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Dominique Lorrain, *Urbanism 1.0. Investigation into a commune of Greater Paris*

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Dominique Lorrain, *Urbanism 1.0. Investigation of a commune of the Grand Paris*

Magda Maaoui

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Research on the governance of Greater Paris often focuses on proposing macro-analyses of policies or major projects that impact the entire space metropolitan. This approach is necessary, but it is important to enrich by others finer studies the conceptual production around this territorial project. As written Thierry Paquot, it is an effort that allows to imagine the Greater Paris and "To reconnect with a Parisian imagination", to give it a greater "Likelihood" ¹. In this vein, Dominique Lorrain's work presents itself as an implementation of what he calls the political economy of detail (p.26). Giving particular attention to actors and tools while at the same time public policies and private actors, he favors in his work this approach to produce monographs located, which aim to inform urban research. The the current to which it is attached gives particular attention to elected representatives, real estate players and instruments of urban governance ².

2

With *Urbanism 1.0: Survey on a municipality of Greater Paris*, Villiers-sur-Marne is the subject a monograph that the reader can approach from several angles. Like all Parisian municipalities subject to renovation and construction projects, this city located to the east of the small crown undergoes acceleration of construction rates

characteristics of Greater Paris. Moreover, analyze the construction projects of the Greater Paris through the urban transformations that ensue in the neighborhoods of Villiers-sur-Marne makes the work of Dominique Lorrain less panoramic, more located. In addition, this study focuses on five years (2006 to 2011) of the term of office Mayor Jacques-Alain Bénisti (The Republicans). It dissects power relations at work in its neighboring commune of the new city of Marne-la-Vallée, the major role played by the promoters, and the decision-making of experts - in reduced committee and mostly in camera. It also dissects the non-respect of the objectives

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in the PLU (Local Urban Plan), leading the real estate operations to exceed the capacities of the municipality.

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At first, the author proposes a historical contextualization of the phases of connection of this municipality to the metropolis - as part of the extension of the network transport and in parallel with the construction of the district of large estates of High-Noues. In a second step, the author advocates an approach of the order of the notebook ground. His observations camp a series of protagonists: Jacques-Alain Bénisti in ambitious mayor and favorable to new real estate projects; Promoters in search land; and more or less aware residents of this daily factory. This

The case study thus extends research carried out by Julie Pollard ³ on the manufactures housing policies of Greater Paris with the prism of logic mixing - often unbeknownst to local residents - the political ambitions of elected officials and the influence of real estate agents.

4

To reconstruct this "puzzle" (p.47), the author draws up the inventory of the different real estate operations, accumulating rich factual and quantitative data. It then deduces the network of real estate developers who, together with the mayor, reshapes Villiers-sur-Marne. According to him, to understand these processes of transformation, it is necessary to first of all to question the belief that it is necessary to have a minimum technical, financial and legal expertise to deal with zoning rules ⁴. His

The political economy of retail then attempts to apprehend in terms of cause and consequence the gap between a commitment to produce 160 homes per year, according to the regional scheme, and an annual construction higher than 675 dwellings. Proposing a critical analysis of the implications for the local urban fabric, the author speaks of a "crisis of political representation" (p 161) inherent in the discrepancy between the political promises of local elected representatives and the number of accommodation on arrival.

5

Dominique Lorrain stresses the need to evaluate and monitor a political project

ambitious, which aims to generate 70,000 homes per year across the metropolis Parisian. Moreover, his analysis rests on the assertion that these rhythms of construction are subject mainly to a market and financialisation logic. The Grand Paris would be for Villiers-sur-Marne rather an opportunity to better equip itself and to play on the land opportunity represented by its available land. In then result from constraints, on the one hand linked to this accelerated overdensification, on the other hand decision-making and budget shares. According to the author, the policy pursued by this common would ultimately be a "tangle of factors and operations" (p.173), always "short-term" (p.107) and "without formal piloting, by small touches, without projection "(p.123).

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Presented as a series of reading keys, the chapters allow you to decode progressively a "black box" (p.79) relating to the language and codes of urbanism. Several evocative metaphors play, like this one, a valuable role not only to convince conceptually, but also to clarify the way whose urbanism is conceived in Villiers-sur-Marne. To not detract from their strength, the book would nevertheless have gained in reducing the number in order to deepen its proposal theoretical. Convinced that it is imperative to work towards greater transparency and for easy access to databases [s](#) , Dominique Lorrain produces here a book the scope of which is based on its call for greater clarity for residents and stakeholders the layout in the face of language - often abstruse according to him - of urban planning. On the one hand, Dominique Lorrain, Urbanism 1.0. Investigation of a municipality of Greater Paris Readings, Reviews

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The housing market is, in his eyes, difficult to decipher in this commune. small, but in full transformation; and his book shows how to develop tools to apprehend the housing factory on a sufficiently fine scale to get hold of the metropolitan political game. On the other, the author notes an offset misleading between the will to adopt innovative practices - which he calls tools and networks of urban planning actors 3.0 - and the eponymous reality of urbanism 1.0. In the problem of metropolitan governance struggling with local entanglement of old codes still largely anchored [e](#) .

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This book is therefore both a field book and a toolbox. A ordinary commune becomes the point of departure for a proposal which will not interest only the student in urban planning fond of methodological tools or the practitioner in search for details on a precedent. It is also a source of useful reading keys for all Villiérain who seeks to understand the development operations likely to impact his daily life.

NOTES

[1](#). Paquot Thierry, "Paris is no longer a literary myth. Or how to reconnect with an imaginary Parisian? ", *Spirit* , 2008, n ° 10, p. 145.

2. See Lascoumes Pierre and Le Galès Patrick (eds.), *Governing by Instruments* , Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2005 and The Galès Patrick, *The return of European cities* , Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2003.

3. See Julie Pollard, *State, promoter and mayor. Housing Policy Making* , Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2018, Margot Delon review for *Lectures* available online: <https://journals.openedition.org/lectures/26073>.

4. Division of an urban area into zones, fixing for each of them the functions and rules of land use.

5. For example, building permits and commercial data disseminated by promoters.

6. See Enright Theresa, *The Making of Greater Paris: Metropolitan Urbanism in the Twenty-First Century* , Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2016.

AUTHOR

MAGDA MAAOUI

Magda Maaoui is a PhD student in Urban Planning at Columbia University, Associate Professor of Geography and

former student of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon. His approach is comparative (America North, Europe) and its methodological tools are mixed (both quantitative and qualitative).

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His research focuses on the circulation of urban planning and zoning models, the impact of housing policies on socio-spatial segregation and gentrification, as well as the role of Urban planning actors, public and private, in the production of large real estate projects.

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