The far distant city of Paris and someone called Haussmann*

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Abstract. Discussion on Large Urban Projects. They involve conflicting agents and are subjected to analysis beyond projectual scrutinity. Paper prioritizes the understanding of a selection of printed media contemporaneous to Haussmann´s works in Paris, and is based on three assumptions: criticism observed in the past repeats in contemporary cities; debates, there and now, do not allow for nuances; analysis of the distant observer prevails praise; analysis of someone closer to it is full of harsh criticism. Material used was a selection of The New York Times discussing works of the modernization of Paris under the responsibility of Haussmann. The discussion and conclusion are based on this material and reiterate assumptions adopted.

Keywords: Large Urban Projects; Architecture/Architectural Imagery; Gentrification; Haussmann.

A distante cidade de Paris a alguém chamado Haussmann

Resumo. Análise de interpretações sobre Grandes Projetos Urbanos, os quais envolvem agentes conflitantes e estão sujeitos a escrutínios para além do projetual. O artigo discute as grandes reformas de Paris no século XIX e prioriza o etendimento da mídia impressa da época, com destaque para o The New York Times, sobre os trabalhos coordenado por Haussmann. Observa-se que o criticismo observado em relação a esses projetos na cidade contemporânea era evidente também no passado estudado, na análise pelo observador distante prevalece a condescendência, na análise do agente mais próximo prevalece a crítica contundente. Com referências da mídia da época, as conclusões reiteram os pressupostos adotados.

Palavras chave: Grandes Projetos Urbanos; Arquitetura iconográfica; Gentrificação; Haussmann.

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La distante ciudad de Paris y alguién llamado Haussmann

Resumen. Interpretaciones sobre Grandes Proyectos Urbanos, con sus agentes en conflicto y un análisis más allá de su intento arquitectónico. A partir de las reformas de París en el siglo XIX el artículo prioriza etendimento de los medios de comunicación impresos de la época, especialmente el New York Times sobre el trabajo coordinado por Haussmann. Se observa que la crítica en relación a esas intervenciones en la ciudad contemporánea también fue evidente en el pasado estudiado, que en el análisis por el observador distante prevalece complazca, y que en el análisis del agente más cercano prevalece crítica mordaz. A partir de fuentes primárias selecionadas se reiteran los supuestos adoptados.

Palabras clave: Grandes Proyectos Urbanos; Arquitectura Iconográfica; Gentrificación; Haussmann.

1 Large Urban Projects and their context[1]

Large Urban Projects (LUPs), when they are the initiative of local, regional, and national governments, are understood as policy instruments of a scale that requires a large volume of public resources, and they are thus discussed regarding their level among social priorities and from the perspective of their necessity for the public good. When they are the result of a private sector initiative, the debate is directed toward potential financial backers or even easing the terms of securing urban planning and environmental permits to support an intervention with the immediate interests of a particular private group. Between these two options are those LUPs resulting from public-private partnerships, which are increasingly present in different urban realities of the contemporary world, and which are the most visible and immediate embodiment of strategic urban projects. Regardless of the source of their resources, LUPs became commonplace in

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contemporary urban spaces as of the 1980s, and this explains the vast amount of literature about them in the following two decades that is herein used as a reference for understanding them.

Although strategic urban projects are broad in their approaches, there is always a clear recognition of the importance of a built demonstration of the changes through architectural icons:

> An icon is understood as a construction that causes an impact, whether for its strategic location, visibility, scale, form, appearance, monumentality, or use. An icon is a construction that, since its conception, has caused some expectation about its implementation.... These icons of contemporaneity are constructed from a political conception, aimed at their international projection. If, at other times, they had a meaning and appearance consistent with the local society, they now belong to the global society (HAZAN, 2003, p. 1).

This is the situation most commonly observed in, for example, economic revitalization projects in certain urban compartments or even large urban areas, where signs of change are demonstrated through urban interventions or the (re)occupation of underutilized areas. LUPs have a multiplicity of uses, although they are mostly structures for leisure, culture, heritage conservation, tourism, urban revival, and transportation (POWELL, 2000). Powell's understanding is reiterated by Del Rio (2000), for whom an LUP refers to opportunities:

> through a strategic planning between public power (enablers), private power (investors) and communities (users), identifying plans and programs that maximize and reconcile efforts and investments, guiding the integrated implementation of short-, medium-, and long-term actions and projects. The positive results, in turn, replenish the process, attracting new investors, new residents and new consumers, and generating new projects (DEL RIO, 2000).

If Powell and Del Rio, among others, formulate a concept of LUPs without immediately highlighting the concerns and criticisms that these interventions might raise, other authors have adopted a more dialectical

understanding. Thus, LUPs move from an intervention capable of changing realities, as defended by Castells and Borja (1996) in their Strategic Planning or City Project, to an almost stigmatized process that is of interest to minorities in order to be able to achieve financial results. On the side of the strongest criticism, the city is transformed through political and real estate projects that rely on easily identified architectural and urban icons that reveal corporate interests. Understood in this way, LUPs would constitute a "spectacularization of the urban, a certain staging of a public life that has long since ceased to exist . . . a sort of panacea that is often not anything more than advertisement, when it isn't cultural and social inhibition and control" (ARANTES, 1998, p. 25).

Similarly, Harvey (2000, p. 144-145), in *Spaces of Hope*, when discussing the revitalization project in the city of Baltimore, uses expressions like "the urban spectacle as a commodity" and "yuppie utopia," indicating a strong and constant relationship between gentrification and renewal. The same author, when considering public-private partnerships, reiterates a strong fear in relation to LUPs: "every new wave of public investment is needed to make the last wave pay off. The private public partnership means that the public takes the risks and the private takes the profit" (HARVEY, 2000, p. 141).

In the post-1980 period, due to pattern changes in the—perhaps prematurely—announced end of the industrial city, LUPs once again became evident, leading some scholars to characterize this period—again, perhaps prematurely—as an Urban Renaissance. More than one renaissance, of course, has seen a transformation of the built environment in a way that differs from those seen in previous decades and that, if initially restricted to rich countries, as Lungo (2000) expresses, is now widespread among countries said to be emerging (ULTRAMARI; FIRKOWISKI, 2012). In this contemporary context, LUPs are understood to be the most archetypal icons of the richest and traditionally central cities, the large works in cities on the periphery of

capitalism, as well as the boldness of newly rich or supposedly wealthy countries seeking a privileged inclusion in the global circuit of cities.

Like the Paris of Haussmann, the Vienna of Emperor Franz Joseph, and the City Beautiful movement of Burnham, contemporary LUPs are especially criticized because of the gentrification process they may cause, the possible misuse of public funds, the possible political appropriation of their image, the property gains of the groups involved, the expulsion of the original population, and often an inappropriate lauding of a past that perhaps never existed.[2] In this fearful stance, there is a clear minimization of any positive aspects, such as the revalorization or refunctionalization of underutilized areas, the optimization of available infrastructure, the availability of leisure and cultural spaces, the increase of tourist activities and, particularly, the recovery of a citizen's self-esteem.

LUPs express a new social dynamic, particularly that of the late 1970s and early 1980s (ULTRAMARI, 2005), which showed a strong frustration with urban management, generally speaking, and its financial, technical, and political inability to implement long-desired socioeconomic interventions. During this same period, the city began to seek new functions, now definitively tertiary, for its obsolete spaces through economic conversion or the re-spatialization of industry. In the reconstruction of these spaces, involving great opportunities and great resources, diverse interests are materialized and sharpened (VALE; CAMPANELLA, 2005). In countries with more consolidated urbanization and a greater availability of resources to meet the requirements of architectural and technological constructive uniqueness that can also characterize an LUP, it might be concluded that these have even announced a possible revolution within their cities (LUNGO; SMOLKA, 2005; LUNGO, 2000). In other realities, like those of large cities that are poor and have diverse and persistently

[2] This refers to the *museification* of urban spaces during revitalization projects.

unmet needs, the urban foundation upon which an LUP is constructed - not necessarily that of an obsolete industry - as well as the priority for the building's function, i.e., its justification, are seen to change.

In the debate over LUPs, they are almost always seen in only one of their aspects: either their nature as a project, with an emphasis on the architectural, urban, and environmental options, or their relationship with the other demands of the city and the different actors that comprise it. The opportunity is lost to understand the result of using public or private capital with a certain feature inherent to each moment through which society passes. The opportunity to discuss the city itself, i.e., their potential ability to leverage changes beyond their areas of most immediate impact, is also lost. Because of inappropriate potential, little-discussed priorities, and outdated forms of management, LUPs are mostly viewed with disappointment, criticism, and, only over time, with some praise. It is clear, however, that there is still much to explore: their purposes, their potential to contribute to society's debate over cities, their integrative opportunities for strategic projects, their impact on the landscape, and the proper use of public resources in their implementation.

The present article seeks to identify these same positions of praise and fear, although seeking their distinctions when made in different time frames and with a greater or lesser distance between the observer and their analyzed object. This same analytical perspective seeks to reiterate or reject the idea that LUPs have the potential to mark a city's history, in a more or less obvious way, despite always provoking criticism and beliefs in a forceful and excluding manner.

This reflection is repeated empirically in the following section, which discusses Haussmann's Parisian project in the second half of the nineteenth century, bringing the debate that was contemporary to him into the light of a new time.

2 The study

The sources for this research were articles from the relevant time period that are available online from the New York Times (NYT). The initial selection was made with the keyword "Haussmann," beginning in 1858 (when the unrestricted, online archives begin) and ending in 1900, as this is believed to be the time limit for a contemporary analysis of those Parisian interventions.[3] The necessary refinement of the research revised the time limit to 1867–1896, resulting in fifteen articles in addition to Haussmann's obituary.

Table 1 - Articles selected for research.

TITLE	DATE
The French capital: Paris rebuilt, … Asphaltum versus macadam	12/13/1867
The French capital: moral aspect of the city / Baron Haussmann´s improvement upon it	05/09/1868
The French capital: the crusade against Baron Haussmann	07/05/1868
Baron Haussmann: his fabulous wealth	02/01/1870
Haussmann and Hall	07/17/1871
The spell of Paris	05/12/1874
Jules Ferry	04/05/1885
Haussmann and his boulevard	12/25/1888
Haussmann's boulevard: steps to complete it. What it will cost	03/18/1890
Baron of Haussmann. Mémoirs du Baron Haussmann	05/11/1890
Baron Haussmann's work	07/20/1890
Paris Haussmannised	08/18/1890
Haussmann and his work: before the empire and after	01/26/1891
Paris dispatch to the London Daily Telegraph (nota)	02/01/1891
London needs a Haussmann	07/07/1896
Haussmann´s obituary	01/11/1891

Source: The New York Times.

[3] Haussmann died when he was 81 years old, on January 11, 1891; he was the Prefect of the Seine Department from 1853 to 1870.

The first observation that can be made upon reading the selected articles is the recurrence of the foreign press selected for this study addressing the issue of the Paris reforms, particularly in the 1860s. Other studies could confirm that the recurrently positive view found in most of the articles studied here is not repeated in the Parisian press, which was more familiar with the different issues of the *Haussmannian* projects. From an NYT article reporting the release of the now-retired Prefect's memoirs, one can construct an overview of how the man responsible for the works is understood by his fellow citizens:

> in Russia, everybody is a Nihilist except the Czar; in Paris everybody was against Haussmann – capitalists, merchants, laborers, those who liked the government and feared for his apparent heedlessness, those who hated the Emperor and regarded the Prefect as his "âme damnée" even the emperor, who approved his plans, signed the decrees that he wanted, intervened in the personal quarrels that blocked his way but insisted publicly that taxes on the necessities should be reduced (PARIS Haussmannised, 1890).

This critical view is, however, ignored when Paris is reported as only a foreign city subjected to large-scale, beautifying, and remedial reforms; it stresses the increase in roads, manicured gardens, its more intense lighting, its more comprehensive water supply, and its trees enhancing the landscape, among other items. At the same time, it diminishes, consciously or not, the relocation imposed upon the residents of areas under construction and the compensation values paid to them. For the foreign media, everything seemed to happen without any criticism, not even for a man and an urban project that "never sacrificed a perspective to time or money" (PARIS Haussmannised, 1890). Even in the most-well known criticisms, such as the misappropriation of public funds, the stance adopted is the explicit exclusion of debate over this possible offense: "He [Haussmann] was capable, fearless, and devoted to the Emperor," and so the Parisians should be grateful to him, as the "tyrant" did not make a fortune, but rather lost one (PARIS Haussmannised, 1890).

> The widest streets of their Paris were the rue Saint Honoré and the rue Saint Antoine: the Champs Elysées was a desert or a swamp; the Bois de Boulogne was at the other end of the world. Water from the Seine or the Ourcq Canal was warm in Summer, cold in Winter, was hawked in the streets from water carts by Auvergnats. There were not enough reservoirs to clean the streets. The sewer system was wretched. In 1852, there were 384 kilometers of streets, avenues and boulevards, averaging 12 meters in width: in 1869, 845 averaging 12 meters in width. The suppressed streets and alleys averaged 7 meters in width. There were in 1852 287 kilometers of sidewalks having a surface of 73 hectares; in 1869, 1,088 with a surface of 296. There were 50,400 trees in 1852, 95,577 in 1869. There were 12,400 gas and 85 lamp lights in 1852, 32,300 gas and 1,539 lamp lights in 1869. There were demolished in seventeen years 19,722 houses; built and rebuilt 43,777. There were dislodged 117,553 families (PARIS Haussmannised, 08/18/1890).

This same utilitarian view that prioritizes the ends and without analyzing the means takes the major justification of Haussmann's works, that of the military, as inherent to an urban intervention. In fact, the close relationship of Haussmann's project with the desire to put an end to social movements or even to the "victory" of this urbanism over the Paris Commune[4] in 1871, *va sans dire* in the selected articles, is prone to a less-questionable selection of facts.

> When the Empress said to him, looking at one of his long, straight boulevards just opened, "Why did you make that Boulevard so long and straight, it is tiresome?" "Madame," replied the Prefect, "I made it very long and very straight because the Generals of artillery whom I consulted a great deal on the subject, assured me that it was impossible to teach cannon balls to turn round the first corner to the left" (THE FRENCH capital, 1867).

In the same way that the military support that Haussmann's works contributed was observed uncritically, there seemed to be a generalized concurrence that city planning could, in addition to ensuring that military strategy, also regulate the citizen's morals. In fact, this same valorization,

[4] The Paris Commune was a power established for two months in Paris in 1871 that was linked to the discontent of the working class and Prussia's defeat of France.

veiled or not, of the cleanliness of the urban landscape that allowed flow and safety also seemed to curb immorality:

> a man will do in a narrow, dark and dirty street what he will not do in a wide, open, clean street. It is exactly the difference between night and day. Handsome and clean streets bring well-dressed people, by the law of imitation; communicate their habits to those about them (THE FRENCH capital, 1867).

The same observation as above, about a moral that is exalted and facilitated by a sanitizing city planning model, can also be found in an article published later:

> not long ago I made use of the expression, for example, that Paris was the most moral-looking city in the world. Of course I could not venture any stronger expression than that […] but a great deal has been gained when the streets and public spaces have been purified; the mysterious under strata is then in turn more easily attacked (THE FRENCH capital, 1868).

In regards to the limitations of this study, which herein seeks similarities and differences between past analyses and contemporary analyses of LUPs, it is important to note the use of the terms "majority interest" or "public interest" to justify interventions, even if these interests are difficult to delimit and could possibly account for expropriations. In the articles from the NYT, the praise directed toward Haussmann's works requires their authors to ignore the traditional and well-known disputes present in land proceedings.

> This word "public utility" is the word put forward in all these plans of improvement; for who can object to what is for the public good? When at last a new street or public square is decided on by the prefect and his legal adviser, the city engineer and his aids survey the route, the people living thereon are notified that at a certain date they must evacuate the premises they occupy (two year´s notice is generally given) (THE FRENCH capital, 1867).

The foreign gaze—deliberate, veiled, or unknowingly insensitive to issues involving the interests of the local population of Paris—proceeds at

different times that can be discussed using the selection of articles. Thus, even with the fall of Napoleon III[5] in 1870, the financial crisis that follows, and even the ideas disseminated by the Paris Commune, Haussmann's works—strictly linked to a toppled power—are able to maintain their appeal in the international media analyzed. These works persist in being seen as only an endless large-scale spectacle of novelties, hardly intending to question "local minor problems." Thus, even in 1874, four years after the end of the power given to Haussmann, the praise continues:

> Yet Paris still continues to exercise its old fascination for the pleasure-seekers of all nations. In fact, foreigners make Paris what it is, and carry home with them habits and impressions of which provincial France takes no account (THE SPELL of Paris, 1874).

This foreign gaze, able to filter what interests it and what can affect it, transforms Paris into a model to be followed, just as many cities today seek to reproduce a success experienced by the transformations in Barcelona or Bilbao through LUPs. This idealized vision of the city shines through in an article from 1896, long after the end of Haussmann's era: "London needs a Haussmann: what London really wants is a Baron Haussmann to transform the metropolis as Paris was metamorphosed by the cutting of grand boulevards through slums" (LONDON needs a Haussmann, 1896).

What is observed in the preferences of the topics discussed in the articles presented is the perspective of someone who seeks to only achieve results. Thus, in the same manner as the cities that implement LUPs today, Paris appears to be produced for new residents, not for its original population. Paris is, then, recurrently presented in the selected articles as a city that "should be visited," indicating that its works meet the interests of those who are not necessarily its local population: "families must be able to visit Paris for weeks and months, to

[5] Charles-Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was elected President by vote in 1848; after the 1851 coup, he took over as Napoleon III in 1852. He was captured in 1870.

see its grand palaces and museums and other feeling than that of pleasure. There must be no disagreeable souvenir of any kind" (THE FRENCH capital, 1868).

Finally, another constant observed when reading the selected articles is, in the same manner as in the analysis of contemporary LUPs, a recurring connection between these works and their use by the installed political power and the private capital partner. If the selection of articles becomes distracted by discussion of the merely architectural and urbanistic characteristics of the results, Haussmann confirms what was already known in the discussion of contemporary projects. Thus, a selected article that discusses Haussmann's memoirs[6] reproduces some of his ideas, among which is the subservience of his actions to a political state project:

> where, asks Haussmann, with evident elation, would the troops of Versailles have been but for the great lines of boulevards which he traced through the crowded quartiers of the working classes? [...] Haussmann first pampered the artisans of the capital with abundance of work artificially created, and then disgusted them with the hardness of existence in the Paris for the rich alone, which he had created (HAUSSMANN and Hall, 1871).

From the source that was employed in this article, it might be characterized as remote from local issues, more attentive to the results than to the means used to implement transformations. Over the years, the NYT articles about Haussmann in Paris continue without reporting upon negative impacts, with no externalities, and with no disputes between the numerous actors that an intervention on this scale always brings together. This conclusion is proven by the observation that the only people able to consistently question Haussmann's works are old-building preservation enthusiasts, although they do not observe aspects of health and public convenience (HAUSSMANN and his boulevard, 1888). In this linear view, the same article concludes by stating that:

[6] Haussmann dedicated the last three years of his life to writing his memoirs, the publication of which motivated on more than one occasion an article in The New York Times of the era.

> they [those who criticize the urban interventions in Paris proposed by Haussmann] should honor Baron Haussmann as a distinctly modern man, who did much to obliterate the traces of the past by doing away with tortuous, narrow streets and the old houses that linked the present to the times when kings were everything in France and Municipal councilors nothing (HAUSSMANN and his boulevard, 1888).

We are far from a more clearly negative view of Haussmann's works, which are known to be recurrent in his time and even today. Such a view of the era may perhaps be summarized in the exacerbated criticism made by Jules Ferry (1968), in his work **Comptes fantastiques d'Haussmann**, in which he discussed all the ailments and outspokenness of the era rather than the announced 500 million, thus heralding a possible personal enrichment.

Certainly, the selection of sources used here (only one newspaper) calls for caution in drawing conclusions about this item. Expanding this source of foreign information and comparing it to another local source[7] could confirm one of the hypotheses made here, which is that of a difference in the gaze of the person analyzing the phenomenon in question according to their proximity. However, it is possible to confirm the temporal permanence of certain issues in the analysis of LUPs. Although presented in an explicitly partial form, issues relating to the following topics are present in the selected articles: state interests in the use of architecture and urbanism, disputes between the old and the new in demolition and relocation processes, hierarchical repositioning of the city in an international setting (from imagery interventions), strategic conceptual generalizations (in the understanding of what can be considered "public interest"), and adapting the urban space for use by others, external to the city's history.

[7] The same search was run for the newspaper, *Le Monde*, but it does not have the same online availability as the NYT; its archives are only available beginning in 1983.

Final considerations

A reading of the collected documents—although geographically and temporally distant from our contemporaneity—suggests a characteristic intrinsic to large urban interventions, which is materialized in controversy, fear, and criticism. However, if LUPs provoke fear and criticism, they also lead to exaggerated praise and partial views. The reason for such fear and criticism would be in the intervention that is inherent to them: they alter histories, alter known landscapes, use large amounts of resources, suggest new and perhaps risky partnerships, and call attention to the debate over urban priorities. In short, they have the potential to destabilize long-consolidated urban realities. The motivation for unrestricted support could be due to the distance from the analyzed item, a reduced knowledge of the needs of the population that is directly involved, and the possibility of being merely a foreign user of the results. Below are two examples of opposite readings about a single object, the construction of the new Brazilian capital in the early 1960s. On the one hand is jubilation, suggested by the government itself; on the other is a movement against the "changeism" from the capital in Rio de Janeiro to a still-uninhabited Brazilian interior.

> We do not turn to the past, which is overshadowed by this profuse radiation of light that another dawn pours over our country. ... Explain to your children what is happening now. This synthetic city arises, above all, for them, harbinger of a revolution fruitful in prosperity. It is they who will judge us tomorrow (KUBITSCHEK, Juscelino, President of Brazil, in the Brasília inauguration speech, April 1960).

> I am amazed by the idea of wanting to put the Brazilian government outside the civilized centers, outside the populated and living center of the country. We have always known what government is: it is government of men over men, and not over land. In the end, what is the government going to do outside the cities? (...) If it's crazy to want to run the country in Rio, a city located in the center of the country [again criticizing the excessive centralization of the Brazilian government], the human, demographic, social, and economic center, won't it also be crazy in the outskirts of the backlands? (TORRES, 1956, p. 4).

With regard to the debate that an LUP can generate, it is worth remembering that the architectural project and the function it provides offer the foundations for an unusual discussion among us: that of architectural criticism. However, we would still be far from the conviction that an architectural work, whichever one, is part of an urban context that is public and affects everyone, expanding the universe of stakeholders in a discussion on its function, location, etc. in the city. The construction of LUPs thus enables an unusual situation that includes polemics over diverse aspects that go beyond a simple concern with public resources and political-ideological criticism but which can move towards architectural criticism itself and continue on to their urbanistic impacts.

What draws particular attention in the readings from the selected source is that criticism and analysis of LUPs is unlikely to create debate over the city as a whole. In the discussion of what may be new, the permanence it has is that of the city's interpretative tradition. The analytical limitation of an LUP is its link with the definition of priorities by the city's collective. Delineating the debate at a time following this definition might reveal a possible option between building museums and the urgency of works for emergency use, such as safety, health, or education (all traditional examples of contemporary LUPs). When there is a difficult unlinking of an LUP from the discussion of a city's priorities, there is a risk of not advancing to other levels of strategic proposals; when there are debates, there is a risk of not gaining positive results. There is a gain, however, in the healthy discussion of "city things."

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