Paris In 19th Century: Economic Problems, Political Gain And Social Divide

Under Louis Napoleon Bonaparte's rule, a radical resifting of Paris' infrastructure into something unrecognizable would happen, all under the guise of modernization. The revolution that would transform France into the Second Empire would also transform its capital into a display of imperial pomp. Charged with the reconstruction of the street system, Baron Haussmann took as much people, money and resources he deemed necessary to fulfill his grand vision. For author David Harvey the change of Paris in the 19th century isn't only because of the vision of powerful people but the culminating point of what preceded. How would it reach this point? Some of reasons David Harvey thinks the replanning of Paris in the 19th century happened are economic problems, political gain and social divide.

Pre- Napoleon III Paris was downtrodden with high unemployment and poverty rates. The city was in the aftermath of its deepest and most widespread economic crisis yet. The city was also flooded with new arrivals from the countryside due to a failed harvest. Paris experienced capitalist overaccumulation, in which massive surpluses of capital and labor power concurrently provided Paris with no profitable options. David Harvey believed that this economic situation contributed to the desire for change. The change that happens through Haussmann's plan brings more job opportunities while also factoring into his plan of wiping out what he perceived to be degrading and unhygienic narrow streets. The Emperor tasked Haussmann with state-financed public works to expand government expenditure that could, in principle at least, help absorb surpluses of capital and labor power, and ensure their perpetual full employment at no extra cost to the taxpayer if they produced economic growth (139).

In the landscape that predated the authoritarian state, many powerful people would lay empty promises at the feet of their followers and supporters in the effort to gain more power. However, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was different in that he offered order and stability amidst a growing crisis. While no other single political faction could agree on a single unified plan, nor did they have the authority to enact their plans, they saw a pawn in Napoleon III who had the popular will that could be controlled to consolidate more power. This is only one example of the political corruption that David Harvey believed contributed to the replanning of Paris. Various fragments of society saw the emergency in an unexpected way. The art laborers, for instance, furnished with corporatist customs, saw deskilling, loss of freedom, pride, and regard, discontinuity of errands—and ceaseless frailty of work—all undeniably forced by entrepreneur control of generation and dissemination, as the center of the issue. The February Revolution enabled them to put the topic of work and the privilege to take a shot at the political plan and to attest their entitlement to be treated with pride and regard, as equivalents in the body politic.

In addition to the class structure that divided Paris between the rich and poor, there was also a division of ideals among the working class due to the economic crisis. David Harvey suggests that this division allowed the rise of the authoritarian state that ultimately reconstructs Paris. Some in the city observed obsolete structures and practices of government and account as the foundation of the issue, and tried to modernize the French state, free the progressions of capital, and give more prominent driving force to the economy. Dynamic components in Paris had likewise since quite a while ago looked for solid state mediations to legitimize and restore

evidently waning physical frameworks. Their endeavors were hindered by different groups of the bourgeoisie, caught either in a monetary conservatism that ensured all out loss of motion during an era of extreme financial downturn, or by customary rights to property possession (to a great extent non-attendant and country) that appeared to offer any desire for individual salvation amidst national ruin. "In the space of power, power does not appear as such; it hides under the organization of space" (146). Haussmann clearly understood that his power to shape space was also a power to influence the processes of societal reproduction. His evident desire to rid Paris of its industrial base and working class, and thus transform it, presumably, into a nonrevolutionary bastion of support for the bourgeois order was far too large a task to complete in a generation. Yet he harassed heavy industry, dirty industry, and even light industry to the point where the deindustrialization of much of the city center was an accomplished fact by 1870. And much of the working class was forced out with it, though by no means as far as he wished. The city center was given over to monumental representations of imperial power and administration, finance and commerce, and the growing services that spring up around a burgeoning tourist trade. the developing private isolation not just shielded the bourgeoisie from the genuine or envisioned risks of the hazardous and criminal classes yet additionally progressively molded the city into moderately secure spaces of propagation of the diverse social classes.

In conclusion, David Harvey thinks that economic problems, political gain and social divide are some of the reasons for the replanning of Paris in the 19th century. All of these issues feed into each other as the economic crisis furthered the social divide which provided political opportunity for someone to seize power on the promise of something better, only to dispossess the people who put them in power.