaux Anvers”.

Other modernization factors made Bordeaux metropolization:

The first international and colonial fairs in *Quinconces Place*, organized by *Philomathique Society*, since 1827, made of Bordeaux one colonial capital even if it looks like a town of province, because of Paris supremacy with its “universal fairs” (1855, 1867, 1878, 1889, 1900).

The guarantee of wine quality, *Les Appellations d’Origine Contrôlée* (AOC) for its prestigious wines of *Bordeaux*, famous all over the world, with the label (AOC) during the first Universal Fair in 1855, is always available nowadays.

The inauguration of the first popular music-hall *l’Alcazar*, right bank of the Garonne river in 1861, with a Creole conductor, Edmond Dede, a violonist and composer from New Orleans. He was the conductor of the orchestra during twenty seven years, from 1867 to 1894, and played his music “protojazz”. Before Jelly Roll Morton, other *Creole* pianist, “originator of jazz-stomp-swing” and before the first record of the *white Original Dixieland Jazz Band* of Nick La Rocca, and before the recognition of *Black Jazz* in New Orleans, and then Chicago and New York with the jazz bands and disks of King Oliver, Kid Ory or Louis Armstrong.

If Edmond Dede was recognized in several American books since the end of the 19th century [1-3], his work is never quoted in France, or with the nickname “un certain Dédé”, except in the recent book and article that I wrote on *Jazz in France* [4-5].

As other arts and crafts, in France, music is particularly boosted when it is issued from Paris, the

Capital of France

During this metropolization of Bordeaux, its 18th century heritage was not spoiled by flows acceleration of 19th century but diversified in the new Bordeaux Metropolis. Everybody stayed in place and everything lived on in people’s memories.

2.2 New York City, Metropolisation: Urban Expansion and Space Conquest

New York has been confronted with a process of metropolization in its respective theme of globalization and acceleration. New York City became a universal reference even though she is founded on a social, cultural, racial and urban, singular and plural distinctiveness.

With trains, streetcars, subway, and the continual immigration, New York knew his metropolization acceleration and renewed its urban wealth and segregation.

With upper class mansions in 5th Avenue or Washington Square and middle class emergence, working class increased. With demographic growth, poor inhabitants crowded together in *tenements*: in 1890 million lived in 37,316 *tenements*. New York in fifty years passed from 100,000 to 950,000 citizens.

Through acceleration of economic immigration, to escape from misery and share in the American dream, and acceleration of upper classes acquisition of wealth, New York knew, like other American metropolises, three processes of concentration and expansion: poor people in *innercities*, skyscrapers built as emblems of upper classes and American architecture and civilization, and middle classes in suburbs and edge cities. And in the same time, because of business and industry, an urban sprawl which characterizes the American way of life, cities and metropolises.

Urban sprawl—which is named “*périurbanisation et étalement urbain*” in France, and is politically criticized nowadays—was immediately accompanied by gridlocks. The edge cities brought down the urban sprawl by including business parks, subdivisions and

shopping centre. But edgeless cities have much more caused the *urban sprawl*.

New York knew also a new organization characterized by urban annexation. In 1898, the old City of New York (Manhattan and Bronx) merged with Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens, and formed New York City.

The wealth of *beltways mansions* is added to the luxury of stately homes, downtown and mainly streets mansions. Urban growth was more important than demographic growth. The space conquest of New York was also characterized by a “height conquest”.

Elisha Otis invented his first elevator in 1857 with steam engine, with electricity only at the end of 19th century.

The first New York skyscraper is the pillars of *Brooklyn bridge*, 100 meter high; *Woodworth building*, trade cathedral, inaugurates the skyline, New York urban outline. William Randolph Hearst is proud of his

three floor saloon.

New skyscrapers height, 164 meters for 44 floors, Broadway buildings fade daylight. 1916, new urban planning, for the 115 skyscrapers built in thirty years: between 1918 and 1929, economic growth builds skyscrapers. *Chrysler Building* needle in mist (1930) (Fig. 1) *Empire State Building*, the most quickly built (from 1930 1931), profit earning only twenty years later, and *Rockefeller Center* (1933) which remained for a long time the tallest building [6].

Skyscrapers are built like Wall Street stock exchange. The stairs silhouettes respect obligatory narrowing to allow seeing a little bit of the sky. Urban expansion stands still by gaining in height and the prices climb up with the buildings height!

New York and the United States, with its social and urban concentration and segregation, exports the American way of life with the skyline.

Fig. 1 Chrysler building needle in mist Photo Romain Sullivan (Architect W. Van Allen, 1930).

Top of the Rock (New York Construction Workers Lunching on a Crossbeam) famous photo of workers, in New York City, on October 2, 1932, has for a very long time symbolized this metropolis story, civil engineering and architecture masterpieces as popular way of life, all over the world.

3. Metropolization in Globalization of 21st Century

3.1 Bordeaux 21st Century, Metropolitan Space-Time in Globalization

In France, since 1945, several urban-planning patterns have followed each other for towns and countryside: residential estates, blocks in dormitory towns, housing estates, trend and activity zones, downtown historical areas, new towns, metropolises in globalization nowadays. Everyone has his advantages and disadvantages and does not solve problems of rental housing.

Since 1980, metropolization and globalization speed up and accelerate specialization of territories, fragmented society, social and urban segregations, from historical centers and touristic to suburbs, edgeless cities and rural areas more and more deserted. At the same time, politics propose to “live together” in a world more and more opened and dangerous.

The problem is less metropolitan than metropolization, with flows accelerations which change cities and citizens heritages.

The problem is how to live together and to work together, when each skill, art and craft, claims to be a master of a masterpiece in a melting pot work. In French language “the project owner” (*propietario* in Spanish, *bauherr* in German) is called “maître d’ouvrage” “building master”; and “the Prime contractor” (“the supervisor” in Spanish, “baumeister” in German) is called in French “maître d’œuvre”, master of art”, that all people admires as a “genius artist”.

Several actors in this urban planning (politicians and

politics, businessmen and women, civil servants and authorities of urban rules, the media, the citizens (facing, without appeal, nature) claim their independence while they work always in interdependence, interferences, and inter interdisciplinary approaches and works facing nowadays environmental issues and challenges.

After the towns expansion on the outskirts of Bordeaux, left bank of the Garonne river, with aeronautic and aerospace industries in Mérignac, Le Haillan, Saint-Médard-en-Jalles, Pessac, and right bank of Garonne, with residential estates and demographic growth, in Floirac, Cenon, Lormont, Bordeaux became again, since 2000, pacemaker of metropolisation. At present time, with 750,000 inhabitants, Politicians hope for *Bordeaux Métropole* one Million of citizens in 2030 and “high quality of life and european ambition”.

Blocks of flats climb in height, town in density, their flat prices too, *Air Bnb* for tourists... there is no metropolis pattern, because each one has its own way of development. Technologic innovations and start up are not sufficient, Bordeaux must not satellize her neighbouring towns in the flows networks. To become “attractive, connected and sustainable metropolis”, she must get richer in relationship of reciprocity with her peripheral towns and countries. And for example buy farm products from her metropolis without round-trip of 700 miles between *Rungis market* and Bordeaux.

Bordeaux must also let its citizens rewrite their memories in space-time of their globalized metropolis. Even if Bordeaux and half of city is distinguished, since 2007, as *Unesco World Heritage*, with a “universal and exceptional” value, the metropole must not be reduced to a museum town and must see visit as part of any tourist itinerary.

With Internet, TGV and low cost airplanes, it is not only Bordeaux which moves up to Paris, but Paris and everyone all over the world which come to Bordeaux.

With *Bordeaux Metropolis streetcar*, the two *Garonne banks* reconquered and *Water Mirror* given to

everybody (Fig. 2), Bordeaux and its “golden triangle” are richer through their crossbreeds. Everyone takes *once’s time* to live in Bordeaux metropolization *space*.

In this way, like classics jazz standards, Bordeaux will enjoy our memories improvising its citizens’ future.

3.2 New York City in Its Metropolitan Space-Time: Metropolis Saving Another Private or Vibrant and Welcoming City?

To everyone—citizen or visitor—New York is the American dream, admiration of the masterpieces of art and architecture and civil engineering, worthwhile investment for managers, worthy sentiments for movie actors and audience, and situation management for police and information specialists.

Since 2001/09/11 New York is no longer what it has been.

New York City knew how to rebound from its ashes. Even the Bronx, Harlem and Chinatown have changed. Arson in abandoned buildings, squats and real-state speculation, evictions and community demonstrations, fine-art installations, graffiti and protest performances by militant artists are long gone [7].

Rudy Giuliani has done his job as town Mayor, by

implementing zero tolerance attitude concerning organized crime. But, today, everyone can wonder whether New York may become in the future an “administration-managed-sanctuary” for tourists (Fig. 3) or will continue being the “vibrant and welcoming city” that the world has always known and appreciated.

New York worships its *Survivor Tree* in front of the *Freedom Tower*, first name of the reborn *One World Trade Center*. Tourists contemplate the *Statue of Liberty* and replay the mass immigration in the *Ellis Island* museum.

From selfies and autographs to handshakes, The United States of America is a country of immigrants. Once the welcome is done with, New York City has to control the flow, the traffic jams, every minute of the day, separate traffic and manage it as we best can to the nearest second. Build bridges, like between Brooklyn and Manhattan, but do not open doors to just anyone, because the USA is also a country of pioneers and of space conquest, the one we have always managed to preserve and defend against the rest of the world. Americans have always had a new frontier to reach: from the Far West to Outer Space, from George Lucas’s and Ronald Reagan’s star Wars.

Fig. 2 The Hermione leaving for New York from the *Water Mirror* in Bordeaux. Photo by Romain Sullivan.

Fig. 3 *Tourist Migration to New York.* Photo by Romain Sullivan.

Fig. 4 *The Freedom Tower Bird.* Photo by Romain Sullivan: Architects Childs, Skidmore, Owings, Merrill 2014.

New York continues its race towards heaven. Christian de Portzamparc, *Pritzker Prize* famous French architect, builds his highest skyscraper with its flats most expensive. Saint Patrick Cathedral has given up to a developer her property rights, and the

apartments not yet built are already sold. But it's not because New York is a dream of *world city*, an icon of movies and sometimes deemed too bright in its diversity and wealth that she should further become a *sanctuary* and a *smart tourist city*. NYC need only

secure the means of encounter in opening its windows to the world as NYC expects the world to open its windows to itself (Fig. 4).

New York City cannot live only by its skyline. The best images can make the best scenarios, if we do not confuse them with reality, from virtual *Times Square* screens to New York City melting pot works. NYC will become every day a vibrant and welcoming city if she does not confuse its landscape and urban design with a screenplay of a blockbuster, where *the winner takes whole market* [8, 9] and sacrifices everyone who does not enter in its screen, stock exchange or social networks.

4. Conclusion

Bordeaux Metropole, New York City and their citizens can welcome each other, smile and shake hands if they do not confuse the globalized metropole pattern with story, memories and future of their city. Like Sidney Bechet, when the Maestro Ernest Ansermet told him in 1919 that “he was a genius”, he simply answered: “my own way”. In this way, the plural can always be written in the singular and the improvisers can still pass for visionaries [10]. Thus, we can achieve, together, metropolization and globalization of our cities, as a melting pot work [11].

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