When de-segregation produces stigmatisation: ethnic minorities and urban policies in France

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Although France has been a land of immigration since the middle of the nineteenth century, for a long time the country did not adopt a definite doctrine explicitly describing the integration of foreigners. Such doctrine was rather inferred from the debate on the code of nationality (code de la nationalité) which gave rise to a definition of the “French individual” and of the conditions for assimilation. Formal “rules”, and the description of the means for incorporating foreigners into the body of the Nation over the last century and a half, only emerged at the beginning of the 1980s. An initial debate was launched by means of a “commission of wise men” established in 1987 by the Government in order to ease tensions raised by an attempted reform of the code of nationality. The work of the commission was published the following year (Commission de la nationalité, 1988). Later, in 1989, a new body was established, the High Council for Integration (Haut Conseil à l’Intégration) whose purpose was to inform and advise the authorities on immigrant integration. The Council soon announced that a voluntarist policy was on the agenda. Here is the most accurate institutional definition of the objective of any integration policy as devised by the HCI in 1991:

Integration is a way to obtain the active participation in society as a whole of all women and men who are lastingly going to live on our land while overtly accepting that specific, mostly cultural, features will be preserved and nevertheless insisting on the similarities and the convergence, with equal rights and duties for all in order to preserve the cohesion of our social fabric. [...] Integration considers that differences are a part of a common project unlike either assimilation which aims at suppressing differences, or indeed insertion which establishes that their perpetuation is a guarantee for protection.¹

¹ This is a revised and more accurate version of the definition presented in the first HCI report (HCI, 1993, p. 8).
While renewing the assimilationist tradition which is the essential feature of the French national model, the HCI struck a delicate balance between the rights and duties of “women and men who are lastingly going to live on our land”, the acceptance of the basic values of the Republic, and the necessary transformation of French society in order to “leave some free space” for newcomers. This “integration model” sums up the long history of immigration and captures the essential principles of French integration policy in the making:

—Integration is an individual process which prohibits participation of immigrants in any structured communities whose institutionalisation poses a threat to the unity of the Nation;
—Admission as a citizen, i.e. becoming a French national, remains the pivot of the integration process. Maintaining an open code of nationality, allowing for a rather sizeable admission of foreigners according to various procedures, ensures an ongoing “mixing” of populations. This is also a way of avoiding the emergence and perpetuation of “minorities” with specific legal statuses as a result of confusions between the notions of citizenship and nationality.
—The concept of integration is attached to the principle of equality in that it tries to practically reinforce the expression of equality in the social field.

According to this wording, the integration doctrine often clashes with practices, including institutional practices, which poorly reflect general principles. The firm opposition to the recognition of any structured communities which would add an intermediate stage between the authorities and individuals is often grossly disregarded in local compromises. The gap between tolerating specific cultural features and granting dispensations from the principles in the course of actual social interventions seems quite slim. In terms of practical interventions,

2 Note the use of the circumlocution which emphasises the lack of any appropriate term.
3 The degree of “openness” of the code of nationality is debatable since the granting of nationality is partially a specific attribute of the State. Although there are few refusals, especially on grounds of “lack of assimilation”, there is a reported increase in adjournments on grounds of job precariousness, which in turn has an aggravating effect on the economic instability of migrant populations. Adjournment criteria in cases of lack of professional activity were eased at the end of 1998, in order to better take into account all “insertion efforts made by applicants”.
4 Indeed the HCI are trying to strike a difficult balance when they acknowledge the legitimacy of active links and solidarities between people of a similar origin while
it is constantly being closed. In a way, the working out of French integration policies is a permanent quest to strike an unlikely—and even, according to many observers, unattainable—balance between an active tolerance of differences (including some concessions to the public expression of such differences) and the vigilant reassertion of the “principle of nondifferentiation”.

When integration policies are carried out in practice, they mostly tend to facilitate the admission and settling in of immigrants while striving to incorporate them in the general legal framework. The fact that the administrative organisation of integration is distributed between various ministries (Ministry of Labour, Housing, Education, Justice, Home Office, Ministry of Urban Affairs, …) testifies to the lack of clarification in the objectives of this policy, and in the end to a degree of helplessness in public intervention (VIET, 1998). This simply reflects the diversity of the fields which play a part in the process of “integration” and the practical difficulties in defining a “group” as a specific target. After painstakingly trying to derive policies from specific features and objectives while failing to define target groups (be they “foreigners”, “excluded people”, “discriminated against people”) who do not fall into administrative classifications based on origin or race, integration policies later found an outlet through what we call “urban policy”. Here, rather than naming populations, public action deals only with the territories (such as “neighbourhoods facing difficulties”) where most problems to be tackled are concentrated. These territories are subjected to “affirmative action”, which is a new notion by French standards and a rather hotly debated one too. Walking down this new road through the “neighbourhoods” makes it unnecessary to actually name the populations at whom special policies are directed. But this also means that in the end, the objective of making up for the damage suffered by those ethnic groups most discriminated against will be obscured by the struggle against segregation and the restoration of equality between the various territories.

With the rise of unemployment, labour relations no longer dominated our representation of society and the workplace was no longer the only setting for large-scale social conflicts. The workplace ceased to be the synthetic microcosm of social relationships; these were now played out in the neighbourhood. Tensions moved out into the open (DUBET/LAPEYRONNIE, 1992) and generally crystallised around a few symbols of social antagonism. In this context, the word

emphasising the danger of having “long lasting community gatherings”, and even more so any institutional recognition of them.
"ghetto" became popular in reference to areas where rampant poverty and growing violence were a vivid proof of the demise of the French social model. Critics have often denounced the exaggerated use of this word, pointing out that it lacked precise definition and was often improperly used to describe situations having nothing to do with what, historically, came to be called "ghettos" (DE RUDDER, 1982; VIEILLARD-BARON, 1990; WACQUANT, 1992). Nevertheless, this vague concept now plays a central role in the symbolic management of social conflicts and underscores two strategic issues: 1) the recognition of ethnic diversity and of its impact both on social organisation and national symbolic representations; 2) the management of the territorialisation of social inequality, in other words the attempt to control a system whereby populations are confined to specific areas according to their socio-economic status or, which is even worse in a French perspective, to their position in the hierarchy of ethnic origins.

The concentration of immigrants in one area, as expressed in the both limited and highly emotional term "ghetto", is thus seen as symptomatic of the breakdown of the welfare state's social safety system, and as embodying the ongoing process of ethnic fragmentation. Undermining, as they emerge, the foundations of the republican ideal of a Nation-State, these "ethnic enclaves" are perceived as the sign of the failure of integration, illustrating both its irrelevance as a model and the specificity of the behaviour of recently arrived immigrants. Furthermore, the outbreak of urban riots, with gangs of youths fighting the police against a setting of low-income housing projects, burning cars, looted supermakets and vandalised facilities, has shown to all that urban "marginality" breeds in a specific type of environment. Along the lines of the "social breakdown" (fracture sociale) theme, whereby people with low social status are "abandoned" and kept apart from the more successful groups (through processes of "disaffiliation" (CASTEL, 1995) or "disqualification" (PAUGAM, 1991), segregation is seen as the geographical illustration of the disintegration of social ties. The perception of social disorders as linked to specific areas has gained importance ever since the elaboration, in the early 1980s, of local social development policies under the cover-all label of "Urban Policy" (Politique de la ville). Spatial concentration and social disadvantage thus became increasingly linked. The idea that the concentration of "disqualified" populations was responsible for their social decline still prevails (PAUGAM, 1995).

5 Concerning the responsibility of the welfare state in the "rise" of the ethnic phenomenon, see BJÖRKLUND, 1987.
The aim of this paper is not to verify or criticise the thesis of "neighbourhood impact" on the socio-economic situation or the status (in the Weberian sense of the word) of immigrants, but rather to identify the various mechanisms underlying these concentrations and discuss the problem of what they should be called —"ghetto", "ethnic neighbourhood", "integration area" (quartier d’intégration), "urban immigrant centre" (espace de centralité immigrée). The analysis of these processes and of their impact on immigrants' housing opportunities will be based on a dynamic view of these ethnic groups' itineraries rather than on a static description of their geographical distribution. This choice is warranted by the wish to understand how immigrants adjust their residential strategies to the obstacles set in their path by the housing market and public policies, obstacles which end up promoting an increasingly ethnically oriented segregation process. The role played by urban integration policies in the development and eradication of ethnic concentrations is ambiguous. Indeed, the filtering mechanisms set up to reduce the "ghettos" end up channelling households belonging to certain ethnic groups towards specific segments of the public housing stock, thus leading them to converge in the same area all over again. Deeper analysis of these policies and of their consequences on immigrants' residential itineraries should enable us to shed light on the French dilemma: how can ghettos be eliminated, or in other words, how can the ethnic distribution of the population be organised in such a way as to avoid the ethnic fragmentation of French society? Can this be achieved without having to elaborate policies specially targeted for immigrants, which would represent an unacceptable form of "multiculturalism" (WIEVORKA, 1996)?

**Ethnicity and segregation: a question of concepts, methodology and sources**

Statistics, by dividing society into normative categories, tend to maintain scientific investigation within the bounds of a predetermined framework. In the conflictual relationships between science and politics, statistics occupy a crucial position by their impact on the representation of society (DESROSIERES, 1993). This is all the more true of statistics describing immigrant or immigrant-related populations or dealing with ethnic diversity (PETERSEN, 1987).

For historical reasons, the categories used in French statistical analyses were, until recently, based on the legal definition of citizenship. No ethnic origin —or, since 1872, religious belief— could be used in
describing the population of France. As a result, although sociologists were interested in "immigrants", statistics spoke only of "foreigners". This methodological twist made it difficult for researchers to analyse the dynamic of integration in France. Naturalisation, a procedure which is not overly difficult in France, has had a specific impact on the decrease in the foreign population: 1) since naturalisations usually occur after a long period of stay in the country, those who become French are usually in the later stages of their life; 2) there is a "generation trap door" resulting from the fact that, up to 1993, children born in France of foreign parents were automatically entitled to French citizenship at their legal majority; 3) naturalisation promotes "assimilation", which in official terms includes having a stable job, speaking French fluently and showing signs of loyalty towards one’s adopted homeland. Naturalisation rates vary according to the country of origin. According to the 1990 census, 48 % of Spanish immigrants and 50 % of Italian immigrants had obtained French citizenship, compared to 13 % of Algerians, 15 % of Portuguese, 12 % of Moroccans and 10 % of Turks.

In 1990, statistical surveys on immigration began to refer to the category of "immigrant" to describe those who were born foreign citizens in a foreign country. By using this element as a main distinguishing factor, the impact of naturalisations on the population structure was neutralised, and interpretation errors in the evaluation of "the degree of integration of immigrants" avoided (TRIBALAT, 1989, 1991). In 1990, the population of France included 3.5 million foreign citizens and 4.2 million immigrants (7.4 % of the total population), a third of whom had become French citizens. The figures for the main immigrant communities present in France reflect the history of the different immigration waves since the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, traces are left of the Polish wave of the 1920s and 1930s, and there are still many representatives of the Italian and Spanish waves (12 % and 10 %, respectively, of the total immigrant population in 1990). The waves of the 1960s are of course well represented, with 14 % Portuguese, 13 % Algerians, 11 % Moroccans. The more recent groups of immigrants are smaller, due to the stricter policies of immigration control implemented since 1974 and the early 1980s. The migratory flows from South-East Asia (4 %), Turkey (4 %) and French-speaking African countries (5 %) are gaining momentum, but given the present context, they probably will not reach the size of the previous waves (TRIBALAT, 1993).

However, the French category of "immigrant" does not correspond to that of "ethnic minority" in the US, Canada, or the UK (Statistics
Canada and US Bureau of the Census, 1993). French statistics refer to individuals in terms of nationality or place of birth, but make no mention of their origin, which is determined in other countries either by their parents' birthplace ("parentage nativity" in the US), or by a declaration of "ancestry" (US) or of "ethnic origin" (Canada and UK). The study of living conditions, economic situation or political participation of "ethnic minorities" remains deficient, since the concept does not actually mean anything. Children born of immigrants are not considered a statistical category, and descendants over several generations even less so. However, thanks to a simulation evaluating the "indirect input" of immigration, in other words the number of immigrants and immigrants' children and grandchildren in France since the beginning of the twentieth century, Tribalat was able to come up with the following results: "between 9.4 and 10.3 million people born in France and present in France on January 1st, 1986, — or in other terms between 19% and 21% of all persons born in France — have at least one immigrant parent or grandparent" (TRIBALAT, 1991, p. 24). If we look at the population of immigrants (foreign born in American terminology) and their children born in France (native born from foreign born), the entire group representing foreign stock, we have a figure of about 10 million, or 20% of the population. For the purposes of comparison, in 1970, date of the last census for which these figures were available (LIEBERSON/WATERS, 1988), people of foreign stock represented 16.5% of the population of the US. There is thus a striking contrast between the contribution of the immigrants to the French population and their incorporation in French symbolic representations. The situation is very different in the US, even though the demographic scale of immigration is comparable. These differences show that the two countries have, in fact, opposite "nation cultures".

These statistical constraints were reflected in the results of quantitative analyses. Studies on segregation ignored the dynamics of residential mobility and were unable to account for the emergence of immigrant groups which could not be strictly identified in terms of citizenship. The arrival of immigrants on the public scene paradoxically coincided with their disappearance from statistics. However, the specificity of the French approach is not limited to the negation of ethnic categories; it also concerns methodological choices. Synthetic indicators describing the distribution of social or ethnic groups in the city (dissimilarity, isolation, segregation) have only rarely been used to analyse segregation in France (BRUN, 1994), in contrast to America, where they are extensively, and sometimes excessively, referred to. There are no long-term statistical series concerning the history of segregation, which means that there is
no data making it possible to analyse its various forms, especially in the
case of immigrants. As a result, when ethnic concentrations began to
be noticed and became the centre of public debates, such simple
questions as these could not be answered: are concentrations of
immigrant groups in specific neighbourhoods more frequent now than
in the past? What causes these phenomena more commonly known as
ghettos?

Studies on immigrants' residential movements have so far almost
always been based on population censuses. Social geographers have
studied this problem extensively and produced mapped analyses at the
municipal or neighbourhood level (GUILLON, 1993). Furthermore,
numerous local surveys have shown that immigrants usually occupy
housing with the same specific and recurrent characteristics: either in
public housing for those living in the periphery, or in old, rundown
housing for those who live in the inner cities. Immigrants apparently
tend to settle in the same types of urban environment (VILLANOVA/
BEKKAR, 1994). Until recently, other than geographical and administrative
maps of immigrant residential distribution, the methods of factorial
ecology had not been applied to this population (RHEIN, 1994). However,
recent work by French researchers has made up for this deficiency.

The development of urban factorial ecology, in the context of
"social area studies", has had a profound impact on the way social or
ethnic segregation issues are approached. Data analysis methods have
made it possible to tackle the question of why individuals choose either
to live together or to avoid each other. Several studies have confirmed
the typologies based on the analysis of correspondences (projection on
a factorial plan) between residents' professions (TABARD, 1993),
between profession and type of household (MANSUY/MARPSAT,
1991), and between housing stock characteristics and tenure statuses
(SIMON, 1996a).

This article uses data from a survey on the living conditions of
immigrants and their children (MGIS: *Mobilité Géographique et
Insertion Sociale* - Geographical Mobility and Social Integration), carried
out by INED in 1992 with a sample of 10,000 immigrants and 2,000
young people born in France of immigrant parents (TRIBALAT et al.,
1996). The survey focused on immigrants from several specific areas:
Algeria, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, South-East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa
and Turkey. The questionnaire inquired about the family, professional
and residential histories of the respondents and included a number of
questions concerning cultural, religious, linguistic and social practices
(SIMON/TRIBALAT, 1993). Each respondent was linked to his/her
residential block, itself identified and described thanks to a selection of
variables taken from the 1990 census. Individual characteristics were thus considered in their local context. On the basis of the 6,544 blocks selected for the survey, a typology of residential contexts was elaborated thanks to the combination of a factorial analysis and an upward hierarchical classification ("Classification par ascendance hiérarchique") of housing stock characteristics and occupancy types (SIMON, 1996a). The results are thus not representative of the entire country, but only of the location of each sample group. Unless otherwise specified, the figures quoted hereafter are taken from the census or the MGIS survey.

A brief history of immigration and of immigrants' residential itineraries in France

The main waves of immigrants arriving in the 1920s and 1930s usually settled near large mining fields (ore, coal) and industrial plants (chemical, iron and steel industries), or in agricultural regions. Contrary to what is most commonly thought, they did not disperse to other parts of the country any faster or more easily in the twenties than they do now. In fact, employers encouraged migrants to remain in the same area, together with their families and countrymen (NOIRIEL, 1989). Italian, Polish, Spanish neighbourhoods, and sometimes even entire villages, were thus created (LEQUIN, 1988). In the 1926 census, many municipalities had a very high proportion of immigrants among their residents, as pointed out in the study published by G. Mauco in 1932:

in the town of Jœuf-Homécourt, in the region of Meurthe-et-Moselle, there are 8,200 Italians and 2,800 Poles for a total population of 17,000; in the town of Villerupt, where 3/4 of the population is foreign, one has the impression of being in Italy. [...] The same can be said for regions where new electro-metallurgical and chemical industries are developing. In Villard-Bonnot, in the Isère region, out of a population of 5,442, there are 5,300 foreign residents, a proportion of 95%! [...] Foreign enclaves also exist in the countryside, in the South-West, in Normandy and in the North. The village of Villeneuve in the Haute-Marne region is Dutch, Blanquefort in the Gers is Italian, and so few Frenchmen live there that it is difficult to find members for the municipal council or to appoint a mayor (Mauco, 1932, p.138).

Until the end of the 1930s, the main immigrant communities gradually made their way into French society, while at the same time creating specific structures and institutions to meet the needs of their
group. Large communities of Spanish, Italian (MILZA, 1986), Polish (PONTY, 1988), Armenian (HOVANESSIAN, 1992), and other immigrants thus lived and grew in a context marked by a rather complex infrastructure of shops, schools, places of worship, and by the emergence of community leaders. Not only were these groups located in geographically circumscribed areas, but they also tended to specialise in certain professions. Thus, in 1930, in the departments of Alpes-Maritimes, Var and Bouches-du-Rhône, 75% of construction workers and 62% of unskilled workers, dockers and packers were Italian. Evidence shows that the development of "immigrant neighbourhoods" dates back to the very first mass migrations. The same phenomenon occurred at the time of migrations from the provinces to the city: migrants from the same region would temporarily settle together, near one of the main gates of a large city, and then gradually disperse. Several "provincial" colonies have nevertheless survived, with their own self-help groups, cafés and shops, and even parish churches frequented by the "pays" (people who come from the same village or locality) (CHEVALIER, 1950).

In the early 1950s, new groups of immigrants began to arrive in France. From 2 million in 1946, they totalled 3.4 million in 1968. When Algeria became a French department in 1946, exchanges between the two territories increased. Along with Algerian-born immigrants, migrants from Italy and Spain began to pour in; to these waves, one must add the influx of Portuguese workers at the end of the 1960s. The Portuguese wave, although short-lived (barely ten years), involved a very large number of people, with 50,000 immigrants in 1962 and 759,000 in 1968. Finally, the exodus of the "boat people" from former Indochina brought over 100,000 people within a few years. At the same time, immigrants began to come in from other North African countries and the former French colonies in Africa, as well as Turkey and the Indian Subcontinent.

Urban housing infrastructures were unable to provide enough decent housing for this massive influx of migrant workers, whose families often subsequently came to join them. Since public authorities were also unable to meet the urgent housing needs of these new immigrants, the latter had no choice but to settle in abandoned or insanitary housing; shantytowns sprouted in the outskirts of Paris, Lyons, Grenoble and Marseilles, providing shelter for those who were excluded from the "slum market" (BACHMANN/LEGUENNEC, 1996; VOLOVITCH-TAVARES, 1995). Public authorities then decided to get rid of the slums and set up specific housing structures for "foreign workers". An organisation called SONACOTRA was created in 1956 to manage special hostels, at first only for Algerian workers, and from 1963 on,
for all foreign workers. At the same time, an interministerial group (GIP) was entrusted with the task of eliminating the shantytowns and inner-city slums. In 1975, part (20 %) of the "1 % for housing" tax was allocated to immigrant housing. In 1981, this proportion was reduced to 6.4 %. These funds, however, were never exclusively devoted to the construction of public housing for foreigners (WEIL, 1991).

Most immigrants arriving in the 1960s lived in substandard housing. Over 35 % of the immigrants from Algeria, Morocco or sub-Saharan Africa lived precariously, in hostel rooms, furnished tenements and shanties, and this proportion rose to 55 % for those who came without their families. Those whose families came to live in France rarely remained in "precarious" housing. In 1974, the country's 680 hostels housed 170,000 foreigners. Today, about 100,000 immigrants live in this type of accommodation, most of whom come from North Africa (63 %) and sub-Saharan Africa (22 %) (BERNARDOT, 1995). With the implementation in the 1970s of programmes to eliminate the slums, many migrant families living in shantytowns were transferred to the "cités de transit" (transitional housing projects). These forms of accommodation were meant for households who had left the slums or for newly-arrived immigrants; they were intended as "transitional dwellings", enabling households to "adapt" before moving to conventional public housing. In practice, the families often ended up staying indefinitely in these supposedly transitional dwellings.

Between 1975 and 1990, the proportion of foreign households living in precarious housing fell from 10 % to 4 %. Algerians were relatively quick to leave the furnished tenements: within 15 years, 70 % of households had moved to other types of housing, especially public housing. Housing without basic amenities now represents only 15 % of immigrants' dwellings, as opposed to 48 % in 1975. The living conditions of immigrants improved thanks to two main factors: "upward" residential mobility, and the destruction of insalubrious inner-city slums, more commonly known as "de facto social housing stock". Since the 1960s, 85 % of the furnished tenements have been demolished, and between 1975 and 1990, so was 70 % of the pre-1949 urban housing stock without amenities. The structural modifications of the housing stock thus paralleled, and even magnified immigrants' patterns of residential movement.

As immigrants gradually moved to conventional housing, they settled to a large extent in the public sector, while those who had previously lived there moved up in the housing hierarchy. For the most part, public housing built in the 1960s had not aged well. Furthermore, middle class French households took advantage of the last years of
inflation to invest in property and move out of their public housing apartments. Thanks to these new vacancies, the more disfavoured families were able to move in (TANTER/TOUBON, 1995). At the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, the HLM companies (Habitat à Loyer Modéré —public social housing) changed their policy and began to grant housing to families which had been turned out of the inner cities, then under renovation. The vacancies were thus occupied by immigrant families in need of larger apartments. The massive arrival of immigrants, however, discredited the social housing sector and triggered a downward spiral of social stigma, physical degradation and segregation. Indeed, immigrants usually lived in the least attractive sectors of the social housing stock. As their presence in an area became a clear sign of the latter's loss of prestige, their numbers declined in the neighbourhoods targeted by urban renewal projects (gentrification of the city centre). As a result, from the mid-seventies on, the rate of concentration of immigrants rose sharply in the most deteriorated segments of the social housing stock.

Nevertheless, not all immigrants choose to live in public housing. Although almost 50 % of North Africans and Turks live in HLM apartments, this is true of only 25 % of the Portuguese and 18 % of the Spanish immigrants (see table 1). An analysis of immigrants' residential movements after their arrival in France shows two distinct patterns (SIMON, 1996b). The first, which we will call the "entrepreneurial model", is based on a very dynamic owner-occupation strategy. The households in this category remain in control of their decisions and choices and manage to stay out of both the state or public housing allocation systems and out of private rental housing. This is typical of Portuguese, Spanish or Asian immigrants and goes along with the development of an ethnic business sector, either trade or small subcontracting firms in the construction or electronics industries (MA MUNG, 1994). The second group of immigrants improve their housing conditions not by becoming owners but by obtaining an apartment in social housing projects. Since the housing allocation system is strictly controlled, households have little freedom of choice and their dependence on the state increases. This is most often the case for North African and Turkish immigrants. This residential choice is linked to the nature of their professions: they are often salaried industrial workers and as such particularly vulnerable to streamlining. Indeed, the unemployment rate reaches 26-29 % for men and 36-44 % for women, as compared to an

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6 In 1973, 12% of the households living in HLM housing belonged to the lowest income quartile, whereas this proportion rose to 32% in 1992.
average of 19 % and 22 %, respectively, for the entire French population (INSEE, 1997, p. 85). Due to their precarious economic situation, these groups are increasingly dependent on the social welfare system.

The ethnicisation of social segregation

The high degree of hierarchisation between different residential areas is the first sign of unequal social distribution within the urban space. When households move from one area to the other of this segregated space, they either modify or reinforce the social division of the city. At the same time, in a segregated system, residential moves depend on the concerned household's financial situation and "social reputation". French cities were shaped by social hierarchy, in terms of profession, income, and family structures (MANSUY/MARPSAT, 1991), and this remains true of most European cities (KNOX, 1995). A. Chenu and N. Tabard have pointed out that from 1982 to 1990, the division of urban space into socio-economically marked areas has intensified. Here are the main trends observed:

— the gentrification of well-to-do areas. Upper level professionals, company directors, and liberal professionals tend to settle in areas where their professions are well represented (gentrification by aggregation); in other cases, the gentrification process occurs when the lower classes are evicted (gentrification through exclusion);

— "technical" professions settle in working class and artisan areas, and correlatively, the service sector expands in the areas where technical professions dominate (CHENU/TABARD, 1993).

These observations have been more recently confirmed and completed by a study carried out by P. Bessy and N. Tabard. This analysis, which looks at the residential mobility of households between 1982 and 1990, shows the crucial role played by residential mobility in the social standing of an area (BESSY/TABARD, 1996).

This is the difficult context faced by immigrant families wishing to improve their living conditions. Indeed, immigrants occupy a rather specific place in professional stratification. Globally speaking, they are over-represented in low-skilled jobs and in independent professions (GUILLON, 1996). At the local level, the degree of over-representation can be quite high, since immigrants tend to be identified with a given socio-professional group. In the working-class neighbourhood of Belleville, in Paris, immigrants represent 28.5 % of the working population, but
62% of the unskilled workers and 45% of unemployed. In the blocks with the highest concentrations of immigrants, the latter represent 40% of the population, 81% of unskilled workers and 71% of unemployed (SIMON, 1995). To complete the picture, we may look at incomes: the first decile of average incomes in France is about 90,000 francs per year. This amount is earned by 13% of Spanish, Portuguese and South-East Asian immigrants, 20% of Algerian immigrants, 24% of Africans and 27% of Turkish immigrants. Between 89% and 77% of Turkish, North African and African households earn less than the French median income (INSEE, 1997:100).

In addition to socio-economic constraints, immigrants must face discrimination based on their ethnic origin or race. This type of discrimination has not been studied much in France. It involves refusals to rent dwellings and filtering processes for access to certain types of housing; as a result, the most stigmatised groups are oriented towards specific sectors of the housing stock. These various and contrasting processes have led to the intensification of immigrant concentration in several parts of large urban agglomerations (DESPLANQUES/TABARD, 1991). According to G. Desplanques and N. Tabard, the analysis of professional positions shows a phenomenon of "overconcentration" of immigrants. The concentration of Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians and Africans in "poor working-class" neighbourhoods is higher than that of French citizens with the same level of professional qualification. On the other hand, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian immigrants are not concerned in this process.

The diversity of immigrants' residential contexts is shown in the distribution of immigrants of different origins according to housing types (table 2). Portuguese and Spanish immigrants tend to live in detached houses, Turks, Algerians and Moroccans tend to settle in public housing projects, and South-East Asians often live in recently-built apartment buildings, either in the inner city or in the suburbs. Last, African immigrants tend to cluster in the old central neighbourhoods and in renovated or recently-built areas, living in disused apartment buildings which have not yet been renovated. Developers of low quality, hard-to-sell plots of land set up contacts with African community leaders. These channel African households which are unable to find public or private rental housing towards these owner-occupation programmes (POIRET, 1996). As a result, the social standing of an area is in accordance with the social imprint of a given type of housing. Turkish, Moroccan and Algerian immigrants tend to live in working-class neighbourhoods, whereas Portuguese and Spanish migrants live in middle-class neighbourhoods; the proportion of South-East Asians and
African immigrants is higher than average in the upper middle-class and well-to-do neighbourhoods.

The analysis of social dissimilarity indexes, which measure the difference in the relative share of socio-professional categories between immigrant and "native" groups, shows a mix between the social position and ethnic origin (table 3). The areas with the lowest indices are those where filtering processes are most active, due to allocation policies in the case of public housing, or economic selection or coopting for detached housing areas. However, the similarities between the social profiles of immigrant and "native" residents tend to decrease as the proportion of immigrants rises. Thus, in neighbourhoods with lower concentrations of immigrants, the proportion of blue-collar workers among the "natives" is 37 %, and rises to 48 % in neighbourhoods with high levels of immigrant concentration; within the immigrant community, the increase grows sharper, from 54 % to 75 %. This situation reflects the slowing down of the upward residential mobility process in the more deteriorated sectors of the housing stock. Having left the slums for normal housing, working class immigrants move in next door to native households, which for their part have not moved up in the housing hierarchy. Another sign of the difference in the social status of these two types of populations is the higher rate of unemployment among immigrants, since they are 1.5 times more prone to joblessness than "natives". Thus, even in neighbourhoods where housing allocation policies aim to reduce social disparities, immigrants remain in a position of inferiority.

The social disparity indices registered in social housing neighbourhoods are nevertheless much lower than those of cosmopolitan neighbourhoods. In these areas, there is a wide gap between immigrants working at rather poorly qualified jobs or in small food or repair shops and native inhabitants whose professional positions are middle or upper level. In these conditions, social diversity goes along with a greater inequality of social statuses, and this can also be seen in the difference in unemployment rates. Although the ratio of over-representation\(^7\) of unskilled and skilled immigrant workers is about 125 in social housing neighbourhoods, it reaches 180 in city centres. The social division of urban centres is thus increasingly based on ethnic criteria. Native blue-collar workers have moved out of these areas and are replaced by recently arrived immigrants. In these urban contexts, the congruence between social class and ethnic origin is reinforced.

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\(^7\) Over-representation is calculated as the ratio of the % of immigrants among unskilled and skilled workers to the % of immigrants in the total working population.
The proportion of immigrants increases as the scale becomes smaller, from municipality to neighbourhood to block. At the local level, some spots reach very high degrees of concentration, for instance in suburban housing projects outside Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Grenoble. Neighbourhoods where 50 to 60% of the population is of immigrant origin are not infrequent. However, neighbourhoods with only one ethnic group are very rare. Usually, many different origins are represented, and in that sense, this form of segregation differs from the mono-ethnic "ghetto" type (VIEILLARD-BARON, 1994).

**Ethnic neighbourhoods**

When the most stigmatised ethnic groups moved to conventional housing and especially to the deteriorated social housing projects, immigrants all of a sudden became much more noticeable. However, this heightened perception of ethnic segregation occurred precisely at the time when the rate of concentration of immigrants in certain types of housing (workers' hostels, furnished tenements, insalubrious buildings) was in fact decreasing. The seventies saw the beginning of a process which may be called, using Habermas' terminology, the *publicisation* of immigrant populations: leaving their areas of confinement, they gradually made their way into mainstream society (DE RUDDER, 1993). Immigrants began to play a major role, on the job market, the housing market, in schools, to such an extent that part of the French population began to voice dissatisfaction about their presence and even reject them. The conflicts which then broke out, owing either to difficult neighbourhood relationships or competition over increasingly scarce jobs, were the direct consequence of the "cohabitation" of native and immigrant populations in residential areas and the decompartmentalisation of the job market. Since immigrants and native French citizens were increasingly in contact, or "competing", as urban ecology terms it, conflicts over the issue of "legitimate rights" arose, which in their most acute expression took the form of demands for "national preference"; most of the time, however, they were expressed in the form of antagonistic behaviour and a refusal to accept the idea of "difference" embodied by immigrants. Ethnic tensions emerged as a consequence of the desegregation process initiated in the late sixties.

These neighbourhood conflicts, which have already been analysed in the conceptual framework of "racial relationship cycles" as applied to the question of residential succession (DUNCAN/DUNCAN, 1965), are a sign that a specific process of appropriation is under way in areas
of high immigrant concentration, resulting in the emergence of "ethnic
neighbourhoods". This process linking an ethnic group to a specific
"territory", and called "territorialisation", has been observed in most
areas with large immigrant communities (BATTEGAY, 1992). As shown
in the Chicago school models, "territorialisation" is a stage in the long
process of assimilation of immigrants into mainstream society. Immigrant
neighbourhoods are considered transitional, or, as E. Burgess put it,
they are "first entry ports", making it easier for immigrants to bear
separation from home and gradually integrate into mainstream society
(BURGESS, 1925). This is why immigrants often recreate their original
surroundings in these neighbourhoods: ethnic shops selling native
foods and other products, community groups and associations helping
people out with bureaucracy and providing them with the information
needed to get by in their new environment (reading and writing skills,
knowledge of social rights, family planning, learning to use the health
care services, etc.). By maintaining a balance between their past and
new environments, these various structures play an important role in
helping immigrants adapt to their new society.

Immigrant neighbourhoods also play a crucial role in the
development of community structures. The grouping of a specific
population together with the development of what R. BRETON (1964)
has called "institutional completeness" are what holds ethnic communities
or "quasi-communities" together, according to H.J. Gans (GANS,
1962). J. Remy has suggested calling these areas, where one or several
ethnic communities have established their networks of relations and
structures, "founding neighbourhoods" (REMY, 1990). We suggest
using the term "integration neighbourhoods", to underscore the role
played by local community facilities, created by and for the community,
in the process of integration of immigrants into the city and eventually
into mainstream society8 (SIMON, 1992). True, the fact that this form
of social organisation coincides with a circumscribed area is reminiscent
of the ghetto. However, several important differences should be
pointed out:

—ethnic neighbourhoods do not owe their existence to an
arbitrary political decision, but to an ordinary though powerful
combination of socio-economic segregation and ethnic-racial
discrimination.

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8 It should be pointed out here that integration into the city does not necessarily
entail integration into the nation, since these two entities, city and nation, have
different sets of values and norms which operate at different levels.
— the inhabitants of "ethnic neighbourhoods" in "post-modern" or "global" cities do not necessarily carry out all their activities in one location. Because of zoning, people constantly travel from area to area, for work, school, leisure or shopping. This everyday mobility tempers the "total" nature of the ghetto as formulated by Wirth. Indeed, the residents of even the most closed-in neighbourhoods, those who bear the worst stigma because of where they live, always have access to the rest of the city and other more distant areas. Thus, the identification between neighbourhood and community must be seen in a more dynamic fashion: space is no longer the main organising factor, it is an element which structures community relations and is to be ultimately overcome, and even subverted (WELLMAN/LEIGHTON, 1981). The notion of "ethnic enclave" has given rise to numerous debates (WILSON(PORTES, 1980; SANDERS/NEE, 1987, 1992; PORTES/JENSEN, 1987, 1989, 1992; WALDINGER, 1996) which have underscored the ambiguity of the notion of territorial enclave taken in the strictly geographical sense of the word, as opposed to the more immaterial concept of economic or social "niche".

— there is a considerable difference between the white immigrant "ethnic neighbourhoods" of American cities and the black ghettos, where population density, along with social troubles and violence, are much greater than in white ethnic neighbourhoods. P. Jargowsky distinguishes several forms of "neighbourhood poverty": the predominantly black ghettos, the predominantly Hispanic barrios, the predominantly white, non-Hispanic "White slums" and the mixed slums, which are not dominated by any specific race or ethnic group (JARGOWSKY, 1996:14). These forms of ethnic or racial concentration have no equivalents in French cities. Even though some neighbourhoods are sometimes called "Arab medinas", "Chinatown" or Central and Eastern European Jewish "Pletzl", these names refer to the fact that these communities, even though they may not represent the majority of the local population, have taken over the neighbourhood's public and commercial space.

Recent studies carried out in France on "ethnic neighbourhoods" show that ethnic groups often do not live the areas where they socialise. The function of ethnic neighbourhoods, which at first was to welcome recently arrived immigrants, is now changing, and this transformation was accelerated by the increasing restrictions on immigration implemented since 1974. Researchers now describe them
as "espaces de centralité immigrée (central immigrant areas)" (TOUBON/MESSAMAH, 1991). The notion of centre no longer refers to population concentration in terms of numbers, but to the economic, cultural and social specialisation of a given area: the latter is a centre of attraction for an ethnic community whose members, though living elsewhere, often come to shop or socialise. Even though high residential density is not a prerequisite for the emergence of these new functions, nevertheless, it is supported by the presence of ethnic groups in the area. Indeed, a community's activities are what determines a neighbourhood's character and image, and up to a certain point, they play a role in determining the profile of the local residents.

The notion of "centrality" can perfectly well refer to a system of residential dispersion combined with the grouping of activities, as noted by A. Raulin in her study of Paris' Little Asia —the Choisy neighbourhood in the 13th arrondissement. Though the Asian community has taken over most of the commercial space available in this neighbourhood, the proportion of Asian residents is decreasing. According to the author, there is a "territorial separation between residential and commercial areas". She continues: "Ethnic or cultural communities living in today's urban (or posturban) context do not necessarily mark their presence by taking over an area for the purposes of residing, shopping, working and religious worship all at once. Not only do these different functions tend to be located in different areas, but immigrant communities are less and less likely to systematically use territory as a strategy; instead, they create 'social networks’ which can overcome distance thanks to modern communication and transport technologies" (RAULIN, 1988, p. 240). This new type of centrality is not in contradiction with the notion of "transitional area", even though it represents another stage in the settling down process. Indeed, it is an extension of the "transitional area" phase and should disappear once the integration process is completed, at which point "centrality", as a function, should ultimately lose its reason for existence. These new forms of "consumption at a distance" are in keeping with the traditional practices of diasporas such as the South-East Asian and Jewish diasporas. For the other groups, ethnic commercial and cultural centres were seldom able to exist without the support of a local resident community.

However, other than these symbolically marked neighbourhoods, most suburban immigrant concentrations have been unable to develop specific community structures. Shopping areas are weakly developed, and despite efforts, community groups and associations have difficulty livening up the dreary atmosphere of these desolate areas. This anomic
world of "housing projects" is home to a bored younger generation, whose idleness is perceived by other residents as potentially threatening. These "projects" have neither social order, nor history, nor memory; everyday life is under constant tension, with people living in an atmosphere of small-time crime and delinquency, drug addiction and dealing, degraded living conditions, in a world of joblessness, inaction and poverty. In this context appeared the first signs of an oncoming urban crisis, which would eventually lead to a complete review of the state's role in the regulation of social problems.

Public policies and the ghetto dilemma

In the 1980s, scenes of urban rioting brutally revealed that a serious crisis was brewing in many social housing neighbourhoods. Several reports warned public authorities about the urgency of the problem. In the most famous of these reports, the author, H. Dubedout, drew the outline of the future "Politique de la Ville (Urban Policy)". Describing the emotion felt by the public after the riots, he wrote: "The media were broadcasting to a surprised and concerned nation the image of ghettos where people and families rejected by the rest of the city and society, lived in a uniform, deteriorated and soulless environment. [...] The public found out about such neighbourhoods as ‘les Minguettes’ in the city of Vénissieux, those of northern Marseilles, the slums of Roubaix, the ‘Haut du Lièvre’ housing project in Nancy, the ‘cité des 4000’ in La Courneuve" (DUBEDOUT, 1983, p. 5). The situation was indeed problematic, owing to a combination of negative factors: the state of deterioration of many public housing projects, the "cohabitation" of populations whose histories and social behaviour differed, the economic decline of neighbouring sources of employment, the arrival on a depressed job market of a large group of poorly qualified young people. Given the role played by young people of immigrant origin in suburban social unrest, the public's awareness of this ethnic mosaic increased. The sight of these areas inhabited by poor and immigrant households evicted from renewed city centres brought to mind frightening images of ethnic or social "ghettos". It also rekindled old fears of crime-ridden and dangerous working class suburbs (CHEVALIER, 1958).

Following the example of the cities, employment policies also went through a crisis. With growing joblessness and an increasing discrepancy between people's level of training and qualification and the needs of the job market, it became clear that the existing system had to be
changed. A new approach linking socio-professional qualification to social integration was worked out. Access to the employment market could only be ensured once a person was successfully integrated into the local environment. This new locally based employment policy was developed in the framework of the decentralisation of public action, according to which social and economic decisions are made on a regional basis (WUHL, 1996). This new focus on local action led to the creation of a special programme, called "Neighbourhood Social Development" (Développement Social des Quartiers, DSQ), aimed at revitalising the economic and social environment of these neighbourhoods while helping "disqualified" persons regain their status in society.

Politically, segregation has become intolerable in a democratic state whose founding principles include the equality of all citizens. There is thus a wide consensus on the necessity of eradicating it. However, the term "segregation" refers to a wide variety of situations and processes, and as a result, many possible forms of intervention exist, which at times may even be contradictory (DAMAMME/JOBERT, 1995). With the Urban Policy, the aim of public authorities is to fight social exclusion by working on its spatial expression: the priority objectives of public action are to pull disfavoured neighbourhoods out of their isolation, revitalise these desolate areas, and patch up the breakdown in social ties. Though this Urban Policy was launched in 1977 through the Housing and Social Life (Habitat et Vie Sociale) programme, which concerned several pilot neighbourhoods, it actually only became operational in 1982. The initial intent of the DSQ programme was first and foremost to avoid dividing public and community action into various compartments, such as social aid, schools, housing, health care, etc. As Donzelot and Estèbe describe it, the role of the state should be that of an organiser ("Etat-animateur"), coordinating all the different actors in charge of implementing the Urban Policy (DONZELOT/ESTÈBE, 1994).

The Urban Policy concerns a selection of "priority" neighbourhoods, termed "problem neighbourhoods (quartiers en difficulté)", or "neighbourhoods at risk (quartiers à risque)", or "sensitive areas (zones sensibles)", etc. With each programme, the list of selected neighbourhoods lengthened: 148 in 1982, over 500 with the 10th plan in 1989, and finally, with the "city contracts" (contrats de ville) of the 11th plan, the figure rose to 1500. Several methodical studies on these "priority" neighbourhoods have been carried out (CHAMPION/GOLDBERGER/MARPSAT, 1992; TABARD, 1993; CHAMPION/MARPSAT, 1996) and have shown that these selections were not sociologically coherent. According to N. Tabard, "although the neighbourhoods targeted by the Urban Policy do not rank very high in the socio-spatial hierarchy
[...], their situation is nevertheless not the worst, neither within their own city, nor as compared to other cities" (TABARD, 1993:16). The composition of the selected neighbourhoods is extremely varied (in terms of household types, unemployment rates, professions, proportion of young people under age 20, proportion of foreigners), thus revealing both a great diversity of situations and the lack of coherence in the choices made.

The DSQ programme is not the only existing territorial approach to social problems. Other forms of state intervention have been devised, such as the ZEP status (Zone d'Education Prioritaire - Priority Education Area), granted to approximately 600 areas in France, each often covering several school establishments; the CCPD (Conseils Communaux de Prévention de la Délinquency - Municipal Council for the Prevention of Delinquency, 735 in 1993), or the missions locales pour l'insertion des jeunes en difficulté (local missions for the social integration of disadvantaged young people —221 offices). Public intervention thus heavily relies on local forms of action, as shown by these decentralised programmes. However, this emphasis on the local nature of public action reinforces the spatial factor and underscores the link between social exclusion and geographical exile. Thus, the new role played by local authorities as purveyors of public action is one of the most striking aspects in the redefinition of the "social issue". Disfavoured neighbourhoods receive special funding, but they are at the same time stigmatised. The linking of social problems to a specific area thus fosters a vicious circle: the neighbourhood’s reputation is tarnished by the fact that its residents are poor, and the residents are in turn socially stigmatised for living in a "bad" neighbourhood. In addition to having to deal with concrete problems, the neighbourhood is branded with a negative image; as a result, both the neighbourhood and its inhabitants end up falling deeper into a downward spiral of depreciation.

The problem of segregation became the focus of urban policies with the implementation of the July 1991 Orientation Law for the City (Loi d'Orientatión pour la Ville, LOV). The aim of this law was to promote diversity in cities, in terms both of housing and population. In

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9 The first chapter of the Orientation Law for the City begins: "So that urban residents may enjoy the right to live decently in the city, the municipalities (etc.) must provide them with the living and housing conditions necessary in order to maintain social cohesion, and avoid or eliminate segregation. The aim of this policy is to ensure the integration of each neighbourhood into the city and the coexistence of different social categories in every urban agglomeration" (Journal Officiel, 19 July 1991, emphasis added).
this sense, the LOV established an implicit connection between social harmony and the coexistence of different populations and types of housing. Public policies, having renewed the ideal vision of a city inhabited by a mix of social groups living together and, thanks to this proximity, interacting more or less closely, were once again trying to "organise society through urban reform" (TOPALOV, 1991, p. 61). However, the context in which the "social mix" myth was being revived had changed. In the past, the role of public action had consisted in eradicating insalubrious housing and providing their former residents with "adequate" housing. Since the working classes had been kept in the slums by greedy speculators and property-owners eager to make as much profit as they could, it was up to the state to intervene as a market regulator, and later on as a manager, and provide decent housing to the working classes. The latter were thus "concentrated" in social housing areas, the main targets of public action. But the decline of these "large social housing projects" (grands ensembles) revealed a fundamental contradiction in the state’s system of action: the Urban Policy was trying to reform what was already the result of reform. In this context, the welfare state found itself in a quandary: since state intervention had a minor impact on the segregational processes caused by city life itself, what was to be done?

The LOV tried to counter this determinism by encouraging well-to-do households to move to working class neighbourhoods, and creating ways for "disfavoured" households to move to better neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, the rationale followed by the LOV still remained one of strict control over where the working classes lived. The aim was thus not to grant freedom of residential choice to the victims of segregation—or at least those so considered—but to create a social and ethnic patchwork by arbitrarily dispersing them throughout the city. However, planning the ethnic and social composition of an area meant de facto dismantling the relationship networks based on the social or ethnic homogeneity of working class neighbourhoods. The policy of spreading disfavoured populations throughout the city was specifically intended as a means of countering the concentration of immigrants in one area. The Urban Policy’s avowed aim was "to fight exclusion by refusing to accept a two-tiered society" (GEINDRE, 1993, preface), but at the same time, analysts of the urban crisis link the growing unemployment rate among immigrants to their increasingly autonomous lifestyle:

In some neighbourhoods, the laws of the republic are increasingly losing hold. The problems of ethnic "cohabitation" must not be ignored: what is considered in France "relative poverty" represents a
much higher standard of living than that of most inhabitants of the Third World, and for that reason, cities will continue to attract immigrants. But if the immigrants who arrived in France during the thirty "glorious" postwar years (Les Trentes Glorieuses) had a good chance of integrating into French society, what about the immigrants or children of immigrants who are now unemployed? Just as in the United States and in Great Britain, those who live in disfavoured neighbourhoods have begun to search for an identity as members of an ethnic community, and one may reasonably see this trend as a potential threat to the non-religious principles and values of the French republic (Geindre, 1993, preface).

Although the situation of immigrants has been identified as a significant factor in the urban crisis, surprisingly enough this fact is ignored by major public policy directives. Public authorities have always understood the strategic nature of the issue of the social integration of immigrants, even to the extent that a ministry was set up for that purpose, but nonetheless, no policy ever addressed the specific problems of immigrants (CHEBBAH, 1996). In contrast with this absence of policy, immigrants must withstand a double accusation: on one hand, they are considered potential trouble-makers and on the other, they are a visible and unwelcome proof of the existence of social inequalities, of which they themselves are the first victims. But state action directed to a specific area would be considered a form of positive discrimination, which the "French model of integration" does not accept. Thus, the development of locally oriented public action can be seen as an attempt to adapt common-law policies to specific situations. The ZEP programmes can thus be justified, since their aim is to deal with the educational problems of the children of immigrants, using intercultural pedagogical methods (LORCERIE, 1995). This type of action, however, contradicts the principle of not differentiating ethnic origins and providing the same type of education to all, regardless of the district. Nevertheless, such deviations from the national norm and republican principles are tolerated in areas of high immigrant concentration.

Conclusion

Public policies are based on an ambivalent interpretation of how ethnic groupings are constituted (BLANC, 1990). The residential movements of immigrants, whose presence qualifies by analogy their area of residence, are viewed in different ways by policy-makers. Ethnic
grouping strategies create a *protective enclave* image, which is negatively associated with the idea of a closed-in community. The emergence of immigrant neighbourhoods shows the resilience of the segregational system and demonstrates how little freedom immigrants have in their residential choices. The enclave is a *locked-in area*, and its inhabitants are, so to speak, under house arrest (BOUMAZA, 1996). In contrast to these forced or willing forms of ethnic regrouping, other strategies involve dispersion outside the area where most of the group lives. Very often, this trend is interpreted as a wish to become integrated into mainstream society. In this case, immigrants move to a neutral environment, devoid of community structures, and become *collectively invisible*, or unmarked as a community. But mobility can also be used as an instrument of domination. Immigrant households are often evicted or rehoused because their dwelling is scheduled for demolition, and they are often destabilised as a result of these forced moves. Moving to neutral areas is not always synonymous with emancipation; in some cases, it can go along with a loss of familiar reference points and cause people to withdraw into their close family environment instead of joining mainstream society.

Despite these contradictory interpretations, public policy-makers opted for desegregation. As a result, new obstacles were set in the path of immigrants wishing to move. The implementation of "social and ethnic readjustment" policies in problem neighbourhoods led to increased filtering, thus limiting immigrants' housing opportunities even more. The procedures for the allocation of social housing involve the selection of candidates according to ethnic and racial criteria. Thus, under the pretext of avoiding concentration, households are banished to areas with a "bad reputation", or refused access to social housing. This style of management, which could be called "management through banishment", is reminiscent of the methods of the private sector, where the worst slums are left to those who cannot be housed in conventional dwellings, either because they cannot afford it, or because of ethnic or racial discrimination.

At the same time, demand for social housing is on the rise. Between 1988 and 1992, a 37% increase brought the number of applicants to 915,000. Immigrant households are priority recipients of social housing. More than 70% of immigrants from North Africa, 

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10 The fact that immigrants are not "visible" as a group does not necessarily mean that individuals themselves are not identified as immigrants.

11 For an example of the segregational impact of different social housing allocation systems, see the study of the city of Genevilliers, in the Paris suburbs, by LÉVY (1984).
Turkey or sub-Saharan Africa apply for public housing, as opposed to 14% of the total number of households. This trend clearly appears after examination of the files of priority applicants. In 1992, 34% of the applicants were foreign citizens, while foreigners represent 16% of Paris’s total population. They also represent 70% of the households of five or more members, and their housing needs are specific and not always easy to meet. A consequence of the improvement of immigrants' living conditions is that their proportional presence increases in the areas where they are already numerous.

The results of anti-segregation planning policies thus seem to contradict the intention of "breaking the Ghetto"; public policy-makers are thus faced with an impossible dilemma:

— France is a multicultural society which does not recognise itself as such; ethnic origin plays a more or less explicit role in the stratification of social groups, and in that sense it partially determines a household’s residential possibilities within an urban system strongly marked by segregational practices.

— Ethnic minorities are not institutionally recognised in France. For this reason, public anti-segregation policies are hampered by having to deal with populations that do not officially exist. Worse than that, these policies have led to deliberately discriminatory practices, since certain ethnic groups are barred from some public housing programmes so as to avoid the development or increase of ethnic concentrations.

— The implementation of secret immigrant quotas for access to certain social housing programmes contradicts the professed wish to reduce inequalities. The residential movements of immigrants are "ethnically" oriented so as to avoid neighbourhood conflicts between "natives" and "unwanted immigrants", and as a result, the latter end up being exiled to the areas with the worst reputation. There is a growing gap between the ethnic groups which are gradually becoming integrated into French mainstream society, and those which are rejected and form clearly identified groups, separated from the rest of society.

— Sometimes, but not always, ethnic concentration fosters the development of community structures and activities, such as shops, places of worship, neighbourhood associations, etc. However, ethnic "enclaves" in the economic sector are few and

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not very powerful; they concern, for instance, the Portuguese (construction industry), Asians (trade and small electronics companies) and North Africans for import and export businesses (TARRIUS, 1992). Furthermore, the tendency of ethnic communities to live and work together is countered by the determination of public authorities to enforce the principles of common law and to avoid funding associations whose activities are too strictly limited to the needs of a specific ethnic group. However, in France, for the time being, the ethnic territorialisation process has not yet reached the scope and degree of cohesiveness characteristic of the American "ghettos" and "barrios".

References


Table 1. Housing tenure and occupancy for selected groups of immigrants, France, 1992 (%)

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Source: MGIS survey, INED with the support of INSEE, 1992.
Table 2. Immigrants by country of birth and type of neighbourhood, France, 1992 (%)

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<th>Portugal</th>
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<th>Spain</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
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Source: MGIS survey, INED with the support of INSEE, 1992; 1990 census, INSEE.
Table 3. Unemployment and social dissimilarity by type of neighbourhood, France, 1992 (%)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Neighbourhood</th>
<th>% of Immigrants</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate (immigrants)</th>
<th>Over-unemployment index (immigrants) (a)</th>
<th>Social dissimilarity index (b)</th>
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</table>

Source: MGiS survey, INED with the support of INSEE, 1992; 1990 census, INSEE.

(a) Over-unemployment index: immigrants’ unemployment rate/natives’ unemployment rate.
(b) Dissimilarity index between immigrants’ and natives’ occupational stratification (11 positions).