



Beyond the Grands Chantiers: Mapping the Deliberative System of Transport Governance in Paris

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Abstract

Over the last twenty years, the greater Paris metropolitan region has seen a decline in vehicle trips per capita, and has invested in alternative modes. Understanding this transition requires looking beyond the formal planning process to the deliberative systems surrounding transportation in the city. Tim Marshall argues that those interested in participation, and even more so in the prospect of deliberation, should look to France and should broaden our vision beyond formal participation to the deliberative system. We take up Marshall's call for deliberative systems research with a comparative analysis of two public deliberations around subway network extension and bus transit improvement, and use Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation as a set of evaluation criteria. Both involve engagement at multiple scales, and are embedded in ongoing deliberations that stretch beyond their formal consultation periods. We explore whether such deliberation led to a consensual, sustainable territorial project. We find that while the system as a whole ranks on the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder and does not reach its aspirational vision of inclusive community participation, moments where coalitions formed to shape the problem-solution nexus moved up the ladder from consultation to partnership, making the Paris system a good model to strengthen and replicate elsewhere.

Keywords

Grand Paris governance model, deliberative systems, problem-solution nexus, participatory planning

Abstract

Durante los últimos veinte años, tanto París como la región circundante han experimentado una disminución en los viajes en vehículo per cápita y han invertido en modos alternativos. Comprender esta transición requiere mirar más allá del proceso de planificación formal a los sistemas deliberativos que rodean el transporte en la ciudad. Marshall sostiene que aquellos interesados en la participación, y más aún en la perspectiva de la deliberación, deberían mirar a Francia y deberían ampliar nuestra visión más allá de la participación formal al sistema deliberativo. Aceptamos el llamado de Marshall para la investigación de sistemas deliberativos con un análisis comparativo de dos deliberaciones públicas sobre la extensión de la red del metro y la mejora del tránsito de autobuses, y usamos la escala de participación de Arnstein como un conjunto de criterios de evaluación. Ambos involucran la participación en múltiples escalas y están integrados en deliberaciones en curso que se extienden más allá de sus períodos de consulta formales. Exploramos si tal deliberación condujo a un proyecto territorial consensuado y sostenible. Encontramos que, aunque el sistema en su conjunto se ubica en los peldaños más bajos de la escalera de Arnstein y no alcanza su visión aspiracional de participación comunitaria inclusiva, los momentos en los que se formaron coaliciones para dar forma al nexo problema-solución ascendieron en la escala de la consulta a la asociación, haciendo que el sistema de París es un buen modelo para fortalecer y reproducir en otros lugares.

Keywords

Modelo de gobernanza del Gran París, sistemas deliberativos, nexo problema-solución, planificación participativa

摘要

在过去的二十年里，巴黎及其周边地区的人均汽车出行量出现了下降，并开始投资替代交通方式。理解这种转变需要超越正式的规划过程，我们着眼于围绕城市交通的审议系统。马歇尔认为，那些对参与规划感兴趣的人，尤其是对商议规划前景感兴趣的人，应该将目光投向法国，并将我们的视野从正式参与扩展到商议体系。我们响应马歇尔对审议系统研究的呼吁，通过对围绕地铁网络扩展和公交改善的两项公众审议进行比较分析，并使用阿恩斯坦

的参与阶梯作为一套评估标准。两者都涉及多种规模的参与，并嵌入到超出其正式磋商期的持续审议中。我们探讨了这种审议是否导致了一个双方同意的、可持续的土地项目。我们发现，虽然整个系统阿恩斯坦阶梯的较低梯级上排名，并且没有达到其包容性社区参与的理想愿景，但在形成联盟以塑造问题解决关系的时刻从协商上升到伙伴关系，这使得巴黎体系成为一个很好的模式，可以在其他地方加强和复制。

Keywords

大巴黎治理模式, 协商系统, 问题解决关系, 参与式规划

Introduction

The Paris region is in the process of imagining how to make car-free travel possible both within the dense walkable core of Paris and the car-oriented outlying suburbs. Over the last twenty years, both Paris and its surrounding regions have seen a decline in vehicle trips per capita, and have invested in alternative modes. These choices require not only decision-maker buy-in but also individual buy-in, to maintain bus lanes free of cars and use the infrastructure provided to change the way they travel. Understanding this transition requires looking beyond the formal planning process to the deliberative systems surrounding transportation in the city.

Tim Marshall argues that those interested in participation, and even more so in the prospect of deliberation, should look to France and should broaden their vision beyond formal participation to the deliberative system (Marshall 2016). We take up his call with a comparative look at two recent transportation projects, both in the Paris region. One is a traditional mega-project, the construction of a new metro system called the Grand Paris Express (GPE). The other is the launch of an urban transportation plan and its flagship project, a “structuring network” of improved bus routes throughout the region known as Mobilien. Both involve engagement at multiple scales, and are embedded in ongoing deliberations that stretch beyond their formal consultation periods.

We know community participation is flawed, we have known it since Sherry Arnstein conceptualized the ladder of participation as a set of evaluation criteria (Arnstein 1969). Literature suggests that often communities are placated or therapized, and that interventions in participation are not systematically attentive to power. We explore whether the Parisian transport deliberations led to a consensual, sustainable territorial project. We find that while the system as a whole ranks on the lower rungs of Arnstein’s ladder and does not reach its aspirational vision of inclusive community participation, moments where coalitions formed to shape the problem-solution nexus moved up the ladder from

consultation to partnership, making the Paris system a good model to strengthen and replicate elsewhere.

We find a significantly greater role for political actors—and political parties—than is normally found in the literature, and a nuanced role for community participation. In both cases, but particularly for Mobilien, exclusion from community participation was determined more by political affiliation and whether the group accepted the problem-solution frame of expanding the role of transit and reducing the role for cars. In both cases, the voices of residents were deprioritized relative to transit users. In the Mobilien case, the excluded voices also counted the wealthier, more conservative neighborhoods, complicating our understanding of whether including all voices helps to bring about a more just transition to sustainable modes.

Background on the Case

The greater Paris metropolitan region lies within the Île-de-France region, a 755 km² territory (population ~seven million) roughly equivalent in size to the Austin-Round Rock metropolitan area and encompassing 131 municipalities. Over the last twenty years, per capita vehicle trips have fallen, not just within the city of Paris proper but throughout the region (Omnil 2019). This decline has been facilitated by a sizable investment in public transport and a political commitment to taking space away from cars (Halpern and Le Galès 2018). These choices require not only decision-maker buy-in but also individual buy-in, to maintain bus lanes free of cars and use the infrastructure provided to change the way they travel, signaling the results of a long-running public deliberation around the use of cars in the region.

The first case study, the GPE, is a new automated metro network connecting the municipalities of the Greater Paris metropolitan region by extending certain existing lines (11 and 14) and creating new ones (lines 15, 16, 17, and 18). The routes of GPE are shown in Figure 1. The design and construction of the GPE is carried out by the *Société du Grand*

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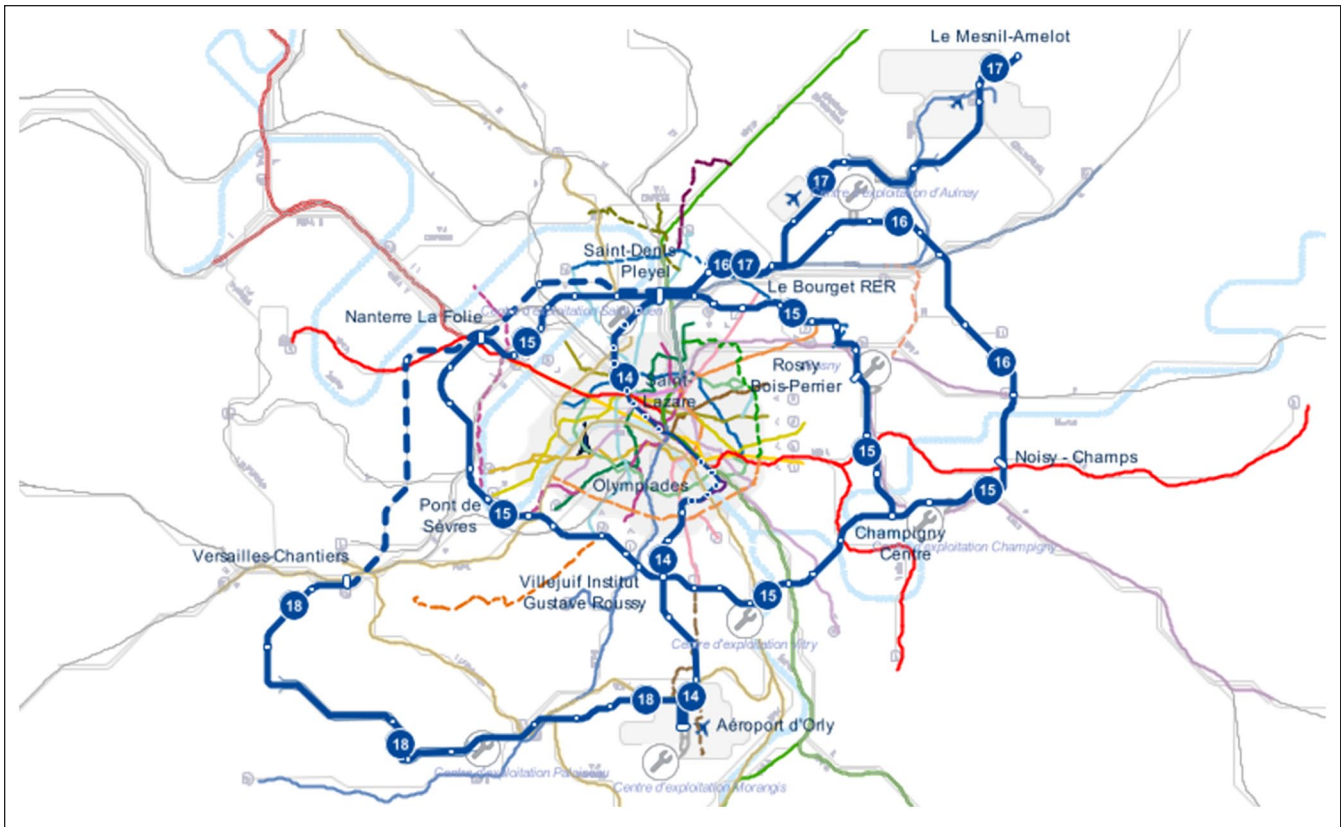


Figure 1. Map of the metropolitan-wide Grand Paris Express public transportation network which covers both the city of Paris and its neighboring suburbs, including inner-ring—*petite couronne*—and outer—ring—*grande couronne*—suburban municipalities that make up the greater Paris metropolitan region (societedugrandparis.fr 2020).

Paris (SGP), which was created in 2010 with the support of the national government. SGP acts in partnership with numerous institutional and socio-economic actors, in particular the mayors, and remains under government supervision to build out the 205 km of rails and 72 new stations, and develop numerous station districts, with a deadline of 2030. This article takes the GPE as a lens to capture a snapshot of the deliberations around the extension of the Paris public transportation system, and the turn to more sustainable, less car-oriented modes of metropolitan transportation.

The second case study, the Mobilien project, was developed by the state-owned transit agency, the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP), and introduced in Île-de-France's Urban Travel Plan (PDUIF) in 2000. RATP envisioned it as a “structuring network” of 130+ major bus routes that would be given priority in urban areas and link transit nodes throughout the region. The routes within Paris are shown in Figure 2. It is important to note from the outset that the Mobilien project was only a piece of the broader investment in buses and transit priority in the region, dovetailing in the beginning with efforts from the newly elected mayor of Paris to take street space away from cars in order to “civilize” the boulevards,¹ while by its end it had morphed into a project known as “lignes express” to expand

transit along key corridors in the *grande couronne*, the less dense outer parts of the metro region. This article takes the Mobilien project and the PDUIF in which it originated as a lens to capture a snapshot of the deliberations around the reallocation of road space away from cars.

While these two case studies work as insightful snapshots to interrogate how just the Paris transition model to sustainable modes is, this paper's premise is that both the GPE and Mobilien maintained the traditional standard of *grands chantiers*—or major works—in that they were solutions developed by experts before being revealed for public discussion. Debates around these processes occurred on different spatial scales and involved different stakeholders (Béhar, Bellanger, and Delpirou 2018). Yet, comparing them provides useful insights into the deliberative *system* that is characteristic of transport governance in Paris.

In addition to taking up Tim Marshall's call to learn from France's experience with public deliberation on infrastructure projects and expanding on the concept of the deliberative system, we also incorporate Sherry Arnstein's ladder of participation as a means of assessing the degree of community participation in the deliberations. The deliberative system approach analyzes both the formal platforms of consultation, and the informal channels of participation and

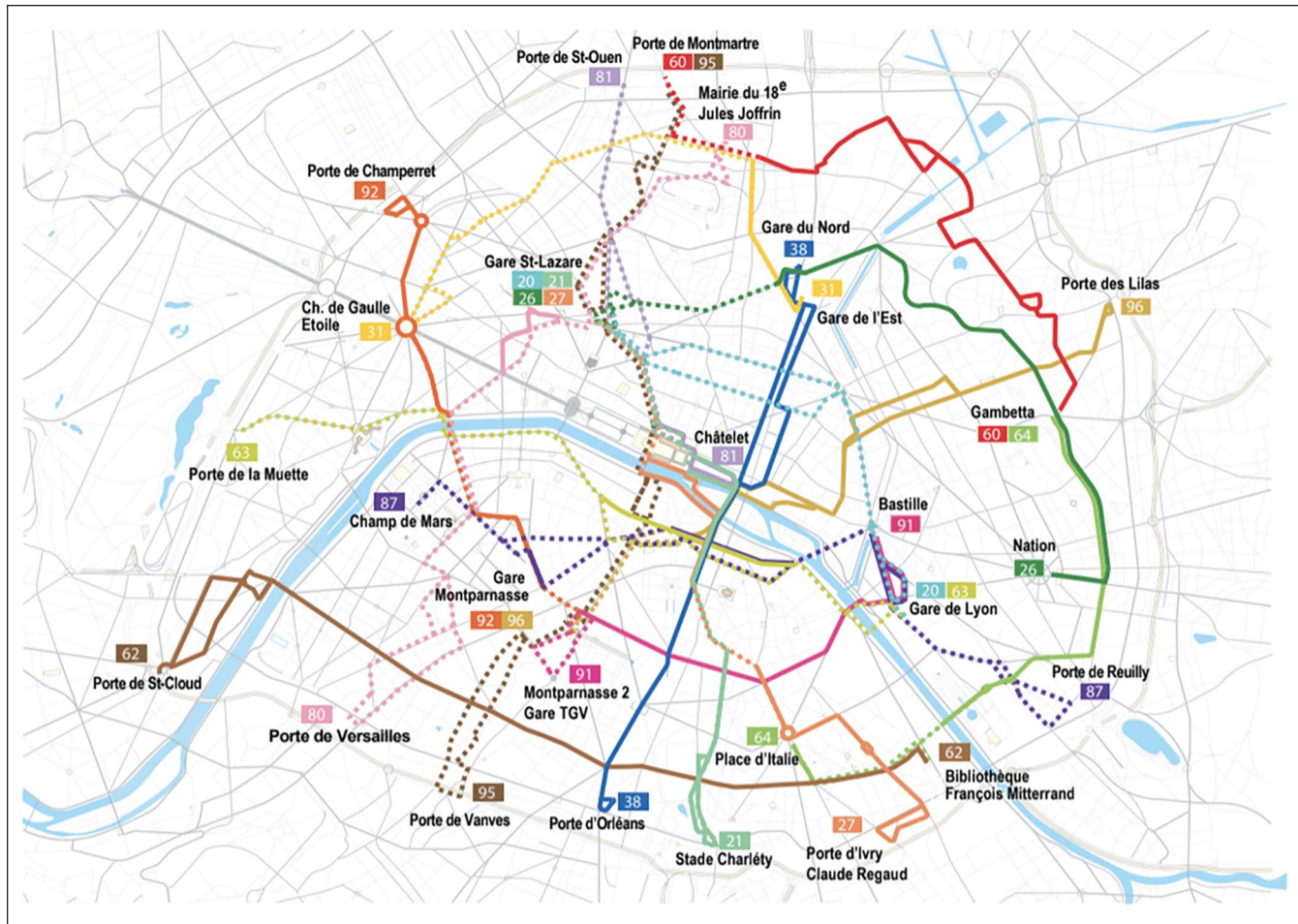


Figure 2. Map of Mobiliens projects in Paris, which span different neighborhoods of Paris within city limits.

Note: Dotted lines were not completed as of 2008, the last evaluation point, though newspaper records show that the stretch from Gare Saint-Lazare to Gare du Nord was completed in 2011 (ratp.fr 2008).

deliberation that surround it. In the Parisian context, consultation—or *concertation* in French—is distinct from American engagement styles in that it happens via large-scale public inquiries or “*enquêtes publiques*” which take the form of repeat deliberations. Confusingly, “*concertation*” is the equivalent of the ring below consultations in Arnstein’s ladder (Informing, or Therapy). Input from consultation meetings will not necessarily end up being incorporated in the final project, since the consultation process often takes place when the planning project is almost finalized.

Governing the Transition to Sustainable Transportation

The reasons for shifting to a more sustainable paradigm for transportation are well-understood, but the questions of how to do so, and particularly how to do so while improving existing inequalities of access, remain central (Banister 2008; Hickman, Ashiru, and Banister 2011). Many have found that public deliberations and conversations are important to

communities taking ownership over transitions (Davis and Altschuler 2019; Hickman, Ashiru, and Banister 2011) but there are tensions between inclusiveness and the decisiveness needed to address climate change (March and Low 2004). The current ideal form for a transportation agency is a centralized regional agency covering all modes across an entire commute shed (Buseti 2015, Marsden and May 2006), but one of the key factors in managing transitions is the deliberations between such a body and local actors who are partners in implementation (Ray 2021).

In her summary of eight successful cases of transition to more sustainable modes of transport, Davis argues that including a large number and wide range of stakeholders is central to institutionalizing sustainable change (Davis and Altschuler 2019). Governance structures that involve both national and local governments, as well as political parties that actively champion sustainable transportation, are potential mechanisms that she finds encourage such broad involvement. Understanding why this may be, and the interaction between political parties and the goal of inclusion,

requires analyzing the entire deliberative system, rather than simply the formal engagement.

Interrogating the Deliberative System

Much research on deliberation and participation in planning focuses on formal tools, like charrettes or engagement around a specific project or program. These analyses often conclude that not enough attention was paid to broader political constraints, including questions of the existence of a body capable of representing the community (Karner et al. 2019), the lack of a systematic opposition to a dominant framing (Vigar 2006), and the more widespread lack of attention to power when creating the mini-publics or assemblies set up for decision-making (Bickerstaff and Walker 2005). Marshall builds outward from these analyses of a single event to consideration of the “deliberative system” within planning (Marshall 2016; Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012).

As developed by Parkinson and Mansbridge among others, the deliberative system consists of the actors, organizations, and ideas engaged in public debate around an issue, and includes, in addition to politicians, bureaucrats, and other decision-makers, the media, experts, protests, and all other categories of informal counter-powers designed to insert more voices into the public conversation (Gatta 2019). Broadening the scope, Marshall argues, affords the planner three additional spaces of intervention. First, as alluded to above, conceptualizing the entire system packages the formal deliberative interventions within the broader policy process, allowing, as Vigar (2017) notes, the ability to identify which types of knowledge are sought from the deliberation and therefore which audiences are needed. Second, a deliberative system allows for identifying repeat deliberations, paying attention to the way solutions were framed in the past, who was at the table, and whether new frames or solutions are now in the conversation (Maaoui 2019). Last, a deliberative system frame provides a more nuanced version of representation, as different sources of representative legitimacy, from democratically elected representation, to inclusion of all ideas in the public conversation, to representation of historically marginalized or disproportionately affected groups, are overlapping and complementary within a broader system.

As with other participation models, the deliberative systems idea is vulnerable to the critique that it can simply be used to justify the *status quo* (Landwehr 2017). Addressing this vulnerability requires a critical stance on any system, asking when and why a system fails to deliver on its democratic and deliberative promises (Landwehr 2017, 61), and who is asking for changes to the system (Landwehr 2017, 64). Meanwhile, Arnstein’s framework has thus far been a classic conceptual approach for the francophone literature on French deliberative planning cases and the way they address—or not—race- and class-based structural inequalities, along with the theories of Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls (Bacqué and Sintomer 2011; Blondiaux 2008). We

argue that Arnstein’s ladder of participation provides a framework for the critical stance necessary on a deliberative system, while the deliberative system concept addresses some of the concerns in more recent takes on Arnstein’s work.

As described in Gaber (2019), Arnstein’s vision of participation was a true sharing of power between the government and community, on an equal footing. Her ladder focuses explicitly on the sharing of decision-making power with the community and the flow of information between those with power and those without. She acknowledges the ladder as a simplification that obscures that neither the powerful nor powerless are a monolith, but a justifiable simplification in that both those with power and those with less view the other group as a monolith. A notable feature of the work that has followed Arnstein is the effort to unpack these monoliths in search of the partnership she sought. Karner et al. (2019) highlighted the need for an organized and legitimate community partner in participatory budgeting, one able to formulate and execute proposals. This insight shifts our understanding beyond the amorphous “community” and the more recent understanding of multiple communities to investigate the actually existing set of organized community actors, remaining attentive to the power dynamics that make it easier for some actors to organize or for some ideas to be organized around. Similarly, Houghton and McManus (2019) and Laskey and Nicholls (2019) identify moments of politicization and insurgency in opposition to participation, and, in particular, in opposition to attempts by planners to shape or manipulate participation. Laskey and Nicholls (2019) suggest that insurgency is a corrective to democratic planning and planners should welcome insurgents and take their critique seriously. The works on insurgency and politicization as linked to participation seem to call for attention to the deliberative spaces surrounding the formal planning process.

Sturup (2016) pessimistically suggests that “authentic community participation in the sense of determining and owning a strategic vision for the built environment is impossible” (56) because projects are developed from a “problem-solution nexus” that is determined by experts and academics rather than the community. Actors not engaged in the decision-making process therefore only engage once the project has been determined enough that specific impacts are known, and the formal participation efforts around planning projects cannot be used to question their rationale. Insurgency, then, results when participants in formal participation attempt to question the overarching rationale.

Zittoun (2013) also recognizes a problem-solution nexus, but he sees the co-creation of problem and solution as a process of debate and coalition formation that does not have to remain in the expert realm. Coalitions are formed through the rhetorical joining of problem, culprit, and solution, such that, in the roadspace reallocation case below among others, the problem—such as air pollution or congestion—is linked

to cars as the culprit and thus to roads space reallocation as the solution (Ray 2019; Zittoun 2013). Similarly, in the GPE metro extension case, the problem is linked to the persistence of car-oriented spatial enclaves in the metro region as the culprit and thus to subway line extensions as the solution. Authentic community engagement in the formation of the problem-solution nexus, before the formal participation begins, is needed to fully achieve Arnstein's vision of partnership.

To assess whether there is authentic participation in the formation of problem-solution nexus, we need both a measure of authentic participation and a wider understanding of participation than that provided by formal engagement. In this research, we use Arnstein's ladder of public participation as a measure of authentic participation and the deliberative system concept to encompass the broader discussion around both sustainable transportation proposals. By opening up to the deliberative system, we can look before the formal periods of engagement to the moments where the problem-solution nexus was formed in the public conversation.

Methodology

To conduct the comparison of two public deliberation processes that structured the metropolitan transition to more sustainable transport modes in Paris, we reviewed and analyzed planning documents and media accounts, and triangulated these with interviews with local stakeholders. We performed a content analysis of the following four major French papers, which cover all sides of the political spectrum: *Le Monde* (center-left), *Libération* (left), *L'Humanité* (far-left), and *Le Figaro* (right). We also conducted twenty interviews in Paris with representatives from the *Métropole du Grand Paris*, the *Société du Grand Paris*, the *Forum Métropolitain*, the RATP, *Île-de-France Mobilités*, and the *Mairie de Paris*. Interviews lasted approximately one hour thirty minutes on average.

We analyze the deliberative systems surrounding the implementations of the GPE and Mobilien (Tables 1 and 2), by dividing the deliberations in two ways. First, they are segmented in time: (1) prior to the formal announcement of the project, (2) between the announcement and the start of construction, and (3) after implementation begins. Second, within each phase, we distinguish between formal and informal deliberative processes. The formal processes are moments when project planners reach out to community members to seek input, including both broad community visioning sessions and one-on-one discussions with stakeholders. Informal processes include media discussions, protests, and other conversations initiated by the community, as well as the deliberations that occur among planners before the formal project is announced. Within each segment, we ask who is and is not included, who is calling for change, and where that segment falls on Arnstein's ladder.

While our conceptual framework outlines a broader range of possible channels of informal participation, we choose to focus more specifically on the role of officials who represent the opposition, local residents' associations and the presence of media accounts of such processes. Because our analysis is shaped in part by who made it into media coverage, not all possible deliberative actors are included. Further research on these cases should also take into account business, real estate developer, and labor union informal participation for an even more comprehensive account of the processes at stake.

- **The Grand Paris Express Case**

Pre-Project

We find that the top-down deliberations of the GPE remained mostly on the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder, whereby the formal platforms that accompanied the official launch of the project came long after its actual genesis, and offered residents and users at most an opportunity to "participate in participation," to quote Arnstein's formula (Arnstein 1969, 219).

In this context, the eastern *banlieues* municipalities of Île-de-France² eventually managed to become explicit partners in the later stages of GPE deliberations, mainly because they organized as an alternative political entity, and had sufficient capacity to serve as a partner, possessed of both technical staff and expertise and the legitimacy of democratic representation.

Formal consultation only began after a prolonged internal discussion among experts on the implementation of the GPE. The structuring of the Grand Paris governance model was made "in silence" (Gilli 2014, 1), reaching the public conversation only in 2009 to 2010. The genesis of the territorial project is usually placed around the time of the founding speech of the Grand Paris given by Nicolas Sarkozy in April 2009 at the Théâtre Chaillot (Bellanger 2013; Enright 2016; Gilli 2014). In fact, discussions on the GPE had been going on since the early 1990s, piloted by Christian Blanc, along with a highly exclusive team of decision makers, particularly engineers from the RATP working in a very confidential and discretionary way to draw the first sketches of the new network (Auzannet 2018; Delourme 2018). Behind the scenes, Blanc crafted the key propositions that went into Sarkozy's speech and formed the first step of the larger problem-solution nexus. These focused on better connecting Paris to its airports, fixing *banlieue-banlieue* mobility with the métro extension, and more specifically better connecting the enclaved eastern *banlieues* to the larger transportation network (Gilli and Offner 2009). Before the speech, there was no talk of formal consultation, since "nothing could be leaked from the meetings in his (Christian Blanc's) office" (Delourme 2018; Mansat 2019).

Maurice Leroy, Blanc's successor as Secretary of State for Greater Paris, launched the second step of the problem-solution

Table 1. Grand Paris Express Case Timeline, Assembled by the Authors Via Triangulation of Planning Documents, Media Accounts, and Fieldwork Interviews.

	Formal consultation	Informal participation
Before the formal announcement of the project	<p>December 5, 2001: Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoë puts Communist deputy Mayor Pierre Mansat in charge of a cooperation between Paris and the metro region's <i>banlieues</i> municipalities around the genesis of the Grand Paris territorial project.</p> <p>December 27, 2007: Newly elected right President Nicolas Sarkozy launches an international competition inviting proposals for a more sustainable future in the Paris larger metro region, aligned with goals of the 1990s global Kyoto protocol.</p> <p>March 18, 2008: President Sarkozy names right official Christian Blanc to take the lead on the Grand Paris Express extension.</p> <p>March 17, 2009: Sarkozy officially announces the launch of a new extended ring-road subway system for the Grand Paris, which will connect all the peripheral economically competitive clusters located in the <i>banlieues</i>.</p>	<p>Fall 2005: <i>Banlieues</i> riots denouncing structural inequalities and historic trends of disinvestment in lower-income, minority neighborhoods start in Clichy-sous-Bois. They quickly gain Montfermeil, other municipalities of the Seine-Saint-Denis department and soon peripheral neighborhoods elsewhere in France. They last three weeks, the longest set of protests since May 1968 if we exclude the Yellow Vest movement started in 2018.</p> <p>July 7, 2006: Socialist president of the Conseil Général Claude Bartolone who represents the eastern <i>banlieues</i> supports the project of a Grand Paris Express Line 15 extension. Following that, mayors of eastern <i>banlieues</i> municipalities organize the <i>Conférence métropolitaine</i> in the <i>banlieue</i> of Vanves, later followed with 11 other working group sessions.</p> <p>June 10, 2009: Paris <i>Métropole</i> (now <i>Forum Métropolitain du Grand Paris</i>), a union of 93 peripheral founding municipalities (160 in 2010), becomes the informal trans-partisan parliament of the Grand Paris, separate from the <i>Métropole du Grand Paris</i> governance structure.</p> <p>2010: Paris <i>Métropole</i>, along with the technical assistance of the Paris planning agencies the Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme (APUR) and the Institut Paris-Région (IAU-IdF), as well as the consultation of transport user associations, makes recommendations for the competing ring-road projects of "Arc Express" and "Réseau Grand Paris." The state and Maurice Leroy make a decision closely in line with these recommendations.</p> <p>May 31, 2018: Seven presidents of the <i>Île-de-France</i> departments, besides Paris, sign an open letter in <i>Le Monde</i> denouncing the extension of the construction timeline and cost increases for the extension toward the south of metro Line 14.</p> <p>March 2019: The channel Public Sénat broadcasts Philippe Lasry's documentary "<i>L'Îlot Ferragus : une histoire du Grand Paris</i>" on expropriations triggered by the extension of GPE Line 15 in the <i>banlieue</i> municipality of Aubervilliers.</p>
Between the formal announcement and the start of implementation/construction	<p>June 3, 2010: The founding law relative to the Grand Paris is voted, giving most planning prerogatives to the state, and setting three priorities: (1) reinforce competitiveness, (2) increase territorial balance and cohesion, and (3) fix the transportation system to answer the metro region's mobility needs.</p> <p>September 30, 2010: First formal consultation public meeting on the "Grand Paris" launched by the <i>Commission Nationale du Débat Public</i> (CNDP).</p> <p>November 2010: Right-wing official Maurice Leroy succeeds Christian Blanc, and formalizes the ongoing negotiations with the <i>Île-de-France</i> region.</p> <p>January 22, 2016: First Council meeting of the <i>Métropole du Grand Paris</i>, under right-wing official Patrick Ollier's presidency. Judicial birth of the Grand Paris.</p> <p>June 4, 2016: GPE civil engineering works start on the construction site of the station <i>Fort d'Issy-Vanves-Clamart</i>.</p> <p>October 10, 2016: Launch of the "<i>Inventons la métropole</i>" international competition, the largest European planning contest for bids which total €6.4 billion and fifty-six construction sites neighboring future GPE stations.</p> <p>September 13, 2017: The city wins the 2024 Olympics bid with a proposed low-budget plan relying largely on future sites from the larger GPE subway extension project, mostly located in the northeastern <i>banlieues</i>, including the Olympics Village housing project in Seine-Saint-Denis.</p>	
After the start of implementation/construction		

Note: GPE = Grand Paris Express.

nexus via the negotiation process with the Île-de-France region. The problem to be addressed was still defined by the initial solutions chosen during Christian Blanc's time. It differed from the first stage in that it was inscribed in a search for consensus with a larger pool of decision-makers at different scales. It was formalized through the creation of the still highly select Club du Grand Paris, consisting of the heads of each of the eight departments that comprised the region (roughly equivalent to U.S. counties), the national government representative for the region, the mayor of Paris, architects, and representatives of the transportation sector. Therefore, only a select group of officials participated in the early steps of the planning process, including problem identification. The third and last stage before formal consultation targeted the territories of the eastern *banlieues* of Seine-Saint-Denis, the most disinvested of the eight departments of the region. The decision process to create the GPE Line 15 Est generated a negotiation process with Claude Bartolone, at the time the Socialist president of the *Conseil Général of Seine-Saint-Denis*. Gaining support from socialist Bartolone eased negotiations with these municipalities, and generally speaking with regional elected officials who represented a socialist majority.

During the Formal Consultation

These three stages demonstrate how the need for a convergence of interests among experts from the state, the region, the mayors, and the departments delayed formal consultation. It was only on September 30, 2010, that the *Commission Nationale du Débat Public* (CNDP) launched the first "Grand Paris" formal public consultation meeting (Enright 2016), and deliberation was constrained to choosing between two predetermined projects: the "Grand Huit" transportation network, championed by the state, or the "Arc Express" transportation network, championed by the region (Auzannet 2018; Lévy 2018). The engagement process did not have a decision-making mechanism other than consensus on which plan to choose. While the "Grand Huit" (130 km) went well beyond the existing metro network, offering to cover the outer-ring *grande couronne* to the west (Versailles/Saclay) and east (Noisy-Champs/Roissy), crossing through Paris, the "Arc Express" (60 km) offered two tangential lines in the inner-ring *petite couronne*, in the North (Nanterre/Bobigny) and in the South (Meudon/Créteil), with an extension to the outer-ring *grande couronne* toward Noisy-le-Grand. In sum, "Arc Express" prioritized connections between disadvantaged enclaves, while the "Grand Huit" wanted to foster connections between more competitive nodes. The CNDP established a platform for formal consultation, which it monitored for a series of debates. During the debates, the citizenry selected the Arc Express proposition, but the experts ended up choosing aspects of both, leading to a final GPE larger than either alternative. This consultation outcome illustrates an unwillingness to engage on a questioning of the problem-solution nexus, as opposed to engaging on

questions of the impact of the solution on local economic development opportunities for disinvested enclaves, a form of engagement that went much more smoothly. The following section underlines further how the formal consultation for the GPE extension was purposely inclusive, but inclusive of those actors already visible in public deliberations.

After the Start of Implementation

The formal process was just one piece of the deliberative system. The deliberative system also included informal processes channeled by accounts from the media, associations protesting the project, and elected officials from the opposition.

First, we consider the role of the press. A search of keywords for the four media outlets that are mostly read by Grand Paris denizens shows that while there are fewer than hundred articles about the Grand Paris between 2000 and 2010, references to "Grand Paris Express," the governance of the "Grand Paris," and budget and construction timeline details³ increase exponentially from 2010 onwards.⁴ The frequency of these mentions echoes the shift to a more *grand public* discussion after 2010. Some media platforms had chosen since Day 1 of the formal consultation process to provide coverage of certain aspects of the territorial project that sold very well, such as recurring controversies on budget allocation and budget increases, or delays in infrastructure delivery. Yet, no matter the political affiliation of the media source, and no matter the side of the debate on which they stood, their coverage of implementation attempted to fuel a deliberative process. And it acted as a channel for informal participation, whether it was to fuel negative perceptions about a "colossal," "pharaonic," "supermetro" project (Mouillard and Albertini 2013), or to address the question of how the Grand Paris would fix inequality and polarization—both territorial and socio economic—a question that acquired even more importance during the aftermath of the 2005 civil unrest in the *banlieues* (Dikeç 2007).

Second, we can see the deliberative system at work in the GPE case, in which local residents' associations were only invited into the official consultation process that took place after 2010. These associations were thus only left with the option to engage in the official consultations about the transportation network extension, or protest each of the redevelopment projects that it triggered.⁵ In 2018, the documentary "L'Îlot Ferragus : une histoire du Grand Paris" denounced expropriations due to the extension of Line 15 in the peripheral municipality of Aubervilliers. The case of Aubervilliers and the mobilization around it echoed other mobilizations from expropriated homeowners across the planned GPE train stations, but this never became a large organized movement.⁶ It also did not include the voices of the many lower-income tenant households equally—if not more—impacted by the extension of the GPE network. In sum, the GPE did not welcome these moments of politicization and insurgency, nor

did it take their critiques seriously, perhaps in part because the movement never gained sustained momentum. What happened is these local concerns were subsequently carried by elected officials from the eastern *banlieues* who had moved up the ladder from consultation to partnership, and were able to be the voice of their local constituents precisely because it had been confirmed that they shared the same vision as GPE experts of what the overall problem-solution nexus was.

Last, this paper considers as another channel for informal participation the role of public officials from the opposition. Some of them organized in platforms that were alternatives to those structured as part of the official Grand Paris governance model. The *Forum Métropolitain du Grand Paris*, formerly known as *Paris Métropole*, was launched in 2009 by municipalities who reclaimed a say in the metropolitan decision-making process, starting with the planning of GPE. The Forum dubbed itself the “Parliament of the Grand Paris” and published early on a *Livre (Ou)vert du Grand Paris* proposing three deliberative scenarios that the metropolitan governance model should aim for: namely, the integrated metropolis, the confederate metropolis, and the participatory metropolis (Desjardins 2010; Mansat 2019). Yet, these institutional scenarios were never published in an official white paper, nor reviewed or adopted at the national Assembly.⁷ Others expressed their growing opposition to pay for the increased budget to finish the GPE construction sites. The seven presidents of the Île-de-France departments surrounding and making up the greater Paris metro region signed an open letter denouncing delays in construction and cost increases for the GPE Line 14 extension (Grégoire 2018).⁸ The open letter denounced a “Grand Paris Express on the cheap” (Grégoire 2019, Author’s translation). This was followed by mobilization of more than sixty mayors and elected officials from Seine-Saint-Denis through an open letter to President Macron asking him to comply with requirement to consult with the local level and reminding him of one of the core principles at the genesis of the Grand Paris: the fight against the spatial mismatch which burdens the eastern *banlieues* (AFP 2018). These mobilizations from elected officials, mostly socialists or communists who were pressured by the concerns of their local constituents to do something against this type of “injustice coupled with rudeness,”⁹ did not generate an increase in budget, nor did they successfully speed the delivery of new train stations. However, they did in part move these elected officials up the ladder from consultation to partnership when it came to subsequent GPE discussions, particularly in light of the 2024 Paris Olympics parallel negotiations. The choice to partner with the eastern *banlieues* also depended here on the fact that local elected officials shared the same vision of what the problem-solution nexus was. Indeed, in the GPE metro extension case, and in the context of future Paris Olympics, the problem was linked to the persistence of car-oriented spatial enclaves in the metro region as the culprit, and thus to subway line exten-

sions, and promises of associated local economic development opportunities, as the solution.

• The Mobilien Roadspace Reallocation Case

The GPE extension project is often seen as a state-led project, but we showed above that its deliberation operated at multiple scales. Similarly, while the push for roadspace reallocation in Paris seemed largely local, it was empowered by state legislation and regional action. The Law on Air and the Rational Utilization of Energy (*Loi sur l’air et l’utilization rationnelle de l’énergie-Laure*) passed in 1996 relaunched the Urban Travel Plans (*Plans de Déplacements Urbains-PDU*) and mandated that they be oriented around reducing automobile traffic and promoting the use of public transport and active modes (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006). The Laure also mandated that the state representative lead Paris’s plan, the PDUIF, rather than the region, contrary to the practice elsewhere in the country.

The centerpiece of the PDUIF was the Mobilien, a network of priority bus routes. The city of Paris took the lead in reallocating road space to buses, as a push from newly elected Mayor Bertrand Delanoë merged with the regional Mobilien project (Halpern and Le Galès 2018). Unlike the GPE extension network, the PDUIF and Mobilien were not issues that made it to the national papers. Over the course of the implementation of Mobilien, between 2001 and 2006, there were only 23 articles on Mobilien in *Le Monde*, compared with 181 in *Le Parisien*, in which one can trace the hyperlocal deliberations around the reallocation of roadspace.

Pre-Project

The public conversation into which roadspace reallocation entered in Paris was very focused on environmental concerns. Activists, politicians, and most of all public health experts at Airparif, the air quality monitoring agency in Paris, had elevated air quality to a mainstream problem and, crucially, had linked air pollution to the car (Boutaric 1997; Zittoun 2013). With a problem and culprit, the space was open for a solution to emerge, one that both combatted the car culprit and provided an alternative to car travel. Into that space, came bus priority and the tram, both ways of simultaneously taking space away from cars and improving public transit. In the mid-1990s, the Association of Users of Transport-Île-de-France targeted particular lines demanding bus priority (*Le Parisien* February 15, May 11, May 14, and June 10, 1996).¹⁰ A quote from the press coverage argued “We must make the bus a surface metro, give absolute priority to the bus along the full length of the route” (*Le Parisien* February 15, 1996). Across France, including in Paris, the Green Party and other ecologically focused parties made great strides in local elections running on a platform focused on transport (Brouard 1999). Politicians in the Parisian

Table 2. PDUJIF/Mobilien Case Timeline, Assembled by the Authors Via Triangulation of Planning Documents, Media Accounts, and Fieldwork Interviews.

	Formal consultation	Informal participation
Before the formal announcement of the project	<p>September 1996: Law on air quality passed, named <i>Loi sur l'air et l'utilisation rationnelle de l'énergie (LAURE)</i>.</p> <p>1997: In-house planning of consultation Mobilien/PDUJIF development process.</p> <p>January-June 1998: Development of Diagnostic feasibility study among thematic groups and local committees.</p> <p>January-December 1998: Development of Principal Network by a separate committee.</p> <p>November 1998- March 1999: Development of proposals.</p> <p>November 1999: Submission to the localities.</p> <p>November 1999-December 2000: Internal discussion with the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP), state-region Contract, and discussion with the localities.</p> <p>June-July 2000: Public inquest.</p> <p>15 December 15, 2000: Final approval of PDUJIF.</p> <p>December 2000: Creation of the Mobilien implementation team in the <i>Direction Régionale de l'équipement Île-de-France (DREIF)</i>.</p> <p>2001-2002: Route planning committees are formed and conduct individual route diagnostics, identifying congested locations and possible remedies.</p> <p>2003-2004: Development of action plan and financing contract.</p> <p>2002-2006: Visits to each arrondissement to discuss Mobilien and other transport projects.</p>	<p>February-June 1996: Demonstrations for bus priority and more bus service in Paris, organized by the Association of Public Transport Users and attended by council members. The protests were largely in the southern portion of the city, home to a large share of Asian immigrants.</p>
Between the formal announcement and the start of implementation/construction		
After implementation begins		<p>2001: Discussion of Mobilien enters the newspapers, first bus lanes launch.</p> <p>2001: Mayor Bertrand Delanoë elected on a platform that includes bus priority and anti-car sentiment.</p> <p>2002: The Prefect of Police calls for a project redesign and a 2,500 signature petition launched against the first Mobilien line in Paris, the thirty-eight, which passes through the wealthy fifth and sixth arrondissement and the university district (Chevalet 2003b; Le Mitouard 2002).</p> <p>2003: Five arrondissement mayors from the opposition party announce their opposition to Line 92 and critique the contestation process (Chevalet 2003a).</p> <p>2004: Montparnasse business owners stage “funeral” protest for their street after city proposes center-running bus lanes in both directions for Route 91 (Gairaud 2004).</p> <p>2004: 5,000 signature petition launched against plans for the Route 92 bus (Chevalet 2004).</p> <p>2006: Bus lane in the twentieth arrondissement, an arrondissement more similar to the eastern <i>banlieues</i> than the rest of Paris, is reopened to cars following a petition that received six hundred signatures in forty-eight hours (Hasse 2006a, 2006b).</p>

Note: PDUJIF = Île-de-France's Urban Travel Plan.

suburbs pushed to develop a tram of their own, modeling their efforts after the successful trams in other French cities.

Bus priority was also supported by the RATP, not only because it would speed their buses but also because it provided the idea of the “structuring network,” a hierarchized bus network that would shape their service investments and allow development to form around key nodes. RATP put forward the idea of the Mobilien project during the PDUIF deliberations, offering a concrete solution to the activist cry for bus priority to counter the car (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006).

The final piece of the conversation was a debate on road safety and quality of life. Beginning with a project of the national government in the 1980s, planners, engineers, socialists, and lawyers worked to develop interventions that would slow traffic in cities and reduce vehicle death. Called Safer Cities, Neighborhoods without Accidents,¹¹ the project developed road engineering techniques and policies that have since become standard practice in France. This focus on the car as a threat to safe, livable cities dovetailed with the air quality problem to identify cars as the culprit and shared with the structuring network a focus on road design.

The PDUIF aimed at the top of Arnstein’s ladder, with the state officially working in partnership with the communities. The development of the first PDUIF was led by the *Direction Régionale de l’Équipement d’Île-de-France* (DREIF), an arm of the national government. Past plans led by the state for the region had been viewed as impositions, rather than collaborations, so care was taken to make the PDUIF a “collective choice taken essentially by technicians in agreement with associations” (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006, 41, Author’s translation). The plan development process included representatives from all the regional governing bodies, the Chamber of Commerce, transit providers, and associations for bicyclists, pedestrians, persons with limited mobility, and public transport users.

Unlike in the provinces or earlier Île-de-France planning processes, all the included actors participated in all steps of the planning process, including problem identification. This was in part the result of time pressures, as the institutional actors could not compile the diagnostic reports from all the committees into a single document and prioritize issues before moving on to the solution proposal phase (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006). As a result, actors were providing their own solutions to the problems they identified as most important, whether or not those problems would have made the cut on a more global ranking. Ideally, those solutions would have been prioritized in some form by the entire group of actors, but the engagement process did not have a decision-making mechanism other than consensus, and so the final plan was left relatively unprioritized. The only decisions made were to exclude a small fraction of the recommendation on the basis of cost, complexity, or being outside the scope of a plan the intent of which was to reduce motor vehicle trips. Those decisions were taken by a group of eight expert researchers

alongside the main institutional actors, including DREIF, Syndicat de Transport Parisien (the regional transit regulator, which would eventually take over from the state), and RATP.

The lack of official statements or prioritization in the PDUIF had implications for implementation. In some cases, the lack of prioritization resulted in benefits for community groups, as when activist groups for persons with reduced mobility resisted the de-prioritization of accessibility improvements (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006). As such, improving accessibility remained an equally valid goal to structuring the bus network or other solutions, and in fact, the improvements in accessibility across the entire region were one of the main successes identified by Mobilien’s implementers, with one noting that “what has been done for disabled persons was the number one priority.”¹² Though roadspace reallocation away from cars to buses and active modes was clearly desired in the plan—the summary calls for “an urban dimension to the principal road network that privileges public space to reduce noise pollution and improve safety . . . and redesigning the space reserved for circulation” (PDUIF 2000, 13), there were few specifics included.

The designers of the PDUIF instead shifted all decision-making to two types of committees. Axis committees were responsible for planning for bus priority along the entire length of a route, and comprised transit providers, regional agency representatives, and localities along the route, while “pôle” committees comprised the stakeholders around the strategic nodes of the network, largely major train stations and public institutions. In the end, however, local municipalities held complete control over whether they implemented priority on the streets they controlled, regardless of the wishes of the committee majority (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006).

During the formal consultation process for the PDUIF and the Mobilien system as a whole, there was no informal protest or conversation recorded in the media. The consultations instead occurred among the various levels of French territorial government, as local elected officials gave input into the plan. During that input stage, many draft requirements became recommendations, and a few recommendations became requirements (Gonzalez Alvarez 2006). The direction of the change depended on whether the action was within the power of the organizing regional agencies or required local action. In that sense, the plan served as a way to coordinate action among multiple regional actors, subject to the advice of local entities. Where we place the formal consultation on Arnstein’s ladder depends on the degree to which we see local politicians as reflective of their community. In this instance, the politicians’ push to convert prescriptions for reallocation to recommendations matched later protest from residents, suggesting that the formal consultation maintained the hope of a partnership style of control.

After the Start of Implementation

For the Mobilien case, the strongest part of public debate occurred after implementation. Formal processes continued, as the city of Paris conducted outreach in every arrondissement around the implementation of Mobilien. The engineers also reached out to individual business owners along affected stretches, learning specifics about the business's needs. For example, Paris's head for Mobilien recalled learning that pharmacies do not require a large truck loading zone but need a space available throughout the day for just-in-time van deliveries of medications that may require refrigeration, changing the design and location of delivery zones.

Unlike during the planning period, the formal process was accompanied by significant informal protest as well. As concrete plans were revealed for individual routes, local businesses and residents' associations, previously excluded from consultations, rose up. Their concerns were not heard in the arrondissement meetings and they instead turned to forms of protest, ranging from drowning out the presentations at said meetings, to petitions, to theatrical street protest. "They were not fair with us and we were not fair with them" reports one interviewee on the consultations, noting that in some right-leaning arrondissements he was not even allowed to set up his powerpoint before the shouting began.¹³ The businesses fronting Boulevard Montparnasse staged a funeral for the street, suggesting that center-running bus lanes would end the business activity on the street. Nearly every route resulted in a petition with signatures (Gairaud 2006). In some arrondissements, where the mayors had particular sway with the mayor of Paris, such resistance was enough to adjust the project,¹⁴ while in others, where the mayor did not expect to get votes, the resistance was ignored.¹⁵ In part, this reflects an unwillingness to engage on a questioning of the problem-solution nexus, as opposed to engaging on questions of the impact of the solution on businesses, a form of engagement that went much more smoothly.

The planning processes for the PDUIF were purposely inclusive, but inclusive of those actors already visible in public deliberations. The ability to get one's preferred solution through the PDUIF was dependent on access to knowledge and resources, though the involvement of various types of users groups on the committees at least prevented their issues from being de-prioritized. The consultation for Mobilien purposely excluded residents, except as represented through the elected officials on the axis committees. The Mobilien project was about increasing mobility, the speed with which the bus traversed the route. There is an inherent trade-off between the mobility of a through route and the permeability across the route, and having already set the goal as improving mobility, comments regarding the need for permeability, or car parking, were not heard. As such, though the project emphasized inclusion, and was tied to an earlier movement of protest in favor of public transport, the inclusive elements of its formal consultation were designed to achieve project goals. Placing them on Arnstein's ladder, then, is also

complicated. Within arrondissements that had political sway, the community was heard, but in general, the planners' decision to engage depended less on the structural power of the protestor and more on whether the actor supported the problem-solution nexus. Those who agreed to support public transit over cars would be heard in their needs for solution adjustments, those who did not would not. Our normative opinions about the relative positions on the ladder are complicated by the fact that the Red and Green arrondissements are less well-off than the conservative ones, such that the Mobilien project ignored the better off residents to put forth a transport project that benefited bus commuters most of all.

Discussion and Conclusion

The deliberative system frame Marshall used is helpful in understanding the participation process as a broader scope than just formal community participation processes, but absent a set of criteria with which to judge a system's degree of democracy or deliberation, one runs the risk of justifying the status quo (Landwehr 2017; Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). Though Arnstein designed her ladder for formal community participation processes, we apply it here to the entire deliberative system, identifying at what level communities engaged in Paris transport deliberations. The combination of the ladder of participation with deliberative systems theory allows us to distinguish among phases of debate and participation within the lifetime of a project, by differentiating by the degree of participation, who is included in the room, and who is tracking and discussing what is happening there. We find that the top-down deliberations of the GPE remained mostly on the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder, but that even the more grassroots fight to reallocate street space had moments where Mobilien's implementers resisted community input to prevent policy dilution, raising complicated questions around which communities need to participate to bring about a more just transport system.

The choice to partner with or placate impacted communities depended on whether they shared the same vision of what the problem-solution nexus was. At the hyperlocal level of individual bus lanes, individual businesses were able to be slightly higher on the rungs of the ladder, operating somewhere between placation and partnership in the shaping of their environment. This input was mediated by the political context, as individual complaints mattered more in communities that shared a political party or were swing districts. Findings suggest that the assumption of political accountability is stronger in local contexts, when individual politicians can be identified with particular projects. The deliberations that occurred with local business owners are mirrored at a higher scale by the deliberations between experts and the eastern *banlieues* in the routing of the GPE. While business owners may have been placated, the eastern *banlieues* were explicitly partners in the third stage of GPE deliberations, mainly because they organized as an

alternative political entity, and had sufficient capacity to serve as a partner, possessed of both technical staff and expertise and the legitimacy of democratic representation (Maaoui and Mansat 2020).

The creation of solutions in both cases maintained the traditional standard of expert-developed *grands chantiers*—or major works (Béhar, Bellanger, and Delpirou 2018) in that both were originally developed at RATP, before being revealed for public discussion. As such, RATP, as the holder of travel data and the transit operator, held a privileged position with respect to developing solutions. As urban development projects become more deliberative and the region takes more responsibility for transit planning, new mechanisms may be needed to further democratize the development of solutions. Organizing the eastern *banlieues* to shape the route of the GPE and including activist groups for people with reduced mobility in the PDUIF strategically shaped the deliberative system and the problem-solution nexus. Per Marshall's words, transport governance in Paris is seeing a "gradual 'deliberatization' of politics" (Marshall 2016, 344), making the Paris system a good model to strengthen and replicate elsewhere.

This paper provides takeaways by looking before the formal periods of engagement to the moment where the problem-solution nexus was formed in the public conversation, for the GPE and Mobilien. By complicating and extending more standard ways of defining deliberative processes, we intend to offer more general takeaways for local planning processes. First, planners should pay attention to marginalized groups and the most affected stakeholders, but also acknowledge that deliberative planning necessarily has to engage with those who have political power. Second, rather than stating that every voice counts and systematically falling short of that goal, planners should be strategic about the power structures within the deliberative system, and match engagement methods to build the capacity of those whose voices need to be strengthened.

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Notes

1. As expressed in the green agreement of Bertrand Delanoë's PS-Verts party platform for 2001 municipal elections.
2. The word *banlieues* refers to suburbs, which can be socio-economically and ethnically diverse, but in the case of the Ile-de-France region, particularly in the eastern inner ring of the Grand Paris metropolitan region, *banlieues* refer to historically disinvested neighborhoods which have concentrated growing pockets of poverty and minority residents since the postwar era.
3. Worries about the risk of a money pit or overextended delays in the delivery of future stations.
4. These media outlets even quickly acquired the reputation of specializing in one type of coverage of the planning project. One knew to read *Le Parisien* so as to grasp the day-to-day granularity of negotiated decision-making processes among officials, while coverage by *Le Monde* reporters offered comprehensive critical assessments of long-term issues awaiting the Grand Paris project.
5. In 2013, the *Collectif pour le Triangle de Gonesse* launched a website to oppose the Grand Paris project of Europa City in the northeastern *banlieue* of Gonesse neighboring a future GPE station. This was soon followed by the creation of a Zone À Défendre (or ZAD, as in a parcel or construction site squatted by a movement that mobilizes to oppose a planning project), in order to squat and oppose the construction site. In 2015, a petition was signed by 11,000 residents who opposed the "Central Park" project in La Courneuve, also close to a future GPE station. The project was eventually abandoned.
6. Interview with Samuel Hanryon, representative of the owners of the îlot Ferragus in Aubervilliers, who were expropriated due to the extension of the GPE subway network, 2019.
7. Interview with Sylvain Cognet, director of the Forum Métropolitain, 2019.
8. Additional costs amounted to an extra €500 million for an initial budget that was capped to €2.2 billion, which represents almost a quarter increase from the original budget. An open letter was written to President Macron's administration after former Prime Minister Édouard Philippe announced a plan prepared by the Société du Grand Paris with additional costs, but also smaller train stations and less connections between extended lines.
9. Interviews with members of Communist mayor Meriem Derkaoui's team in Aubervilliers, 2019.
10. Articles accessed as clippings in the RATP Archives, Folder "Aménagement Réseau 91/96 5."
11. Villes Plus Sûres, Quartiers sans Accidents.
12. Interview with Hervé Abderrahman, 2019.
13. Interview with Emmanuel Martin, 2019.
14. For instance, a petition of only eight hundred signatures in the left-leaning twentieth arrondissement triggered the end of a bus lane on the Rue Pelleport.
15. The bus lanes on Montparnasse went through despite the funeral and a petition of four thousand signatures.

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