

Teams

The ACS Research Team

The IPRAUS (Paris Research Institute: Architecture, Urbanism, Society) research laboratory

The Suburban Studies Observatory

The ACS Research Team

The background

Formed in 1990, the ACS (Architecture, Culture, Society, 19th–21st century) team has been based at the Paris-Malaquais School of Architecture since the school was founded in 2000. It became a CNRS associate in 1997.

In overall terms our work is aimed at examining and analysing the culture of architecture and its ongoing mutations through the combined prism of sociology, the history of knowledge and analysis of its formal and tangible products. Architecture is considered here as a distinct form of intellectual work, in terms both of content and organisation.

Our research focuses on a number of primary concerns:

- the architectural and urban project.
- space as a cultural 'fact' and social product jointly produced by its designers and its users.
- the relationships down the ages between theories of architecture and architectural doctrines.
- the spatial systems that have emerged from these various interactions, 'system' being understood here as the organisation of given elements in such a way as to produce an effect on behaviours and practices, whether the original intention is explicit or implicit.

Since its inception the team has been structured around two main fields: the habitat, its genesis, and up to and including its most contemporary manifestations; and the recent history of architecture and urbanism (mainly the 20th century).

An initial investigation homing in more particularly on the bases of architectural and urban modernity in France and regions influenced by European and North American metropolitan culture has modulated in recent years towards ideas formerly considered as of little importance by traditional architectural research:

- 'postmodernism', which took us from mass to multitude, a process in which architects – in the best case scenario responsible for designing and organising the habitat – played a crucial, pioneering role.
- ongoing fusion of the worlds of private and public project management.
- the role of the architect within complex project systems.
- the place of architecture on the intellectual scene and the definition of the architect as an intellectual.
- the training of elites in a milieu which, between 1968 and 1973 and in the shadow of the looming 'crisis', underwent a complete change in its lifestyle.
- valuation and cultural hierarchies, and thus the thorny question of 'matters of taste' in architecture.
- in general terms, the scholarly and the popular – that oddly matched yet abidingly interlocked couple.

The laboratory's role at the National School of Architecture

The Paris-Malaquais National School of Architecture is home to three research laboratories: ACS

(Architecture, Culture, Society, 19th–21st century), GSA (Geometry, Structure and Architecture) and LIAT (Infrastructure, Architecture and Territory Laboratory). ACS is a member of the AUSser/CNRS Joint Research Unit no. 3329 (together with IPRAUS – Paris Research Institute: Architecture, Urbanism, Society) and of the Urban Futures Excellence Laboratory. The three Paris-Malaquais laboratories are part of the 'Cities, Transport and Territories' doctoral school at the Université Paris-Est Research and Advanced Education Hub (PRES).

The teacher-researchers at Paris-Malaquais – the teachers who are members of one of the three research laboratories and whose research is subject to regular evaluation in this context – make up a relatively large part of the teaching body. They include 7 qualified research directors or *docteurs d'Etat* and 1 MA *docteur d'Etat*. Of the 57 doctoral student members of the Paris-Malaquais laboratories (18 GSA, 12 Liat, 27 ACS), 17 (7 GSA, 6 Liat, 4 ACS) are involved at various levels in the teaching programme (tutorials, Research Development teaching, dissertation supervision in research workshops, etc.-).

The high proportion of teacher-researchers at Paris-Malaquais makes students aware, throughout their programme, that the theoretical teaching they are receiving is driven and refreshed by research input appropriate to a higher education establishment.

The teaching-research connection is present at different levels of the study programme, in terms of teaching, production and student involvement. This emphasis reflects the spirit of a pedagogical project that approaches the teaching of architecture as an intellectual discipline. There are particular points at which the connection with research is especially marked:

Writing dissertations

At the end of the Bachelor's course the study report is replaced by an academic account of a research project (UE R6) that has to be defended orally before a jury. The UE R6 thus provides an initiation into research methods and a framework for a personal project by the student. Different workshops are offered by teachers, centering on a concept, theme or subject. Each student defines his or her own research focus, based on interests developed during the previous years of study and/or establishing new lines of research for the Masters studies to come.

In Masters studies the M1/M2 research workshop dissertation, structured and problematised according to the criteria of an academic dissertation, and based on original issues and investigations, falls under the aegis of a department and a research laboratory. The LIAT is thus the laboratory for the THP (Theory, History and Project) and AAP (Art, Architecture, Politics) research workshops, ACS for those of ADD (Architecture and Domestic Systems) and VAT (Cities, Architecture and Territories), and GSA for that of AMC2 (Architecture, Materials, Constructional Principles).

The Graduation Project (PFE) dissertation is prepared during the last semester of the fifth year and accompanied by the presentation of the project on the day the dissertation is defended. The student is required to theorise his own practice as a project designer.

International role

Since its inception the Paris-Malaquais National School of Architecture has stated its intention of finding a place on the European and international scenes. As part of the school's project, this includes the following principles:

- The international dimension as a factor in receptivity to diversity and to other cultures.
- Willingness to accept students of different origins.
- An open-ended programme allowing for personal choice via optional subjects. The choice broadens as the student advances through the study programme, allowing him or her, from the third BA year onwards, to effect part of their studies – a maximum of two (not necessarily consecutive) semesters –

in a partner university abroad.

- Willingness to promote critical debate and encourage students to think for themselves.
- Recruitment of European and international teaching staff, or teachers trained abroad, as a means of promoting receptivity.
- In the interests of networking, in 2001 the school adopted two major pedagogical principles: semesterisation and a validation system identical to the European Union system of ECTS credits. In addition, in 2005 it switched to an academic calendar based largely on those of other European universities and offering a closer fit with those of North America and Asia.

One result has been closer links with the University of Montreal. This began with a line of research pursued between 2011 and 2013 in response to the *IgnisMutatRes* call for tenders from the French Ministry of Culture's Architectural, Urban and Landscape Research Unit (BRAUP), in partnership with the University of Montreal's Institute of Urbanism. Philippe Simon from ACS and Sandra Breux in Montreal were joint directors of the project 'Towards autonomous buildings. Energy, lifestyle and urban skin: architectural and urban forms and strategies. Learning from Chicago, Montreal and Paris. This research was an extension of the ideas raised by the ACS team, working with Dutch architects MVRDV, in the consultation process for the 'Grand Paris' project in 2008–2009.

With the backing of a special supplement in the Montreal daily *Le Devoir*, an international colloquium (Canada, United States, Brazil, Chile, France, Belgium, Greece, Sweden, Switzerland) organised in March 2012 by the Research Laboratory for Potential Architecture (LEAP) in Montreal and the Fund for Research into Society and Culture in Quebec, laid the groundwork for a network covering architecture competitions. The ACS laboratory, with its experienced teachers and also some of its doctoral students, intends to become part of the network. One of its researchers gave a paper with the editor in chief of *d'architectures* magazine that outlined the pioneering (and exemplary?) character of architectural competitions in France. This coming winter a woman doctoral student from LEAP who has been at the ACS laboratory for three years will be defending her dissertation on 'The house as a space for redefining the conventions of architecture: the United States, 1988/1998'.

Two events held in the United States in 2011 particularly involved ACS and its researchers. The first, at Princeton's School of Architecture, was Teaching Architecture/Practicing Pedagogy, an international colloquium organised by Jean-Louis Cohen, a former founder member of our Paris team who now teaches at the Princeton doctoral school. He invited one of his researchers as keynote speaker, as well as two young PhD's whose dissertations had addressed, respectively, Kevin Lynch's teaching of 'urban design' at MIT and the revival of the methods advocated by Bernard Huet in France around 1968.

The second, also held in 2011 at Columbia University in New York, with the backing of the French Embassy and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, was a series of talks and debates chaired by two ACS members. The focus was the publication by Semiotexte/MIT Press of an anthology of texts from the magazine *Utopie*, published from 1967 to 1978.

With regard to our connections with our European neighbours, the ACS laboratory has for some years now been trying to consolidate and officialise a network initiated by Monique Eleb, founder and former director of the team. The aim is to set up a shared database on housing (in the wake of the Archi-Habitat Workshop at the AUSser Joint Research Unit) that compares approaches to the question. A Europe-wide exchange network is in the process of being set up and so far includes the Escola Tècnica Superior d' Arquitectura del Vallès in Barcelona; the Atlas da Casa research group at the Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo in Porto; the Nuevas Técnicas, Arquitectura, Ciudad team from the Universidad Politécnica in Madrid; and also in Madrid GIVCO (Grupo de Investigación Vivienda Colectiva) and ARKRIT (Grupo de investigación de Crítica Arquitectónica). Other participants are the Madrid School of Architecture, the Chalmers School of Architecture in Gothenburg, Sweden (Sten Gromark), the University of Liverpool (Mark Swenarton), the Faculty of Architecture at Roma Tre University (Andrea Vidotto) and the Turin Polytechnicum (Filippo di Pieri).

Lastly, during the academic year 2012–2014 the ACS laboratory benefited from the presence of two post-doctoral students, Orfina Fatigato and Federico Ferrari, and intends to pursue this policy in the years to come.

Associated Masters workshops

PASS (Architectural Practices, Situations and Strategies) department

Workshop: Systems and Genealogy of Present-day Architecture – From Utopia to Strategy: the Project Today

Teachers: Jean-Louis Violeau, Soline Nivet, Isabelle Chesneau, Pierre Bourlier

VAT (Cities, Architecture and Territories) department

Workshop: The Global Urban Landscape

Teachers: Jean Attali, Yves Bélogegey, Anne Bossé, Leda Dimitriadi

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The IPRAUS (Paris Research Institute: Architecture, Urbanism, Society) research laboratory

IPRAUS (Ensa Paris-Belleville)

The IPRAUS team and the development of the institute's research themes

Since its founding in 1986 the IPRAUS research laboratory, a vital component of the teaching system at the Paris-Belleville National School of Architecture, has been working in association with the CNRS, the National Centre for Scientific Research. The link between them is now the Joint Research Unit 'Architecture, Urbanism, Society: Knowledge, Education, Research' (in French, 'UMR AUSser no. 3329'). Thus the laboratory's focus is on the teaching and practice of the architectural and urban projects, on the one hand, and on the humanities and social sciences on the other. This dual situation promotes knowledge production relating to architectural and urban space in terms of its relationship with forms of social organisation and its modes of production.

Research into architectural and urban forms is the team's core activity, but the study of the forming of cities carried out on historical and morphological lines is currently being challenged by mutations that defy our ability to describe, analyse and interpret territories. Given today's changes in urbanised territories, with their uncertain boundaries and polymorphous composition, there is a need to develop tools for understanding the structure and dynamics of urbanisation.

Working from a critique of the operational separation of travel practices from production of urban forms, our research looks into their interaction at the architectural, urban and territorial level. It examines the impact of the major transport facilities on changes in today's territories. There is particular emphasis on the characteristics of the public space associated with new travel modes, and to the environmental issues that are modifying the territorial approach in terms of land use, resource management and economy of space.

Paris and its metropolitan area have been a rewarding field of study since the creation of the laboratory, as recently highlighted by the 'Seine Metropolis' project mounted by IPRAUS as part of the 'Grand Paris' initiative. The Paris example is also a benchmark for comparative studies, notably those involving Asia,

which has been under close study since the 1980s. Examination of Asian cities, where the situation is changing radically in terms of metropolisation and internationalisation, bears on the lasting qualities and resistance shown by old architectural and urban forms in the face of models from outside; relevant here are the designing and implementation of new projects, as well as of the behaviour patterns of residents and users.

Embracing both cities and architecture, many studies continue to look into the housing issue, in a programme that compares the demands made by the evolution of design with those of actual use. Taking account of both design and reception, regular assessment of experimental operations is highly informative as to the dynamics of different usages, their sociodemographic implications and their response to architectural proposals. Study of the protection of certain iconic works of architecture indicates the extent to which institutional recognition of modernity is introducing a new factor: heritage.

In addition, architectural and urban design is addressed through study of how it is taught and of the different vectors mediating it. This research is currently updating the old interest in theories of architecture and the city. In studying the process of development of architectural culture and skills, together with the ways they are handed on, this kind of research combines historical study and contemporary expertise.

At the same time the recent emergence of a line of research devoted to technical culture is leading to exchanges of views between historians of technology and construction specialists. It also enables an examination of technical culture's place in the architectural domain, from design skills through to the concrete issues involved in the processes of invention and technological durability. By combining recent input from the history of science and techniques with the experience of stakeholders in the built environment, this approach sets out to evaluate the – steadily increasing – role of technology in the light of its social and cultural implications.

The work being done by IPRAUS researchers now coincides with the themes of the Joint Research Unit:

- The architecture of territories
- Heritage and project
- Architecture and cities in contemporary Asia
- Present-day architecture
- Architecture and technical culture
- Architecture: dissemination, transmission, teaching

The laboratory's role at the National School of Architecture

As the only research laboratory at the Paris-Belleville National School of Architecture, IPRAUS exists to unify the school's research capacities. The involvement of researchers in teaching at the Bachelor, Masters and postgraduate levels helps fuel and renew the teaching content: this applies not only to lectures, but also to project studios whose themes intersect with those of the laboratory, and to the workshops in which students are trained in research methods and given an active part in the production of knowledge about architecture, the city and territories.

Organisation of exhibitions, colloquia, study days and lectures, together with publication of researchers' work make the laboratory a major participant in the dissemination of research-related architectural and urban culture.

IPRAUS is home to the Roger Henri Guerrand documentation centre and a map library. These tangible and intangible resources are available not only to researchers, but also to the teachers and students, and IPRAUS is currently engaged in creating databanks for the scientific community as a whole and setting up a documentation monitoring service focusing on the Joint Research Unit's themes.

Masters workshops overseen by IPRAUS researchers (2013–2014)

- Art, flux and architecture (J.P. Midant)
- The art of the project: architecture and print (G. Lambert, E. Thibault)
- 'FARE': making and representing (V. Foucher-Dufoix)
- Working at history (M.J. Dumont)
- Heritage and project (P. Prost, V. Fernandez)
- Cities and territories: projects and research (M. Lambert-Bresson)
- Territories and projects: architecture, urbanism and landscape (F. Bertrand, C. Jaquand)

Architecture studios overseen by IPRAUS researchers (2013–2014)

- Masters studio: 'Memory, context and creation: working on historic buildings today' (P. Prost)
- Masters studio: 'Metropolitan interfaces: urban transformation and environmental approaches' (F. Bertrand, M. Benzerzour)
- Masters studio: 'Living in the countryside today' (B. Mariolle)
- Masters studio: 'Postwar social housing: a heritage to be enhanced or an episode to be deleted' (V. Fernandez)
- Graduation project studio: 'Architecture and the pre-existing' (Soleenn Guevel)
- Graduation project studio: 'Architecture for cities, architecture for the countryside' (B. Mariolle)

DSA postgraduate diploma

- DSA in 'Architecture and Heritage' (J.P. Midant, research director)
- DSA in 'Architecture and Urban Project' ('Architecture for Territories') (F. Nordemann research director, A. Grillet-Aubert teaching coordinator)

Doctoral School: 'Cities, Transport, Territories'

As a part of the AUSser Joint Research Unit, the IPRAUS team welcomes students to the 'Cities, Transport, Territories' doctoral school, whose supervisors are laboratory members.

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The Suburban Studies Observatory

Observatoire de la condition suburbaine

Marne-La-Vallée National School of Architecture, the City and Territories (ENSAVT)

The research team: the background

The research team at the Suburban Studies Observatory (OCS) at the National School of Architecture, the City and Territories (ENSAVT) initially focused on phenomena specific to urban peripheries, in studies devoted to observation and interpretation of the new town of Marne-la-Vallée, where ENSAVT is situated. At the time Marne-la-Vallée was seen as an experimental laboratory for new suburban situations. The research into different aspects of this new town was financed by the Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy.

These investigations were then extended to other Greater Paris territories, partly in the context of studies by researchers at the school, but above all as part of the 'Grand Pari(s)' competition in 2008: here the OCS worked with the Descartes group, which also included other teachers from the school. This major

competition brought the opportunity to get ENSAVT more closely involved with project and research issues. Yves Lion, curator of the French pavilion at the International Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2012, invited the school to explore the potential and the evolution of a suburban territory dubbed 'Dorsale Est' or 'Eastern Backbone', of which the school's Descartes campus is part. Research by a host of students and teachers enabled the accumulation of a body of in-depth knowledge of this vast territory.

This knowledge proved particularly useful for the research by Jean-François Blassel, which was chosen as part of the second session of the Ignis Mutat Res (IMR) interdepartmental research programme. Carried out in association with the Navier laboratory at the École des Ponts Paris Tech engineering school, the research was titled 'Towards an Energy-Resilient City: the example of Paris's Eastern Backbone.' Its aim was to use what was known of the territory to draw up a typomorphology of buildings and groups of buildings in terms of their energy potential: the task then was to identify the decisive criteria and test them by modelling them onto a large number of project scenarios. These scenarios drew on the material explored by the School for the Venice Biennale and emerged, during the first phase of the project, from the 'Food for Thought' project workshop run by Florence Lipsky as part of the School's Masters 1.

This Ignis Mutat Res research also signalled the evolution of the themes now being pursued by the research team. The environmental issues many researchers at Université Paris Est are looking into has led us to identify more clearly the role architecture can play in the broader field of university knowledge. The privileged setting of our school of architecture within a university campus – a rarity among the schools of architecture in the Ile-de-France Region – means that we are constantly approached by our university neighbours for our specific capacities.

In the context of current social issues, this position has paved the way for research theorised by or on the basis of the architectural project; the project being understood as, simultaneously, a form of knowledge, a skill and a way of thinking that makes it possible to study or investigate a wide range of objects. At a time when many universities are in search (especially in the field of 'sustainable development') of holistic, systemic or transdisciplinary approaches combining theory and action, architecture – in its broad sense, including urbanism and landscape – can turn out to be a formidable resource. We see here how immersion in a host of different disciplinary fields can, paradoxically, reveal the specific knowledge production input provided by architecture and the architectural project.

The laboratory's place within the National School of Architecture

The links between the laboratory's activity and that of the school exist basically on three levels: teaching, workshops and lectures, and the ENSAVT publishing policy.

Teaching

Following the pedagogical line of a school that has chosen to teach 'architecture, the city and territories', the OCS has focused on the phenomena of peripheral urbanisation via a historiographical approach to the theories and practices of territories constructed during the 20th and 21st centuries. The landscape/territory/politics triad explored within the framework of this research has fed directly into the school's teaching, especially in the Masters workshops. Dialogue between these research activities and the Masters' specialist study areas have substantially contributed to the diversification of the team's research themes and thus enabled inclusion of all the issues inherent in those areas: structures, the environment, architectural theory, etc.

The OCS team has also become involved in developing research through and for the project by adding doctoral training to the postgraduate 'Architect-Urbanist DSA' and to the very recent postgraduate 'Post-Carbon DPEA' diploma, in partnership with the Ecole des Ponts Paris Tech. The aim is to allow students to pursue some of their investigations relating to the architectural project or to forward-looking hypotheses (or scenarios) in the context of a doctoral dissertation.

Workshops and lectures

The workshops and lectures organised at the School are another way of interconnecting research and teaching. For several years the school has offered a workshop associating the Seine-et-Marne Council for Architecture, Urbanism and the Environment, the university's Department of Urban Engineering, the Ecole des Ponts Paris Tech, and the Advanced Diploma in Applied Alternative Urban Arts. This allows Masters and doctoral students to make contact with contemporary issues relating to the city and the urban project.

In addition, the school's organising of the international Ignis Mutat Res workshop – in association with the Ministry of Culture and Communications, the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Housing and Transport, and the International Grand Paris Workshop – has also been a means of strengthening the links with research. The year that followed the Ignis Mutat Res workshop saw a research team from the school propose its candidature for the second session of the research programme – and be accepted, in partnership with the Navier laboratory at the Ecole des Ponts. This team is now an integral part of the OCS.

To facilitate interchange between the different themes, a research workshop was set up in the second semester of the 2013–2014 academic year, intended for students wishing to engage in research: Masters' students wanting to specialise in research, and volunteers from the 'Architect-Urbanist DSA' and the 'Post-Carbon DPEA'. This workshop was also an opportunity to encounter lines of research training provided by the Community of Universities and Establishments (CUE) and other schools of architecture in France and abroad.

The Architecture School's publishing policy

The OCS is also closely associated with the ENSAVT's publishing policy. whose goals are: to create a tool for sharing and dissemination of the research produced at the school and to welcome and encourage teacher and student involvement in research. The publishing policy comes in three parts:

- The journal *Marnes, documents d'architecture*, founded and directed by two OCS members, Eric Alonzo and Sébastien Marot. This publication has a dual purpose: to provide students and an informed public with documentary material not otherwise easily obtainable; and to give teachers and researchers the chance to publish articles bearing on the school's teaching orientations.
- The series *Etudes et perspectives*. Published by Editions de la Villette, this series covers studies and research by ENSAVT teachers.
- The *Cahiers du DSA d'architecte-urbaniste*. This series comprises transcriptions of studies commissioned by contracting authorities from DSA participants. They are explicitly intended as tools for converting project questions into research questions.

Associated Masters' workshops

Each of the four specialist sections of the Masters has its own thematic workshop, thus contributing to stress the connections between research and teaching. The four workshops are:

'Transformations of built situations'

With urban densification and intensification in the process of replacing extension, the theme of transformation is now looming larger. This workshop focuses on three aspects: re-use of existing buildings and/or changes of purpose for certain sites, plus transformation of the usages and (re)fabrication procedures of buildings and cities.

'Theory and project'

This workshop sets out to combine theoretical and project-related concerns, which as a rule are kept separate

in the teaching of architecture. It draws on two complementary approaches: consideration of permanence – as 'the ordinary' – and of change, as 'the extraordinary'.

'Food for Thought'

The goal here is increased rapport between thinking about architecture and thinking about materials and their transformation. This means placing the making process at the heart of the architectural project. Not a posteriori, but a priori, as a way of thinking the project through and thus addressing the materials, evolving techniques and transformations of the world we must work on.

'Metropolises'

The distinctive feature of this segment of the Masters is that it approaches architecture by considering the metropolis as a place whose destiny, functioning and rhythm are closely linked to those of the planet. The workshop invents, studies and researches the main themes and subjects that structure the history, present-day functioning and future issues of our metropolises.

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