

**Antoine Paccoud**

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**Article (Accepted version)  
(Refereed)**

**Original citation:**

Paccoud, Antoine (2018) Badiou, Haussmann and Saint-Simon: opening spaces for the state and planning between ‘post-politics’ and urban insurgencies. [Planning Theory](#). ISSN 1473-0952  
DOI: [10.1177/1473095218764224](https://doi.org/10.1177/1473095218764224)

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This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/87469/>  
Available in LSE Research Online: April 2018

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# Badiou, Haussmann and Saint-Simon: opening spaces for the state and planning between 'post-politics' and urban insurgencies

**Antoine Paccoud**

Luxembourg Institute for Socio-Economic Research (LISER), Luxembourg; The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK

[antoine.paccoud@liser.lu](mailto:antoine.paccoud@liser.lu)

## ABSTRACT

The post-political literature – which equates 'the political' with insurgencies directed against the state – has only limited relevance for planning, focused as it is on the ways in which conflict is displaced from the functioning of the state apparatus. The post-political literature has however neglected a significant change in Alain Badiou's conceptualisation of the relation between the political and the state: the introduction of a political subject which acts from the within the state – what he calls the state revolutionary. This figure, which makes 'evental' planning possible, is fleshed out through a Saint-Simonian reading of Haussmann's planning practice in his first years as Prefect of the Seine.

**Keywords:** Alain Badiou, haussmannisation, Paris, planning event, post-politics, Saint-Simon, the state

## INTRODUCTION: POST-POLITICS AND PLANNING

This article contributes to the discussion on the relevance of the post-political turn for planning. The way in which the state has been equated with 'politics' – as opposed to 'the political' (Swyngedouw, 2014) – in this body of work has so far limited the usefulness of these ideas for planning. The central argument of this contribution is that the work of contemporary philosopher Alain Badiou provides a means to think about the state as a possible vehicle for 'the political'. His work on events – moments when inequitable power relations are bracketed out by an individual or group striving for equality – has been used to think through what have been called urban political insurgencies (Dikeç and Swyngedouw, 2017). However, in *Logics of Worlds* (originally published in 2006; translated into English in 2009), Badiou posits that events can be brought about by two 'evental' figures, one working against the state (the mass rebel) and the other working from within the state (the state

revolutionary). While the figure of the state revolutionary has been neglected by Badiou's proponents (Bassett, 2016; Swyngedouw, 2011) and critics alike (Hannah, 2016), it has a lot to offer to those working on the politics of planning.

This is because the figure of the state revolutionary complicates the consensus/conflict dichotomy that has crystallised opposition to the reception of the work of Jacques Rancière and Alain Badiou (among others) in the social sciences – both of which draw a distinction between the everyday modifications that take place in parliamentary democracies and those moments in which the pursuit of equality brings about a significant reworking of the social order. This is a dichotomy that has been found to be unhelpful in that it obscures the myriad political practices that occur in between these two forms (Beveridge and Koch, 2017; Bylund, 2012; Hannah, 2016; Legacy, 2016). The issue is that the reception of these ideas, drawn from interpretations of Rancière (Dikeç, 2005) and from more polemical texts by Badiou himself, has been accompanied by a 'fixing' of places: the democratic state is associated with consensus – through the operation of post-politics (Oosterlynck and Swyngedouw, 2010) – and that which lays outside of it with conflict in the form of urban political insurgencies (Dikeç and Swyngedouw, 2017). The figure of the state revolutionary allows for an inversion of these 'placements': in events pushed forward by this type of subject, it is the state that becomes the vehicle of conflict and the outside which opposes the force of consensus. Badiou's work thus opens a new window in the debate on post-politics, one that pushes past the 'state phobia' that has characterised it thus far (Hannah, 2016). It parallels Metzger's (2017) suggestion that the planning office could at times be the place of the political.

The theoretical contribution of Badiou's figure of the state revolutionary is fleshed out through a reading of Haussmann's early planning practice. While Haussmann oversaw the transformation of Paris between 1853 and 1870, his tenure can be split into two distinct periods: between 1853 and 1859, Haussmann drew on Saint-Simonian ideas to force through the entrenched influence of property owners over planning; after 1859, losses in the courts handed back planning power to property owners. Little is known of Haussmann's planning practice in the first period: contemporary critiques emerged after the end of his tenure (Marx' *Civil War in France* and Zola's *La Curée* in 1871, Engels' *The Housing Question* in 1872). The strong critiques attached to the process of 'haussmannisation' also correspond to the consequences of the return of property owner influence over planning: proto-gentrification (Engels, 1942; Lefebvre, 2000; Merrifield, 2014; Smith, 1996), the consolidation of urban capitalism (Benjamin, 2002; Harvey, 2006) or the forceful imposition of order over a city (Pinheiro, 2002; Scott, 1998).

My aim here is to follow in the footsteps of the reconsideration of certain aspects of Haussmann's work in Paris carried by studies of urban history in France, most notably François Loyer's discussion of the surprising balance of the Haussmannian architectural system (Loyer, 1987), and Florence Bourrillon's detailed work on Parisian industrial quarters which tempers the usual association of the public works with worker displacement (Bourrillon, 1996). Here, the focus is on Haussmann's strategic approach to the use of planning law to align the public works with the interests of Saint-Simon's industrial class over those of idle property owners in a context of extreme wealth inequalities: in 1847 Paris, the richest 10% of decedents held 98.3% of total wealth, with a corresponding figure of 55.8% for the richest 1% – in comparison, these were respectively at 66.9% and 23.7% in 1994 (Piketty et al, 2006).

The article starts by positioning Badiou as a thinker who is indebted both to Sartre for the focus on radical agency and to Plato for the existence of universal ideas able to mobilise this agency. The discussion then moves to the progression in Badiou's thought from thinking about being to thinking about appearing. This move has important implications. As far as being-there is concerned, events are 'thinned down': instead of an ontological rupture, they are the restructuring of relations between objects in a particular local situation, however large or small this 'world' may be. The second implication is that events are no longer defined in relation to the state. Instead, events can either occur against the state or through the use of state power. This makes it possible, through the figure of the state revolutionary, to think of 'planning events'.

The article's latter half is concerned with fleshing out one possible such event, Haussmann's use of Saint-Simonian ideas early in his tenure to break the hold of property owners over planning. It starts with a brief summary of the account of Haussmann's early years in Paris developed in ANON (2016). This is followed by an introduction to the thought of Saint-Simon, the utopian socialist whose influence permeated French society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The final section confronts the characteristics of Badiou's state revolutionary with a Saint-Simonian reading of Haussmann's planning practice. Viewed in this light, this planning practice grappled with a question of universal relevance to planning: how to articulate confidence and authority within planning practices aiming to reverse deep structural inequalities?

## BADIOU'S STATE REVOLUTIONARY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING THEORY

The key to understanding the specificity of Badiou's ideas is to view his work as the unlikely combination of the insights of Plato and Jean-Paul Sartre. The founding statement of his philosophical work is that universal truths exist. The aim of *Logics of Worlds* is to show that even if one assumes that bodies and languages are the only things in the world, it remains possible to point

to the existence, as an exception, of universal truths. It is in Badiou's focus on the worldly existence of truths that his Sartrean roots become visible. This is because, "*universality is not the 'for all x' of a judgement deemed universal. For me, universality, [...] is always a construction, a procedure, which is arranged within a particular situation or world. Universality is always built with materials that are particular*"<sup>1</sup> (Badiou and Milner, 2012: 104). The crucial term here is that of 'construction', one which depends on the actions of subjects. What Badiou calls the materialist dialectic is the historical to and fro between moments of normality in which human animals are structured as bodies and languages and those unique moments when they refashion this normality in the name of a truth.

The crucial concept of Badiou's project is thus the notion of 'subject': "*in the long-run, the theme of the subject unifies my intellectual undertaking, against those who define (post)modernity by the deconstruction of this concept*" (Badiou, 2009: 522). It is the subject (called faithful) which identifies the possibilities opened up by an occurrence (the site) and which works to construct a truth. For Badiou, a truth is visible in the actions of the faithful subject, as it articulates "*four determinations: will (against socioeconomic necessity), equality (against the established hierarchies of power or wealth), confidence (against anti-popular suspicion or the fear of the masses), authority or terror (against the 'natural' free play of competition)*" (Badiou, 2009: 27). The notion of determination should be understood here as the condition of being determined, as a synonym of resoluteness. It is in this sense that a truth is a construction, a practice, forged in a particular world (Badiou's term for a local, bounded, situation).

To construct this truth, the faithful subject draws inspiration from an ideational framework circulating at the time of its constitution. The framework which structures a subject's truth is what Badiou, drawing on Lazarus (1996), calls a historical mode of politics. This corresponds to a historical sequence in which a singular political thought is deployed. Examples include: the revolutionary (1792-1794), the classist (1848-1871), the Bolshevik (1902-1917) and the dialectic (1928-1958) modes, pinned to the respective figures of Saint-Just, Marx and Engels, Lenin and Mao (Lazarus, 1996: 90-91). The faithful subject is thus that entity which uses a 'spirit of the times' to construct a practice able to effect a change in the local structure of appearances. A paradox starts to become apparent here. While the list of revolutionaries above includes a number of actors who wielded state power, Badiou has long insisted that politics should occur at a distance from the state. In *Being and Event* (originally published in 1988; translated into English in 2005) for example, the concepts used to define an event – state of the situation, presentation vs representation – all clearly point towards

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<sup>1</sup> All translations of works published in French are mine – the original French citations can be communicated in case of interest.

antagonism vis-à-vis the state. Badiou's political activism, as with undocumented migrants, is also in staunch opposition to the state.

Badiou's solution to this problem was first formalised in *Logics of Worlds*. There are two steps. The first is a displacement of the state from the definition of an event. This can be seen in Shaw's (2010) discussion of the shift from the idea of an 'event-site' in *Being and Event* to that of the 'site' in *Logics of Worlds*. The former was intrinsically linked to the state, a "halting point' that puts the State at 'arms-length'" (Shaw, 2010: 438). In contrast, the notion of the 'site' in *Logics of Worlds* is that moment when the "the non-represented reveal their existence from the desert of inexistence" (Shaw, 2010: 439) – there is no prescription as to whether this non-represented object is to be found within or outside of the state. An event is simply a reversal of the structure of appearances by which the inexistent in a world becomes maximally existent (Badiou, 2009: 377).

The second step is the split of the faithful subject into two types, distinguished by their relation to the state: the mass rebel (which he sees in Spartacus, Müntzer or Tupac Amaru) and the state revolutionary (as, for example, Robespierre, Lenin and Mao). Badiou explains in a long note in *Logics of Worlds* (Badiou, 2009: 518-522) that the state revolutionary should be understood as that subject which tries to "enact the separation between the state and revolutionary politics, with the added tension that it tries to do so from within state power" (Badiou, 2009: 521). What is crucial for Badiou is the notion of 'separation': revolutionary politics should see the state neither as its objective nor as a norm. When in the midst of an event pushed forward by a state revolutionary, state power becomes only a means to effect the reversal of the structure of appearances. For Badiou, the 'revolutionary' political orientation consists "not in an integration in the consensual figure of the constitutional state but in making the state directly serve [its] own objectives" (Badiou, 2017: 192). That is, "a truly political administration of the state subordinates all economic laws to voluntary representations, fights for equality, and combines, where the people are concerned, confidence and terror" (Badiou, 2009: 21). The use of state power must be constantly evaluated with respect to the construction of a truth, with the final goal being to push this construction "not by constantly reinforcing the authoritarian mechanisms of the state, but on the contrary by diluting the state little by little in collective deliberations, what Marx called 'the withering away of the state' in favour of 'free association'" (Badiou and Lancelin, 2017: 36). It thus seems as though the state can be a legitimate, albeit temporary, site for an event as long as state power contributes to the advancement of the truth the state revolutionary is constructing in that world

Badiou's resolution of this paradox between his political activity and his philosophical work in *Logics of Worlds* has an important implication beyond the introduction of the state revolutionary. Badiou

notes that the shift from the study of being to that of being-there: *“makes it necessary that the event is recognised or realised only through the entirety of its consequences, and not only through its ontological structure. This has the effect of thinning down the event. It ends up being what I think it is: a pure split, a moment of pure dysfunction – it needs to be reduced to this”* (Badiou, 2011: 174). From the perspective of the structure of appearances, an event occurs whenever subjects, by constructing and mobilising a truth, effect the reversal of this structure.

What is important is not only that this definition is detached from the state, but also that it is in a sense detached from a prescribed scale. This is linked to the flexibility of the concept of world, *“the place in which objects appear”* (Badiou, 2009: 598), and the staging ground for an event. Badiou provides a number of examples of worlds: for the Paris Commune, *“Paris at the end of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870”* (Badiou, 2009: 363); for the appearance of serialism, *“German music at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth”* (Badiou, 2009: 79); or simply *“the slow constitution of a demonstration at the Place de la République”* (Badiou, 2009: 199). For Badiou, a world is a local situation defined by a logic which ties all objects within it together. What is important is that *“each world has its own envelope, and this is an immanent guarantee that there is never a total ‘universe’ but an infinite amount of worlds”* (Shaw, 2010: 437). A world is thus a bounded and structured set of objects which can be potentially restructured by an event. So while Badiou uses examples of momentous transformations when discussing events, there is nothing in the logical system he develops that imposes a minimum scale on events.

There are in fact only two conditions in *Logics of Worlds* for a change in the structure of appearances to be considered an event: (1) it must effect a reversal of the structure of appearances, and (2), this reversal must be driven by a subject pushing forward a truth articulating the four determinations of will, equality, confidence and authority.

While these determinations will be discussed in more detail in the empirical section below, it is worth looking at the notion of equality a bit more closely here. This is because this determination is the one which allows for a distinction between Badiou’s ‘events’ and other, less progressive, significant changes to the social order. There are two conceptions of equality in *Logics of Worlds*. The first, more abstract, is indebted to Rancière’s equation of politics with the assumption of equality: *“Rancière’s conception of equality inspired me, and still does, because of its axiomatic power: equality is never the goal, but the principle. It is not obtained, but declared. And we can call ‘politics’ the consequences, in the historical world, of this declaration”* (Badiou, 2009: 560). This conception of equality is that it be assumed in all political action, but without it being the explicit goal of the political sequence. Setting up equality as the goal of a political sequence would be to

acknowledge that equality did not yet exist, that it was distant state that one hopes will one day be attained. Against this, Rancière states that equality is “*a point of departure, a supposition to maintain in every circumstance. Never would truth speak up for it. Never would equality exist except in its verification and at the price of being verified always and everywhere*” (Rancière, 1991: 138).

This conception of equality, drawn from Rancière, can be contrasted with another present in an illustration of the determinations in *Logics of Worlds*. Here, equality “*means that everyone is referred back to their choice, and not to their position*” (Badiou, 2009: 26). This conception is closer to the phrasing of the determination ‘equality’: *against the established hierarchies of power or wealth*. This vision of equality is clearly less concerned with ‘verification’ and more with a course of action destined to force its realisation: “*state revolutionary subjectivity is identified as an implacable struggle against the factions that arise from wealth or hereditary privilege*” (Badiou, 2009: 26). This framing of the determination equality as a course of action will be privileged in what follows: it is in line with Badiou’s focus on the ‘subject as organised action’ (as opposed to Rancière’s ‘subject as disruption’) and provides a more concrete way to gauge the ‘evental’ nature of a course of action.

These two conditions – reversal of the structure of appearances, course of action marked by the determinations – make it possible to move away from the discourse of the exceptionality of the ‘political’. From this perspective, events occur whenever a political practice, at any scale, brackets out structural constraints through actions that carry an affirmation of equality. Badiou’s *Logics of Worlds* thus opens up a number of analytical possibilities. The one that is of interest here is that it enables an application of his work to the domain of planning – one which pursues goals that are at times antithetical to demands of the market and in which actions usually originate from within the state apparatus. This a view on planning that sides strongly with antagonism and which thus shares the critique of consensus-seeking developed in work drawing on Chantal Mouffe (Bond, 2011; Hillier, 2003; Pløger, 2004). However, it is not a view that either seeks to move from antagonism to agonism (Pløger, 2004) or which aims for ‘reciprocity’ between adversaries (Bond, 2011). Seeing planning through Badiou shifts the focus to pure antagonism inscribed in an ‘evental’ temporality.

While Badiou’s writings emphasise decisive action and in general tend to abstract from the ‘messiness’ of actual political situations, his concept of the subject offers the flexibility needed to analyse a range of political situations. This is because his concept of the subject is purely formal: not an individual but that which adopts a particular stance towards the truth of an event. This has led Badiou to insist that the category of the subject must be thought without that of the individual: when part of a subject, all individuality is lost, only the positioning in relation to the truth matters. It thus includes all of the actors (individuals, institutions, organisations, etc.) which drive the



construction of a truth in a particular world. This points towards a way to accommodate features of contemporary planning situations in his events: issues of governance, diffuse responsibility for change, hybrid governance arrangements in which the public sector may not be the only institutional actor involved, etc.

A Badiouian perspective thus turns the spotlight towards attempts by particular planning apparatuses to effect a reversal of the structure of appearances existing in a particular place by pushing forward a truth with universal, egalitarian, resonance. The possible connection with particular episodes of planning will be fleshed out in the next section through the example of Haussmann's early years as Prefect of the Seine during the public works which transformed Paris in the middle of the 19th century. It will show how Saint-Simonian ideas fed Haussmann's determinations and allowed him to curtail the speculative ambitions of property owners in a context of extreme wealth inequalities.

## SAINT-SIMONISM AND HAUSSMANN'S PLANNING PRACTICE

### HAUSSMANN'S PLANNING PRACTICE

Haussmann was appointed Prefect of the Department of the Seine in June 1853. He presided over this public work programme but was still a civil servant of the Imperial regime and thus subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior. The account of Haussmann's planning practice developed here is based on 115 administrative cases centred on letters or petitions sent to the Minister of the Interior (Haussmann's immediate superior) by Parisians over the 1853–1859 period (and detailed in ANON, 2016). The majority of these cases were initiated by property owners who wrote to the Minister of the Interior – sometimes repeatedly – to complain about, or bypass, Haussmann's planning injunctions. This shows that Haussmann's actions were having serious impacts on Parisian property owners at that time.

This conflictive relationship between Haussmann and property owners culminated in a number of legal setbacks Haussmann suffered in the late 1850s in the Council of State, France's supreme court of appeal for administrative law courts. The consequences of these defeats in the courts can be found in many texts on the public works (Benevolo, 1967: 135-136; Gaillard, 2000: 28-30; Hall, 1998: 737-738; Harvey, 2006: 131-133; Roncayolo, 1983: 114). The roots of this conflict can be found in Haussmann's use of the possibilities of the 1807 law to the full. Passed under Napoleon I's Empire, the 1807 law gave the planning authority strong tools to modify the urban fabric through the drawing up of 'plans d'alignements'. Once approved, these plans could be used to justify the piercing of new streets and the widening of old ones (Sutcliffe, 1981). It also placed the powers of

expropriation in the hands of the executive, not the judiciary. In practice, however, the 1807 law quickly came under attack in the legislature and the courts and never received full application.

Hausmann sought to bring back the 1807 law by first pushing for the strict application of its street widening clauses. He refused property owners all repairs or renovations to buildings that were not on the proper alignment, regardless of how long the particular alignment invoked had been ignored. For him, this was the only way to guarantee the effectiveness of this gradual approach to street improvement. The stricter the municipal authority was on the kinds of repairs that should be considered as reinforcing a property, the more quickly the state of the properties would deteriorate and the more quickly the property owners would have to destroy or pull back their properties.

As concerns street creations, Hausmann was applying, and even strengthening, the 1807 law whose street creation clauses had been severely defeated by property owners. The intervening jurisprudence laid out a series of administrative steps that needed to be taken between the moment when the public became aware of expropriation plans for their neighbourhood and the moment at which the expropriation of their particular property would be consumed. During this time, Hausmann forbade property owners in the zone to be expropriated from making any changes to their properties that could be seen as adding to their value, even if they were on the proper alignment. This was the case from simple projects decided with the Emperor to expropriations just about to be officially decreed: once the plan had been decided, it was illegal to build or rebuild on the wrong alignment.

Hausmann's planning practice in the 1853 to 1859 period can thus be seen as an attempt to take planning power back from property owners by resuscitating legislation which had become dead letter or rendered impotent by property owner influence on the courts. This practice – centred on suppressing and controlling property owner attempts at speculating on the public works – was short-lived: his interpretation of the planning law was defeated by the court cases mentioned above. While Hausmann pushed on with the public works in the 1860s, without the backing of planning law (or of the Interior Minister) these became a source of speculative profit for property owners and developers – a fact well documented by contemporaries and which is encapsulated in the term 'hausmannisation'. The focus here is on Hausmann's early planning practice because of its interesting parallels with the thought of the utopian socialist Saint-Simon. These will be drawn out after a short presentation of Saint-Simon's ideas.

## SAINT-SIMON

Saint-Simon's writings were concerned with diagnosing the situation of France in the early years of the Bourbon Restoration. For him, the uncertainty of this period – which followed the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire – was a chance to push forward a new mode of social organisation that would put France's productive class at centre stage. This class, which he calls the industrialists, must be understood as all of those working to produce things useful to society: factory owners and their workers, those involved in agriculture or trade, as well as artists and scientists. The 25 million industrialists thus made up the vast majority of the French population, outnumbering the other members of society – nobles, aristocrats, the legal sphere, the clergy – by a factor of 50 to 1.

The problem for Saint-Simon was that while this small group of non-industrialists controlled the most important administrative and ministerial positions it was not contributing to society in any useful way: *"The behaviour of those who do not belong to the industrialist party is immoral, since they consume and do not produce; since they really live at the expense of the others; since they benefit from all the improvements of industrial work without giving anything useful or enjoyable in return; since finally they do not do for their fellow citizens what these do for them"* (Saint-Simon, 1819b: 355<sup>2</sup>).

Saint-Simon's aim was thus to shed light on this situation and to help install a new social system, one which recognises that it is industrialists who need to be the focus of public policy, not those already in positions of power. For him, this means that individuals *"must organise society in the way that is most advantageous to the greatest number; they must propose as the goal of all their endeavours, of all their actions, to improve as quickly and as completely as possible the physical and moral existence of the largest social class"* (Saint-Simon, 1825: 3). He calls this new model of social organisation the industrial system: *"There is and there can only be two distinct types of systems organising social life, the feudal or military system, and the industrial system; and in the spiritual dimension this is paralleled in the opposition between a system based on beliefs and one based on the establishment of proof"* (Saint-Simon, 1821: x).

The central principle of this industrial system is that individual worth is to be measured by the usefulness of that individual's work for society as a whole, not by birth-right or arbitrary designation: *"The industrial system rests on the principle of perfect equality; it stands against the constitution of any birth-right and any type of privilege"* (Saint-Simon, 1823-24: 57). In this system, equality *"consists in individuals drawing from society benefits in exact relation to their social outlay, that is to*

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<sup>2</sup> Saint-Simon's authorship of this anonymous text has been identified by Grange et al. (2013) on the basis of its fit with his other writings, its content and its style.

*their real capacity, to the valuable use of their resources, among which must be understood, of course, their assets”* (Saint-Simon, 1821: 206) and freedom in *“developing, without barriers and to the fullest extent possible, a worldly or spiritual capacity useful to the group”* (Saint-Simon, 1821: xij). There is constant condemnation of idleness – *“real freedom does not consist in standing idly by, one could say, in the group; such a propensity must be severely suppressed wherever it is found”* (Saint-Simon, 1821: xij) – with property owners a clear target here: *“An idle mind is the devil’s workshop. Property owners can afford idleness, industrialists are forced by their occupation to be hard-working”* (Saint-Simon, 1819a: 269).

## HAUSSMANN AS A SAINT-SIMONIAN STATE REVOLUTIONARY

Haussmann’s early planning practice inverted the way in which the world of Parisian planning had been structured: planning power was taken back from property owners. It can thus be considered to be a ‘planning event’ driven by all the planners, surveyors, administrators, architects, building companies, financial institutions, property developers and others who formed the ‘Haussmann’ subject. This ‘evental’ reading of Haussmann’s work is in stark contrast to authors who consider it to be a logical continuation of existing planning thought rather than a radical novelty (Bowie, 2001; Papayanis, 2004). Within this event, Haussmann’s planning administration can be seen as one of Badiou’s state revolutionaries, inscribed within a Saint-Simonian historical mode of politics, an important ideational framework at the time of Haussmann’s work in Paris. The focus here will be on showing the way in which Haussmann’s planning practice was dependent on this Saint-Simonian worldview. This will be done by fleshing out the links between Haussmann’s planning practice and Saint-Simon’s writings through the four determinations which ground the actions of Badiou’s state revolutionary (will, equality, authority and confidence).

## WILL – AGAINST SOCIOECONOMIC NECESSITY

Individuals *“must propose as the goal of all their endeavours, of all their actions, to improve as quickly and as completely as possible the physical and moral existence of the largest social class”* (Saint-Simon, 1825: 3).

Contrary to accounts of the public works which emphasise security rationales – *“the true goal of Haussmann’s projects was to secure the city against civil war. He wanted to make the erection of barricades in the streets of Paris impossible for all time”* (Benjamin, 2002: 23) – Haussmann seemed disinterested in matters of security. This can be seen in his response to a proposition, received by the Minister of the Interior in 1856, to establish a new marching ground for the military in one of the

more volatile areas in North-East Paris: *"I do not know whether the government would deem it important to possess a second Champ de Mars; this is an issue that is not under my responsibility"*.

It also does not seem as though the aim of these first years of the public works was to extract as much value from the built environment as possible, or to free capital from its feudal straitjacket (Harvey, 2006: 108). Haussmann's disregard for personal capital accumulation comes out clearly in the following excerpt, taken from a 1857 letter Haussmann wrote to the Minister of the Interior in response to a property owner's complaint about a construction freeze: *"Suffice it to say that I strongly urge Your Excellency to reject the complaint by Mr de Luçay, whose clear intention is to take advantage of his property's location to extort money from the city. Adopting this property owner's system would make the carrying out of the projects of public utility decided for Paris more and more costly, a carrying out which is becoming increasingly necessary, however, since population increase in this city has resulted in insufficient living space and justifies the municipal administration's efforts to assimilate to the city through clever piercings the open land at its circumference"*.

There is sense of urgency which drove his planning practice. Against the property owner view that construction freezes are damageable because not all decreed streets are actually pierced through, Haussmann was adamant that new streets planned are *"not vague projects that will be carried out far in the future, but projects of a certain and current nature which do not allow the municipal administration to tolerate building activity which could make the undertaking more difficult and more costly"* (Letter to the Minister of the Interior, 1857).

Following Choay (1996), Haussmann's planning practice can be viewed as one of regularisation, based around the interconnection of comprehensive and layered systems that fulfilled the twin objectives of circulation and hygiene. She defines Haussmann's planning practice as *"the will to optimise the city's functioning by the integration of the ends and means put at his disposal by science and technology"* (Choay, 1996: 274). Haussmann's focus was to improve the overall functioning of the city 'as quickly and as completely as possible'.

For Haussmann, Paris was facing an urgent problem: the city's population had outgrown its urban fabric. This was the source of the other difficulties facing Paris, be it congestion, cholera or unsafe housing. Haussmann was only identifying a problem that was linked to the wider transformations of 19th century France: industrialisation, urbanisation, migration, etc. (Agulhon and Choay, 1983). But his contribution is the elaboration of a planning practice that was meant to offer a solution to this problem. Badiou's will here can thus be understood as Haussmann's attempt to regulate the actions of property owners so as to be able to regularise the urban fabric and improve the city for the industrial, productive, class.

## EQUALITY – AGAINST THE ESTABLISHED HIERARCHIES OF POWER OR WEALTH

*“The industrial system rests on the principle of perfect equality; it stands against the constitution of any birth-right and any type of privilege”* (Saint-Simon, 1823-24: 57).

Hausmann’s early planning practice constituted a complete reversal from the situation under the July Monarchy (1830-1848). In that period, planning was beholden to property owners: *“the figures of the property owner and of the tax payer (often the same person) inspire the utmost respect”* (Roncayolo, 1983: 97). In the first half of Hausmann’s tenure, property is no longer sanctified. Access to the powerful and property wealth, instead of enabling a dismissal of planning, becomes an incriminating factor that calls greater attention from the planning apparatus. In the midst of the public works, only those with enough property wealth had the means to speculate by building or renovating on the path of a future boulevard. Assuming the equality of all Parisians in the realm of planning meant that the planning apparatus had to attack two mechanisms through which wealthy property owners were able to bypass planning injunctions.

The first was the Civil Buildings’ Council (‘Conseil des Bâtiments Civils’) which offered architectural guidance in the context of public building commissions and public works projects. As Hausmann informs the Minister of the Interior in 1858, this Council’s influence *“contributed in no small measure to the creation of the narrow and small-minded case law which still holds sway in the Council of State today as concerns housing under legal order to be pulled back and that allows most of these houses to defy the 1807 law with impunity”*. The most well-informed property owners knew that this institution was independent from Hausmann’s administration and could be used to bypass its injunctions. In their letters to the Minister of the Interior, they requested a separate investigation from this institution, such as this multiple property owner in 1858: *“These two requests having been turned down in turn by Mr Prefect [...] the undersigned property owner comes to ask you, Mr Minister, to be so kind as to order a short visit by Messrs the architects of the Civil Buildings’ Council, persuaded as he is that [...] after their investigation they will conclude that his request should be authorised”*. To counter this institution’s influence, Hausmann, in a 1958 letter to the Minister, denounced its historical links with private property and scorned *“the architects (most of them kept very busy by private construction projects) that make up the Civil Buildings Council and who bring to it mind-sets fore-warned against the actions of the municipal authority”*.

The second mechanism used by property owners to bypass the injunctions of Hausmann’s planning practice was to hire prominent lawyers (officiating in the Council of State or the Court of Cassation, the highest court in the French judiciary). It is through these lawyers that property owners identified that Hausmann’s use of the legislation went beyond the spirit of the planning regulations

(bracketing out as he did the post-1807 jurisprudence). As Haussmann's planning practice depended on this creative use of planning law, attacks through the courts were much more difficult to guard against. To do so, he sought to enrol the support of the Ministers of the Interior active during his tenure. His approach was to state, as in this 1857 letter, the primacy of the sovereign will over the protection of the right to property: *"The decreed street alignment plans depend only on the higher authority which approves them and the Municipal Administration which proposes and implements them – third parties cannot make claims on them or obstruct them when it is recognised, at all degrees of the administrative hierarchy, that they must be implemented. Besides, the alignments prescribed by the municipal administration under the control of the higher authority cannot be attacked through legal means"*.

#### AUTHORITY – AGAINST THE 'NATURAL' FREE PLAY OF COMPETITION

In the industrial system, equality *"consists in individuals drawing from society benefits in exact relation to their social outlay, that is to their real capacity, to the valuable use of their resources, among which must be understood, of course, their assets"* (Saint-Simon, 1821: 206).

Benefits can be received from society only in proportion to what one contributes to it. If no contribution is made through one's work, then one is not entitled to *"benefit from all the improvements of industrial work"* (Saint-Simon, 1819a: 355). Given that property owners are not producers, and are thus not contributing useful work or resources to society, they are not entitled to benefit from public policies aiming to improve the conditions of the 'most numerous class'. For Haussmann, property owners had to submit to construction freezes, refrain from speculating on the creation of new streets through urban fabric and accept to pull back properties on the wrong alignment. Authority is thus exercised through the state's capture of the returns on the public works to fund further work of general interest – as opposed to a focus on wealthier areas or a speculative free for all.

Haussmann's authority is clearly visible in his letters to the Minister of Interior. He had to constantly defend his principle of automatic construction freezes once the path of a new street to cut through existing fabric had been decided. If this practice were put into question, speculation on the public works would be rampant. He explains this to the Minister in a 1857 response to a property owner complaint: *"the inevitable administrative delays would be a time reserved for private interests, always very apt and very active, to speculate on the projects submitted to a public enquiry, and commit all possible frauds against general and municipal interests"*. Haussmann had good reason to be suspicious of property owners, as illustrated in this 1857 letter to the Minister describing the actions of a Count and multiple property owner: *"This property owner, in full knowledge of the facts*

*and without waiting for the result of the request submitted to your Excellence, has thus added considerable value to his property by raising buildings that are already destined to be demolished. This occurs frequently on the path of planned streets and deserves to be severely prosecuted”.*

Hausmann also had to defend decisions in which property owners were forbidden to consolidate buildings on the wrong alignment. This was also an occasion to condemn the actions of property owners, as in this 1859 letter to the Minister concerning the actions of a Baroness and multiple property owner: *“the administration must to the contrary be tough towards speculators who under the pretext of building worker housing raise for the lowest possible price, in densely populated neighbourhoods, poor constructions whose existence is already limited to the length of a lease and which jeopardize the lives of tenants”.*

This account of Hausmann’s heavy hand when dealing with property owner attempts to bypass his planning injunctions clearly contrasts with accounts of the public works which highlight the *“authorities’ basic unwillingness to disturb private interests”* (Sutcliffe, 1981: 134) and which assert that Hausmann’s *“personal views were strictly conservative”* (Benevolo, 1967: 134). Hausmann was clearly in the state revolutionary logic of action here: *“the real goal is to forbid inequalities, to suppress speculators, hoarders and factions. Without terror, the natural movement of things lies in the dissidence of the power of the rich”* (Badiou, 2009: 25).

#### CONFIDENCE – AGAINST ANTI-POPULAR SUSPICION OR THE FEAR OF THE MASSES

*“There are over 25 million French citizens engaged in agricultural, commercial or manufacturing activities : industrialists thus constitute the large majority of the French population”* (Saint-Simon, 1821: 18)

Within the Saint-Simonian framework, the words ‘people’ and ‘masses’ can be replaced by the notion of the industrial class, since this class encompasses the vast majority of the population. The aim of his writings is to free this class from the influence, and predation, of the non-productive elements of society. Once free, this class will be able to develop, *“without barriers and to the fullest extent possible, a worldly or spiritual capacity useful to the group”* (Saint-Simon, 1821: xij).

Hausmann’s public works can thus be understood as a means to tear down the constraints on the activity of the industrial class imposed by the small, tortuous and congested central Parisian streets. In a 1857 letter to the Minister of the Interior, Hausmann highlights that the ‘right and duty’ of the municipal administration *“is to implement all improvements to the city’s old plans that are called for by the new needs of traffic and circulation”*. This lends credence to Giedion’s (1943) view that Hausmann was the first planner to see the importance of the city itself to the development of



industry; as he says it, Haussmann *“wished to make Paris the first of the great cities to be brought into conformity with the industrial age”* (Giedion, 1943: 469).

The aim was thus not to build a city for the few but to open it to as much activity as possible, to provide an efficient framework for the industrial class to prosper. This can be seen in the responses Haussmann provides to proposals he received from property owners, most of which were requests for permission to cut open a new street on their land. Haussmann used two criteria to evaluate their merits: whether the new street would bring about any improvement to circulation and whether it would be beneficial to building activity. Work on the street network was thus seen as both a means to solve congestion and to open up new land for development.

For example, in justifying to the Interior Minister his decision to grant property owners the right to open up a new street on their land in the Quartier de l'Europe, Haussmann invokes the positive contribution of the new street on both these counts: *“This new street will provide some benefits to circulation [...] It will also have the advantage of usefully dividing up large tracts of land, today without use, and to call to them property speculation”*. The same two considerations are invoked in 1857 to recommend that a building company should be allowed to open a new street on land they own: *“this street they propose to cut would have unquestionable benefits, both as a new means of communication and because of the facades it would guarantee to new buildings, in a neighbourhood where property speculation is not waiting for much else to become very active”*.

However, this does not mean that Haussmann was willing to let some property owners profit from the public works. If property owner suggestions fit with his agenda for the city, he thought they should bear a large proportion of the costs associated with opening the new street, as it would lead to a large increase in the value of their land, a benefit that should be used as leverage to get them to contribute. This can be seen in his analysis of one of these suggestions in 1857:

*“It is clear that the owners of these tracts of land have the utmost interest in seeing this street opened, which would immediately lead to a large increase in the value of their buildings. By destroying his building and allowing the street to run through it, Mr Wetzels would find himself in the possession of a 66 meter long potential facade on the new street, which as he declares, he would not fail to make use of. In these conditions, the City of Paris cannot consent to the opening of the new street, unless all property owners who own the land needed for the street accept to give away the necessary portions for free, and that they accept, in addition, to bear the costs of first paving, of sidewalks, of lighting and of sewer construction, and to conform to all other conditions the City imposes for the opening of new streets on private property”*.

These conditions were designed to turn initiatives that were in the private interest into something beneficial for the city by controlling the profit made by property owners wishing to speculate and by making investments in the public realm a necessary counterpoint to individual gains emerging from the public works.

It is clear from the four determinations above that Haussmann put into practice in the world of Parisian planning a Saint-Simonian mode of politics – at least in the first half of his tenure when he was able to ‘get away’ with his strategic approach to the use of planning law. His planning practice was predicated on demanding from property owners the contribution to society that the large benefits they extracted from the public works required.

### CONCLUSION: THE PLANNER AS STATE REVOLUTIONARY

Seeing Haussmann’s early planning practice through Badiou’s figure of the state revolutionary provides a different account of the public works, one which centres on attempts to use state power to break the hold of the wealthy over the organisation of the city. While this early planning practice can be seen as the typical post-political ‘technocratic infrastructuralist’ approach which did not provide much voice either to the property owners or to industrial class more generally, it was nonetheless progressive for its time: it elevated the general interest above that of property owners in a context of extreme wealth inequality. This practice was not about including all possible voices but about doing what was needed to inverse the hierarchy of voices, following Saint-Simon’s call to put the interests of the majority of the population over those of idle property owners. This is an indication that the ‘*separation between the state and revolutionary politics*’ – which is at the heart of the post-political literature (as in the separation between ‘la politique’ et ‘le politique’ in Rancière) – does not need to occur in complete opposition to the state. The planning apparatus is one of the places in which this separation can be enacted, if the conditions are right. A clear lesson from Haussmann’s work is that conflict is inherent to planning practices that seek to displace logics that fix inequality.

Through the lens of the state revolutionary, Haussmann’s planning practice is a localised answer to a problem still relevant today: how to articulate confidence and authority within planning practices aiming to reverse deep structural inequalities? Haussmann’s actions drew on Saint-Simonian ideas, a mode of politics appropriate to the time and place in which he faced this problem. Other subjects, in different worlds, will develop answers in a mode which allows them to coherently articulate the four determinations that drive their course of action. A mode of politics is thus both historical and geographical: it is the ‘way of doing politics’ existing ideationally in a world which is the most useful to the subject trying to force through an unequal state of affairs. A mode of politics consequently

does not pre-exist the subject: the ideational base may exist, but the specific articulation of these ideas to political practice is a creation of the subject. The question is: what could a planning practice that follows a state revolutionary approach look like today?

The ideas developed by Badiou in *Logics of Worlds* are thus an opportunity to expand the discussions on the relation between planning and work on the notion of post-politics. The thinning of the category of event it proposes and its indifference to the placement of the state undermines a number of distinctions at the core of these discussions: 'grandiose' vs. 'minimal' politics (Marchart, 2011), the heroic vs. the anti-heroic (Beveridge and Koch, 2017) or emancipatory struggles vs the state (Swyngedouw, 2017). This thinned down event can be empirically investigated whenever a political practice, at any scale and from whatever place, brackets out structural constraints through actions that carry an affirmation of equality. This opens the door to the comparative (trans-worldly) study of 'planning events'.

There are a number of points of correspondence between these 'planning events' and the work on planning and power. Badiou's events can be seen as a particular response from planners to operating under conditions of large structural distortions in the power available to different interest groups. In such contexts, *"identifying and supporting an actual force with the potential to effect major political-economic change is crucial"* (Forester, 1984: 29). A 'planning event' approach likewise brings together *"the power of the bureaucracy with a predisposition to utilize it aggressively for the alleviation of socioeconomic disparity"* (Kiernan, 1983: 82). In this framework, planning events provide a means to evaluate the course of action taken by public planners: what differentiates a genuinely political course of action from a post-political one is the attempt at reversing the structure of appearances by making what was formerly inexistent (those at the receiving end of the inequality) maximally existent. It is possible that given the entrenched power of private interests, more forceful action than a *"repertoire of mediated-negotiation strategies"* (Forester, 1987: 312) or 'critical pragmatism' (Forester, 2012) may be needed. What distinguishes these events from other ways out of post-political conundrum is the essentiality of antagonism (vs Mouffian agonism) and the primacy of organised action (vs Rancièran disruption).

While Mouffe (2009) has called for a 'critique of engagement' with the state – *"we have no other choice but to engage with hegemonic practices, in order to challenge them"* (Mouffe, 2009: 235) – this is dependent on achieving a state of agonism: *"a real confrontation, but one that is played out under conditions regulated by a set of democratic procedures accepted by the adversaries"* (Mouffe, 2013: 9). The central concern thus seems to be the legitimisation of pluralist democracy. In contrast, for Badiou, the aims of a course of action, if they mobilise an articulation of the four determinations,

relativise the means through which this change is achieved. This comes out quite clearly from his description of the affect 'justice' which drives the actions of the political subject, an affect which *"affirms the equivalence of what is continuous and negotiated, on the one hand, and of what is discontinuous and violent, on the other [...] They are not to be hierarchically ordered. War can have as much value as peace, negotiation as much as struggle, violence as much as gentleness"* (Badiou, 2009: 86). This could thus include the use of state power to break an unequal state of affairs, even if this action has not received full democratic backing.

While politics is as closely linked to equality in Badiou as in Rancière, 'planning events' provide a different set of insights than perspectives on post-politics drawing on Rancière. First, the use of state power to break inequalities is not a Rancièran category. Second, the central figure in Rancière's politics is the *"collective becoming of a different subject, a yet unseen and unheard part whose appearance can only disrupt the existing social order, not found a new one"* (Van Puymbroeck and Oosterlynck, 2014: 94). The difference with Badiou's event thus hinges on the notion of organisation. As noted by Bassett, both Rancière and Badiou *"agree that real politics must also be a mode of radical subjectivization, but Badiou's criticism is that Rancière fails to see that any such subjectivization must also be an organized and disciplined process"* (Bassett, 2016: 282). Badiou's focus on organised action – be it in the case of the mass rebel or the state revolutionary – provides a different way out of the 'post-political condition' in planning. Here, the focus is on organising planning practices around a coherent articulation of the determinations.

A Badiouian 'planning event', pushed through by a state revolutionary, thus distances itself both from agonism and from pure disruption. It should not however be seen as identical to the 'purification approach' which *"proposes a new society devoid of power, inequality and politics"* (Van Puymbroeck and Oosterlynck, 2014: 93). Badiou is keenly aware that any event will call forth reaction and is ultimately short-lived. The essence of his materialist dialectic is precisely this historical to and fro between events and the re-establishment of unequal structures. His work is thus a call to constantly push back this normality of inequality by joining a political subject.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Murray Low, Jayaraj Sundaresan, Asher Ghertner, Crystal Legacy, Wendy Steele and the three anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments on earlier versions of the paper.

## FUNDING

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was supported by the National Research Fund, Luxembourg (INTER/SNF/12/02).

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