



The Primacy of Residential Quality in Urban Creation. A Current Observation on a Recurring Notion

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Sten Gromark

SUMMARY As a current observation this contribution intends to situate origins of the notion of the primacy of residential quality in urban creation in a historical context before May '68 and to show the relevance and actuality of this concept in emerging contemporary projective urban architectural practices. This is done through a retrospective re-reading of a major research contribution of architectural residential sociology elaborated by Henri Raymond and his team of ISU directed by Henri Lefebvre. A summary of results were published in 1966 as *l'Habitat pavillonnaire* and re-published in 2001 with the three different components together with the never published applied methodological instruction for inquiries of deep interviews with residents in suburban single family urban zones. This groundbreaking qualitative interpretive approach in social sciences with repercussions in residential architectural design orientations is regarded by the author as a still valid example of how social sciences can provide a more profound understanding of residents' perceptions of their spatio-social residential situation, *hábitat y habitar*, than what the standard survey can offer for design guidance.

KEY WORDS urban residential studies; suburban zones; sociological methods of interpretative enquiries; architectural sociology; biographical qualitative research; Henri Raymond; Henri Lefebvre

RESUMEN Como observación actual, esta contribución pretende situar los orígenes de la idea de la primacía de la calidad residencial de la creación urbana en un contexto histórico antes de mayo del 68 y mostrar la relevancia y la actualidad de este concepto en las prácticas arquitectónicas urbanas contemporáneas emergentes. Esto se aborda a través de una retrospectiva de la importante contribución a la investigación de la arquitectura residencial de la sociología elaborada por Henri Raymond y su equipo de ISU, dirigido por Henri Lefebvre. Un resumen de los resultados se publicó en 1966 como *l' Habitat pavillonnaire*, reeditado en 2001 en sus tres volúmenes, junto con la metodología aplicada y nunca antes aplicada de entrevistas a residentes en zonas urbanas unifamiliares suburbanas. Este método de interpretación cualitativa innovador en ciencias sociales con repercusiones en las orientaciones de diseño arquitectónico residencial, es considerado por el autor como un ejemplo que sigue siendo válido de cómo las ciencias sociales pueden ofrecer una comprensión más profunda de la percepción que los residentes tienen de su situación espacio-social residencial, *hábitat y habitar*, a lo que la encuesta estándar se ofrecen como guía de diseño.

PALABRAS CLAVE estudios urbanos residenciales; zonas suburbanas; los métodos sociológicos de las investigaciones interpretativas; sociología arquitectónica, investigación cualitativa biográfica; Henri Raymond; Henri Lefebvre

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IN A CONTEXT OF URBAN RESIDENTIAL SOCIOLOGY:
HENRI RAYMOND

In contemporary social history of architecture concerning the post war period the May events in Paris 1968 were crucial moments of a genuine rethinking of the social in architecture but with the main focus directed towards the emerging urban society. Of the many seminal contributions to this rethinking, premature to the actual events, the prime example of Henri Lefebvre and *The Right to the City* was produced in the midst of upcoming student protest movement located to a great extent at his own university in Nanterre¹. Other similar books contributing to the situation were in particular by Guy Debord with *The Society of the Spectacle* from 1967 with his strong but conflictual relation to Lefebvre². We must also in this context mention Lefebvre's assistant Jean Baudrillard with his early focus on the emerging iconic turn and the society of consumption³. Other related later celebrated events concern Michel Foucault on *Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias*

from the lecture in 1967 extensively referred to and finally published many years later⁴ but also the less acknowledged but sometimes mentioned early contribution of Gilles Deleuze: *Différence et répétition*, in many ways distantly echoing in slogans on the streets and in graffiti on walls during the uprisings like '*méto, boulot, dodo*' or '*vive la différence*'⁵.

But there is yet another event in the intellectual world amidst these intense and creative moments of upcoming eruptions that has a more obscure but to my mind crucial position in this image of the decisive years leading up to the situation that spring in Paris. Even if dedicated and limited to residential problems and not directed towards a general audience perhaps this research played an even more influential role in the aftermath of this society suddenly struck by great turmoil, of political convictions, philosophies and architectures profoundly re-questioned and re-formulated. That moment is the publication of *l'Habitat pavillonnaire* in 1966, of the sociologist Henri

1. Lefebvre, Henri: *Writings on Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006 [1996]; Lefebvre, Henri: *Le droit à la ville suivi de Espace et politique*. Éditions Anthropos, 1968.
2. Debord, Guy: *La Société du Spectacle*. Paris: Gallimard, 1992 [1967, 1971].
3. Baudrillard, Jean: *Le système des objets*. Paris: Gallimard, coll. tel, 1968.
4. Foucault, Michel: "Des espaces autres. Hétérotopies". *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, 1984. pp. 46-49.
5. Deleuze, Gilles: *Différence et répétition*. Paris: P.U.F., 1968.

Raymond and his transdisciplinary team of the research institute ISU⁶, as a summary of results from the research work initiated in 1964 and carried out in 1965⁷. It is no exaggeration that in spite of being limited to the fairly isolated French cultural sphere this book has definitely had a substantial and groundbreaking influence on the practice of residential architectural design and on applied methodologies in the related social sciences.

This major undercurrent contribution to reflections on the urban question from another and, to the opinion of many observers, too microscopic point of view, with the primacy of residential qualities in the foreground, has not seen any translations in contrast to most of the others mentioned above. Thereby it has been largely ignored and forgotten at least in the English speaking academia. Fortunately it was ultimately republished in France in 2001 in the three original components by the different authors in the team, all initially directed under the fatherly auspices of Henri Lefebvre with his lengthy foreword to the whole endeavour. In the reedited version is also added a foreword by the authors themselves indicating how they perceive of their work in historical hindsight.

On top of that the methodological background and backbone to this whole sociological endeavour authored by Henri Raymond –that has never before been published –was also added the same year: *Paroles d'habitants. Une méthode d'analyse*⁸. This is a precise methodological instruction that generation after generation of sociological students and researchers have probably been referring to

in tarnished photocopied editions. This text was actually Henri Raymond's unpublished dissertation, *Thèse de Doctorat*, with Lefebvre as director, in 1970, initially published 1968, but conceived as early as 1966 also as the other components of this whole contribution⁹.

Lefebvre has been accused to construct his urban theory on very loose empirical grounds or even solely on pure speculation. It has however recently been argued in a thesis by Łukasz Stanek based on a thorough analysis pointing in the opposite direction by shedding much more light on the supportive role of Raymond. Lefebvre in many regards actually grounded his urban concepts on insights of the conditions in residential situations like the ones studied by Raymond and his transdisciplinary team. Raymond clearly states that Lefebvre put high priority on urban issues while he was directly himself ordered by the master to primarily focus on residential aspects with his team¹⁰.

The whole biographical profile of Henri Raymond as the person replacing the famous professor Henri Lefebvre in his chair at Nanterre X suburban university west of Paris and as a teacher in Belleville School of Architecture in Paris has been recently pictured in full personal and sometimes extremely frank detail in conversations with his former student and collaborator, the professor and architect Jean-Pierre Frey with the translated title *The Discourse of a Sociologist: Towards an Architectural History the Society*. This exceptional, precious source and generous account of a unique academic personality brings us the very voice and un-muted discourse of the sociologist himself¹¹.

6. The members of the team were Henri Raymond, sociologist, Nicole Haumont, psycho-sociologist, Marie-Geneviève Dezès (formerly M-G Dezès-Raymond), political scientist, Antoine Haumont, geographer.

7. The original research was developed within ISU, Institut de Sociologie Urbaine, and published by CRU/CSTB in three different volumes, all later reprinted on l'Harmattan editions in 2001 with added updated comments and new foreword by the authors Raymond, Henri, Nicole Haumont, Marie-Geneviève Dezès, and Antoine Haumont: *L'Habitat pavillonnaire. Préface des auteurs. Préface de Henri Lefebvre*. 4^e ed. Paris: l'Harmattan [CRU; Centre de recherche d'urbanisme], 2001 [1966, 1979]; Dezès, Marie-Geneviève: *La politique pavillonnaire*. Paris: l'Harmattan [CRU], 2001 [1966]; Haumont, Nicole: *Les pavillonnaires*. Paris: l'Harmattan [CRU], 2001 [1966]. This re-publication event also included the simultaneous first publication of Henri Raymond's reflections on the applied methodology Raymond, Henri: *Paroles d'habitants. Une méthode d'analyse*: L'Harmattan 2001.

8. Raymond: *Paroles d'habitants. Une méthode d'analyse*.

9. Raymond, Henri: "Analyse du contenu et entretien non directif." *Revue Française de Sociologie*, no. Avril-Juin, 1968. pp. IX-2.

10. Stanek, Łukasz: *Henri Lefebvre and the Concrete Research of Space: Urban Theory, Empirical Studies, Architecture Practice*. [diss.]. Delft: Delft University of Technology, 2008; Stanek, Łukasz: *Henri Lefebvre on Space: Architecture, Urban Research, and the Production of Theory*. Minneapolis/London: Univ of Minnesota Press 2011; Gromark, Sten: "A Third Wave of Receptions: Space as Concrete Abstraction, Łukasz Stanek on Henri Lefebvre." In *Site magazine 'Senses'*, 2013a, pp. 245-52.

11. Frey, Jean-Pierre: *Henri Raymond. Paroles d'un sociologue. Vers une histoire architecturale de la société*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006; Stébé, Jean-Marc: *Architecture, Urbanistique et Sociétés, Idéologies et représentations dans le monde urbain. Hommage à Henri Raymond*. Paris: L'Harmattan 2002.

With this orientation towards residential realities and *ways of residing*¹² as conditions for urban creation on a far wider scale Raymond initiated a concept that we see reiterated in parts of contemporary practice even if the residential aspects of urban reflections in general sometimes seem almost totally lost. Henri Raymond formulated the principle, as I see it, of the *primacy of residential quality in urban creation* –the notion that the dedication to secure residential qualities at all levels and materialising dreams of the unthinkable must be at the core of any kind of urban invention or imagination–.

As Raymond puts it himself:

*"Our experience with les pavillonnaires*¹³ *arrived at an absolutely fundamental final assessment: There existed a distinct residential culture that was far beyond the conventional contours of class cultures. This was made perfectly clear*"¹⁴.

THE PARISIAN SUBURBAN WAY OF LIFE – 'LES PAVILLONNAIRES'

In the research programme initiated by 1964 Raymond and his team engaged with a fundamental question that might be coined as the *Residential Question* in relation to the original Housing Question once raised by Marx and Engels as they focused on the housing conditions of the working classes in their early political thinking. The programme was basically concerned with the relation between individual isolated ways of residing and collective concentrated ways of residing, of the virtues or traps of dispersed single family residential patterns or dense mass housing concentrations: A contested focal point of intense debate within the social sciences and the design

and planning professions. But the final conclusion of the involved researchers in historical hindsight reveals that this contradiction is less a question of different virtues or deficiencies of the two models, individual and collective, but rather what had been revealed through the research was the need of "...an architectural concept that enables and empowers the inhabitants becoming the masters of their own residential situation, not to be dependent on the outside world, being in control of the most intimate residential spheres of a home"¹⁵.

Their unique approach and the decision to mainly focus their research on suburban detached residential areas –'les zones pavillonnaires'– was most courageous because at this point in time when these vast areas of low rise suburban detached houses 'sprawled' out in the Paris agglomeration with ever greater pace they were generally met with scorn and harsh criticism from a radical left wing intelligentsia; considered as an urban nightmare and a political trap ever since the early days of Le Corbusier, still repeated today considered as a 'suburban hell zone' on earth¹⁶. But they consciously took the opportunity to seriously challenge this established opinion and decided to let the *pavillonnaires* themselves have a say in this, in order for the researchers to discover and to unfold the basic symbolic and spatial realities of residents in these areas.

The background to this was the major initial and commonly known fact in this matter –still as active– that the general opinion on different residential preferences and as dream choices clearly preferred the single family ideal as early as 1947 to the degree of 72 per cent¹⁷. In spite of this, in France, the whole political and technocratic ideological establishment independent of party positions

12. The concept of *ways of residing* has been elaborated by Professor of Sociology Katrin Paadam cf. Paadam, Katrin: "Understanding distinctions in ways of residing: the socio-physicality of relations and capacity." In Lehtovuori, M.; Ilmonen, P.; Pakarinen, T.(eds.): *Prospectūs. Kirjoituksia kaupungista ja suunnittelusta*, Espoo: Helsinki University of Technology, 2007

13. *Suburban single family residents*; the French word *pavillonnaires* is difficult to translate but it refers to populations of residents in vast suburban structures of modest detached single family houses. The word *pavillon* means a small and light building, originally a military term for a battle field tent, but it could also mean *flag*; so indirectly it connotes symbolically to a residence where you may raise your flag, literally, *lever pavillon*, a place where you are fully resident.

14. Frey, Jean-Pierre: *Henri Raymond. Paroles d'un sociologue. Vers une histoire architecturale de la société*. Op.Cit., p. 140. Authors italics.

15. Raymond, Henri; Haumont, Nicole; Raymond, Marie-Geneviève; Haumont, Antoine: *L'Habitat pavillonnaire. Préface des auteurs. Préface de Henri Lefebvre*. 4^e ed. Op. Cit., p. 1.

16. Debry, Jean-Luc: *L'Enfer pavillonnaire*. Paris: l'échappée, 2012.

17. Raymond, Henri; Haumont, Nicole; Raymond, Marie-Geneviève; Haumont, Antoine: *L'Habitat pavillonnaire. Préface des auteurs. Préface de Henri Lefebvre*. 4^e ed. Op. Cit., p. 1.

–even so in general in the larger international context e.g. Sweden– for different reasons predominantly advocated the intensified and highly subsidised construction of high rise collective social or council housing estates.

A major conclusion drawn from the research concerning this issue was that any attempt to build collective housing ignoring the fundamental and universal opinions and desires discovered in the suburban single family housing world were doomed to failure. Many French architects have tried to apply these principles to provide or to simulate single family residential qualities in collective residential projects providing a much wider scope of typological offers.

As Raymond himself formulates it this was the time when the *user* –‘usager’– was invented that led to quite an ‘obsession’ with this unknown conceptual and mysterious figure: ‘What is he thinking? What does he want? How is he responding? And if he doesn’t answer what should we think of it?’¹⁸ The prime questions for sociologists to answer in service of architects designing residential structures was what his basic *needs* were as articulated in interviews but this soon later rather turned into an identification of insatiable *desires* and envisageable new modes of appropriation.

In many ways this initiated, due to the great demand for a social orientation in the world of architecture post ‘68, the starting point of a sometimes difficult but also sometimes exceptionally creative relation between sociologists and architects as the former profession step by step entered into the educational systems of architecture but that hardly or rarely the opposite ever happened. Henri Raymond is perhaps the foremost illustration of this new relation between sociology and architecture as he entered the role of a teacher and professor at the Belleville School of Architecture, the current EASPB, and worked in close cooperation, in research projects and teaching, with the founding father of the school after 1968, the legendary architect and teacher Bernard Huet.

It has always been the wish of architects to have precise advices from the social sciences on how to design, if, on the other hand, they did not simply arrogantly declare –as some did– they know the best by way of design intuition. Architects are considered in the eyes of sociologists to regard the results or social impact of built residential structural or symbolic projections with very superficial eyes and it would indeed be an advantage to provide occasions for a more thorough investigation on residents’ actual reception of designs, the design *effects* or *defects* of initiated or imposed designs for *affect*. The research led by Raymond was in no way so precise but it definitely generated another way of relating to the unknown user. The applied methodology at least offered much more of a knowledgeable insight for creative support to designers than the standard survey on preferences.

The main research question addressed by Raymond and his team could be reduced to the study of the dynamic interrelations between ways of life or rather ways of residing and residential types, between social agencies and material structures. The main predecessors in this field are the classics of urban sociology as mentioned by the authors like Willmott and Young but particularly in France by Chombart de Lauwe. This approach has also within and confined to the French context been substantially unfolded by the longitudinal research conducted by Monique Eleb and Anne Debarre with very recent and relevant contributions on the topic¹⁹.

A NON-DIRECTED INTERPRETIVE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY: BETWEEN NUMBERS AND DISCOURSES

As Raymond explains it, at the origin of the research project was the most favourable situation for research in France in the early 60’s and in particular at the CSTB, the national construction and building research institute, and the related research agency CRU, Centre de Recherche

18. Frey, Jean-Pierre: *Henri Raymond. Paroles d’un sociologue. Vers une histoire architecturale de la société*. Op. Cit., p. 124.

19. Willmott, Peter; Young, Michael: *Family and class in a London suburb*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1960.; Chombart de Lauwe, Pierre-Henri: *La vie quotidienne des familles ouvrières*. Paris, 1956; Eleb, Monique; Philippe, Simon: *Entre confort, désir et normes. Le logement contemporain (1995–2012)*. Bruxelles: Mardaga, 2013; Eleb, Monique; Debarre, Anne: *L’invention de l’habitation moderne. Paris, 1880–1914. Architectures de la vie privée. Suite*. [Introduction de Michelle Perrot.]. Bruxelles: Hazan/AAM, 1995 [2000]; Eleb, Monique; Debarre, Anne: *Architectures de la vie privée: maisons et mentalités, XVII–XIXe s.* Bruxelles: Archives d’architecture moderne/AAM/Hazan, 1989.

d’Urbanisme. Raymond was active in ISU, Institut de Sociologie Urbaine with Lefebvre as the leading figure. Following some former experiences of the same kind of research together with Nicole Haumont, a sociologist with experience of and a profile in psychosocial issues, they fairly easily convinced the leadership of CSTB, the planner Jean Canaux, and the CRU to fund a huge project dedicated to deep interview inquiries with residents in suburban areas with owner occupied detached houses, *les zones pavillonnaires*. The team was composed of the two mentioned first and foremost but included also Antoine Haumont, a geographer and the, according to Raymond, brilliant young political scientist Marie-Geneviève Dezès, that he actually also was married to for a shorter period.

The major axis of orientation for this research was the study of urban ways of life that implied two predominant aspects; the massive urban development on one side and on the other how this drastic transformation was experienced in the urban residential life worlds of residents. A secondary focus was put to address the urgent contradiction between citizens’ massive preferences for individual housing while the official political ideology favoured collective mass housing.

It is interesting to see in the report finally submitted, with the profound analysis of the life of *les pavillonnaires*, how the perception of collective housing in their minds comes out as a sharp contrasting anti-image and reflection in the mirror:

*“For pavillonnaire ideology, actually, collective housing represents disorder. The multiplications of social relations (besides being illusory) that could be the result of the presence of all and anyone is perceived as a dangerous hazard; the multiplicity of apartments is the source of a mixture equally hazardous that the pavillonnaire refuses. The neighbor is imposed. He is the result of a ‘someone’ that has put him there”*²⁰.

Scientifically the project was initiated with a clear profile and approach towards specifically qualitative or interpretative sociological inquiries –from numbers to

resident’s discourses– while at the time the positivist attitude reigned almost unchallenged within the world of social sciences with some rare exemptions represented by that time according to Raymond by Lefebvre indeed but also by the professor of sociology Raymond Aron. The main essential ambition of the research design was “... *to establish a simple method that would make it possible to classify interrelations between spaces and social practices...*” characterising predominant ways of residing in the suburban areas in question. The ambition was in particular to be looking for ‘structured responses’ identifying universal perceptions of residential realities, “...*what by that time was called a structure that related the spatial elements with the social elements...*” when people tended to answer repeatedly the same way to the same questions²¹.

A key to the realisation of this approach, to be conducted in extensive numbers, the over 300 non directed qualitative interview situations, was the capacity of the personnel engaged and hired particularly for this task. Nicole Haumont had the important key role with responsibilities for the organisation and the implementation of field work. The sensitive mission to make interviewees talk freely and with ease was of highest importance and a decisive condition for providing and collecting qualitative, relevant and valid responses. So the whole project initiated an important attempt at operationalisation of an interpretative, hermeneutic, reading of speech statements or utterances, of *la parole*,²² from residents, providing a more profound qualitative insight in residential life worlds. What was particularly discovered with some surprise in this context was that interviewees always tended to move unhindered and erratically without boundaries from symbolic levels to actual spatial and material levels of considerations –a fact that supported the strong mental unity of these levels of perception. In the end analysis much focus was put on oppositions or dualities and even triangular conceptualisations, searching for universalities beyond the actual local conditions in the residential situations so observed–.

20. Raymond, Henri; Haumont, Nicole; Raymond, Marie-Geneviève; Haumont, Antoine: *L’habitat pavillonnaire [Préface d’Henri Lefebvre]* 3^e ed. Paris: CRU Centre de Recherche d’Urbanisme, 1979 [1966]. p. 130. Author’s italics

21. Frey, Jean-Pierre: *Henri Raymond. Paroles d’un sociologue. Vers une histoire architecturale de la société*. Op. Cit., pp. 86–87.

22. Raymond uses the key word *la parole*, difficult to translate, could be *word* or *speech*, like *in the words of the resident*, in theoretical terms maybe *discourse*.

The role of Henri Lefebvre in this whole grand sociological undertaking was quite superficial and distanced according to Raymond.

"...Lefebvre indeed was the somewhat distant boss of the whole project, but he was following it from the planet of Sirius. He wrote a preface à la Lefebvre that did not have much in common with *Les Pavillonnaires*"²³.

In spite of this, to conclude, I believe that the story of *L'Habitat Pavillonnaire* 1966 is just not simply academic history – it is so much more. It has a valid bearing on currently recurring notions and perspectives so the questions addressed in this recently freshly reprinted material is still very relevant.

The main scientific contribution of Henri Raymond and indirectly to a different and richer explorative research climate in sociology and architecture, the golden years of architectural research as he puts it himself, was indeed the work on *Les pavillonnaires*. This effort evidently has had wide repercussions in following research initiatives of the same kind ever since. The re-publication of these texts is a sign of more than just historical recognition and is in many respects still a fully valid source of inspiration devoted to the provision of a far more substantial insight to the residential realities of contemporary society.

ARCHITECTURE, THE SPATIAL ADVENTURES OF REASON & BAROQUE URBANISM

Henri Raymond's continued research career amounted primarily in his ultimate thesis, Thèse d'Habilitation, published in 1984 as *L'Architecture; Les Aventures Spatiales de la Raison*, again with Lefebvre as director and with Huet and Le Roy Ladurie among others as jury members²⁴. This time the methodology is applied to collective mass housing of the famous project by architect Émile Aillaud and *La Grande Borne* (1964–71), the snake like social housing structures south of the Paris urban agglomeration. This is a full-fledged heavy theoretical argument, referring to the vast spectrum of intellectual considerations of architecture

from a social science perspective in the Latin language context, based on empirical evidence and interpretations of residents' perceptions of this quite unusual residential situation. 'We are here confronted with prisoners discussing the formal qualities of their premises' is a typical sardonic quote from these reflections²⁵.

Another part of his contribution to research on architecture in a historical context, in his collaboration with Bernard Huet and Liane Dufour, led to the fascinating account of the resurrection of baroque architecture grand urban designs on Sicily and the Val di Noto after the earthquake 1693²⁶.

A quite striking and particular feature in Raymond's relation to the rich intellectual environment in the Paris post war academia that he has been working within is his relation to Pierre Bourdieu. Their joint orientations are turning around the growing importance of *symbolic exchange* in cultural and social interaction. They were actually for some time also colleagues as young assistants at the Sorbonne University. They both shared the notion and strong focus on symbolic social interaction mediated by material culture. Pierre Bourdieu's initial work related to significations of a traditional residential life world in Algeria has much in common with Raymond's great attention to modern western residential realities. The introduction of *symbolic transgression* developed late in the life of Pierre Bourdieu in his *Pascalian Meditations* has many relations to similar discussions around processes of spatial appropriation and domination or denigration, thus relating to spatially and materially mediated relations of power²⁷.

A CURRENTLY RECURRING NOTION – A SUCCINCT STRATEGY OF '...PLANNING FROM THE INSIDE OUT...'

The main conclusion of Raymond's work pointing in the direction that knowledge on the way residents perceive their residential situation is crucial for the design of residential architecture but also represents the fundamental prerequisites for a successful urban intervention.

23. Frey, Jean-Pierre: *Henri Raymond. Paroles d'un sociologue. Vers une histoire architecturale de la société*. Op. Cit., p. 88.

24. Raymond, Henri: *L'Architecture – les Aventures Spatiales de la Raison*. Paris: CCI, 1984.

25. Ibidem p. 222.

26. Dufour, Liane; Huet, Bernard; Raymond, Henri: *1693, val di Noto; Urbanistique et Sociétés Baroque. Rapport de Recherche*. Paris: CORDA / DGRST, 1977.

27. Bourdieu, Pierre: *Zur Soziologie der Symbolischen Formen*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970; Bourdieu, Pierre: *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique, précédé de trois études d'ethnologie kabyle*. Genève: Éditions Droz, 1972; Bourdieu, Pierre: *Pascalian Meditations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006 [En 2000, Fr orig 1997].

This attitude, towards the primacy of residential qualities in urban creation, has recently been reformulated in projective practice by architects Druot, Lacaton & Vassal. It is a currently recurring notion from the past worth reiterating. This principle of 'planning from the inside out' is revalidated as confirmed recently in a published discussion with Anne Lacaton: "...an apartment is the first step...we are convinced that the question of urban planning should be totally changed and that architecture should be the first step in urban planning..."²⁸ Frédéric Druot is also quite expressive when he in a recent discussion summarises this perspective in the drastically formulated principle of "...urbanism begins in the bedroom...".

This strategy has been implemented to a large degree in the extensive discussions with inhabitants premature to the realisation of *Tour Bois-le-Prêtre* in Paris. It seems even that this demanding and exhausting procedure getting to know the unknown user of every one of the hundred apartments and their relevant needs and desires could be conceived as the key condition for the great success of this unique refurbishment project at least as measured in professional and public recognition²⁹.

A lot of other tendencies in the contemporary architectural world indicate a return to residential quality as the prime basic component of urban life qualities. The high ambition of the municipality of Bordeaux to initiate a consultation for an urban residential strategy to a number of teams, with Druot, Lacaton & Vassal included, described as an 'upside down commission' asking the architects first and foremost to define their urban proposals by defining desired residential qualities to be obtained. The CUB

Urban Prospective Commission is starting its mission in this unusual way as described below, initiating a grand strategy for *residential resilience*³⁰.

"The commission for architecture, urbanism and landscape is focused on a strategic research how 50,000 new apartments can be created within the Bordeaux urban conglomeration, the CUB. The mission should take into account the obstacles and the dispersal of urban development, the reduction of costs for commuting, the reduction of green house gases and the reduction in urban infrastructure investments. It will give a response on how to solve the housing shortage to secure accessibility for all citizens, to guarantee its diversity and its generosity. The proposal explores an inventory of all existing situations, enabling within the limits of the same economy to transform the existing most fragile housing stock and to produce on appropriate and viable terrains new housing and services. Without demolishing, without cutting, without disorganising the existing situations, without master planning but carefully considering case by case in detail and with precision, delicacy, consideration and attention"³¹.

Added to this the former *Grand Pari(s)* project initiated by former French president Sarkozy now takes another direction from transportation towards housing in focus with Hollande as president. Fifteen teams are working on strategies for the development of the Paris agglomeration now re-titled as *Habiter le Grand Paris*. The intention is to produce 70,000 housing units per year in Ile-de-France in order to reach a territorial balance of habitation and work and "to make housing a tool for urban development and territorial equalities"³².

28. Paadam, Katrin: "Interview with Anne Lacaton/Vestlius arhitekt Anne Lacatoniga." *MAJA (EE)*, no. 2 (76), 2013, p. 11.

29. Gromark, Sten: "A Case of Symbolic Transgression." In *NJA Nordic Journal of Architecture 'Alterations'* 2, winter 2012 no. 3 (2013): pp. 94–98; Ruby, Ilka, and Andreas Ruby, eds: *Druot, Lacaton & Vassal – Tour Bois Le Prêtre*. Berlin: German Architecture Museum (DAM) & Ruby Press, 2012.

30. Désveaux, Delphine; Siron, Véronique; Lussault, Michel: *Avec vue sur la métropole: 50 000 logements autour des axes de transports collectifs de l'agglomération bordelaise*. Paris: Archibooks 2013.

31. <http://www.lacatonvassal.com/index.php?idp=74#> accessed 8/8 2013; Fr orig. 'La mission d'architecture, d'urbanisme et de paysage porte sur la recherche stratégique et la faisabilité de 50 000 logements nouveaux sur le territoire de la CUB. La mission prend en compte l'enrayement de l'étalement urbain, la réduction des dépenses dues aux déplacements, la réduction de la production de gaz à effet de serre, la réduction de l'investissement et des charges urbaines. Elle apporte une réponse à la question du logement, à son accessibilité pour tous, à sa diversité, à sa générosité. La proposition dresse l'inventaire des situations existantes, s'attache dans une même économie à transformer les logements existants les plus fragiles et produire sur les territoires viabilisés les nouveaux logements et services. Sans démolir, sans couper, sans désorganiser les situations existantes, sans master plan mais au cas par cas, petit à petit, avec précision, délicatesse et attention.'

32. <http://www.lemoniteur.fr/133-amenagement/article/actualite/20560339-grand-paris-le...> accessed 2013-07-05

CONCLUSION – TOWARDS INTEGRATIVE WAYS OF RESIDING?

We might conclude that these related events points towards the relevance and persistent validity of the urban residential approach once adopted by Henri Raymond, Nicole Haumont, Marie–Geneviève Dezès and Antoine Haumont with Henri Lefebvre; only that today the huge problem ahead is primarily to turn the existing modern era mass housing into decent and resilient qualities of living as has been pointed at in the ambitious CUB project in Bordeaux.

And what has happened in social housing construction since the early sixties? Isn't it a persistent search for intermediate forms of housing, mixing of types and hybrid solutions trying to reconcile the purely individual with the extreme collective, as integrative ways of residing combining programme components.

In relation to the 60ies the current residential situation at large is, in many regards and according to many sources, characterised by processes of both accelerating individualisation and accentuated fragmentation of lifestyles. We should therefore move towards residential solutions of integration searching for *integrative* ways of residing in renewed patterns of *hybridisation*, e.g. bringing different complementary user demands together in new synergetic urban residential contexts³³. Recently articulated extended demands on housing encountered by providers and users alike have led to a number of experimental residential realisations at the very edge of radical invention. These are sometimes encompassing situations of healthcare, ageing and dwelling in new ways and surprising constellations of programmatic components. When these life spheres and life phases are brought together in urban residential situations, in different combinations, it

becomes very clear in what way and to what extent they can potentially make a significant difference. The virtually added value and decisive impact resulting from these integrative ambitions, in terms of resilient residential quality, becomes strikingly evident especially when supported by qualitative and innovative structural, architectural and esthetical contributions of symbolic character³⁴.

As an extreme and intrepid expression of such tendencies mixing in an almost surrealistic manner and with a lot of irony three predominant residential typologies into one building –terraced town houses as foundation, mass housing slabs in between and detached individual family houses on top combined with integrated commercial and public premises– is Eduard François' project *Urban Collage* in Champigny–sur–Marne 2012³⁵.

Another current example of programmatic component micro mixture is architects Casanova & Hernández finalising a winning entry to EuroPan 6 competition, '*Hybrid Apartment Block*' in Groningen, Holland, 2013. This apartment tower, eight–stories in height, contains 41 apartments with 16 'Fokus' housing units for disabled people.

The final lines and ultimate conclusion in *L'Habitat pavillonnaire* from 1966 had an optimistic message to purvey, still valid after soon almost 50 years passed of residential architectural social history:

*"The residential plasticity, the perfection of technologies, and the imagination of architects and urbanists makes it possible, whatever strategy adopted, to materialize apartments adapted to the profound needs of residents. It is thus relevant to challenge the modernist self–confidence, and to soften it up, in order to make housing all over again what is has been for long periods of time: an unconscious, oblivious, but very important collective creation"*³⁶. ■

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36. Raymond, Haumont, Dezès, and Haumont: *L'Habitat pavillonnaire. Préface des auteurs. Préface de Henri Lefebvre*. 4^e ed. p. 114. All translations to English in this article from French original texts is done by the author.

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