

MARCH 2006

The challenge of urban cohesion in Europe: update and public policies

How should we handle the social segregation which is dividing our most developed European cities? In answer to this question, the IAURIF conducted a comparative study on social and urban segregation in five European cities: Ile-de-France, Berlin, London, Barcelona and Milan. Although it is essential to exercise caution when transposing studies conducted in different institutional and socioeconomic contexts, this comparison offers a new perspective on the steps taken in the Ile-de-France region. The Ile-de-France region has placed the issue of territorial and social inequality, which mainly affects the suburbs, at the very centre of the discussions on the drafting of the regional master plan (SDRIF), in its aim for solidarity.



© A.-C. Davy/iaurif

Gentrification process, Prenzlauerberg area (Berlin).

Generating wealth, but also unequal income, centres of innovation and competition, but also host to the multi-cultural populations which sustain their economic development, cities are full of contrasts, interspersed with major social and territorial disparities. They constitute an interdependent system in which the situation of the disadvantaged urban areas stems from a number of processes affecting the city landscape.

The selection of the cities analysed was based on a two-fold objective: to analyse the processes and policies implemented in north-western European countries having been confronted with the issue of disadvantaged urban areas for several years, and to examine the emerging issues and developments in the southern countries. Apart from Berlin, in which the development of metropolitan functions was delayed due to its history, the chosen cities play a preponderant demographic and economic role within their countries. With eleven million inhabitants, the Ile-de-France region has the highest population, ahead of Lombardy (9.1), Greater London (7.2) and Catalonia (6.3). Berlin, both a *Land* and city, only has 3.4 million inhabitants. A monograph was drawn up for each city, based on a summary of the existing investigations and encounters with specialists and key players.

Segregation, an issue which is more acute in northern cities

For over two decades, the transformations in industry have been accompanied by increasing unemployment and insecurity, together with the growing contrast between rich and poor areas in the northern cities. Studies on segregation have not been widely developed in the two southern cities, which are more firmly rooted in family solidarity. In addition, the northern cities, once centres of immigration, also have to face poverty, social exclusion, nationality, culture and integration issues. The immigrant populations, essentially labourers, were the first victims of the restructuring of industry. The most poverty-stricken areas are hence those with the highest immigrant populations. In the two southern regions, the high foreign immigration observed over the past few years could become a significant aspect of the social geography in the future.

In the "old cities" in the north-west, the divide between the rich and poor areas is widening. Household mobility is helping to establish or even accentuate the contrasts in the population. A growth in the middle-classes, organification according to the Anglo-Saxons, is currently being observed in certain attractive sectors in the centre or outskirts. The wealthy populations are gradually invading districts with better services and facilities in the city. In London, there is a strong social contrast between newcomers and the resident population, which has led to a number of security strategies for the new residential areas. These recent developments once again show that the social differentiation of the city lands-

The challenge of urban cohesion in Europe: update and public policies

cape is, above all, evidenced by the grouping together of the wealthier classes. Segregation is the most apparent in the latter.

Similarities between segregation processes

Each country has its own history; however, the processes leading to the social geography in the cities analysed point to the same types of factors. Many of the poorest districts are located on the old industrial sites built in the 19th century. Urban policies (organisation of growth, renovation of centres) and housing have also helped to redefine the current social landscape.

Effect of urban policies and housing

In all of the cities, but particularly those in the north, one of the major responses by the State to the shortage of housing after the war was a voluntarist policy for the construction of social housing in the sixties and seventies, with the appearance of high-rise flats. In the southern cities, the building effort was more short-term and ultimately on a smaller scale, particularly in Spain. At that time, the scale of the social programmes was also partly related to the extent of the urban renovation operations in the city centres redefining the social profile of the residents. These urban transformations allowed modest-income households to leave the old dilapidated areas and move into new, more comfortable social housing. The periods of post-war urban expansion were situated in a context of a relative lack of social differentiation and heterogeneous social housing. However, the widening range of available housing, with the growth in home ownership, particularly buoyant in southern

Europe and Great Britain, and the allocation policies in State-owned housing have gradually nurtured the segregation processes.

Over the past twenty years or so, the centres have become a place of preferential investment in many cities (renovation of depreciated urban areas in Inner London, redevelopment of the old central sectors in West Berlin, major urban projects in Milan and Barcelona – particularly with the effect of the 1992 Olympic Games). These major projects have been fuelling the gentrification processes in the centres.

Increasing State disinvestment in social housing

However, one of the major aspects of the past few years corresponds to State disinvestment in social housing in the majority of cities with sizeable social housing. Perceived during the post-war period as a means of tackling the shortage of accommodation, there have been major turnarounds in the social housing policy over the past twenty years or so. Several countries have opted to sell off social housing to private owners or private non-profit organisations: 1984 Right to buy law and 1988 Housing Act in the United Kingdom; subsidised social housing reaching the end of the public contract in Germany and sale to the occupants; privatisation, decentralisation and sales in the Netherlands and Italy. France has not yet taken steps in this direction, how-



Renovation of Sant Eusebio area (Milan).



© B. Guigou/laurif

South Kilburn New Deal for Communities shop.

ever two factors weigh heavy on resources: the insufficient level of current building work, the lowest in twenty-five years, and the initiation of major social housing demolition-building operations within the framework of the Borloo law, with uncertainties as to whether it will actually result in more housing.

Growing poverty among families living in social housing

Growing poverty among populations living in social housing is currently being observed, varying with the location, in the Ile-de-France region, in the same way as cities engaged in the sale of social housing. There is a link with sales and allocation policies. Transfers and sales in London focus on the most attractive properties located in quality sectors, leaving the municipalities to take care of the most depreciated properties. Social housing is becoming a context of social marking which varies in significance according to its relative importance, degree of regional concentration, and the make-up of the resident households. However, its segregative role is tending to increase in the different cities with the exception of Barcelona where its importance is marginal.

Consequently, the poor populations, but also the middle classes, are struggling to find satisfactory accommodation, due to the increase in housing prices and the drop in available reasonably priced housing. There has been

The challenge of urban cohesion
in Europe: update
and public policies

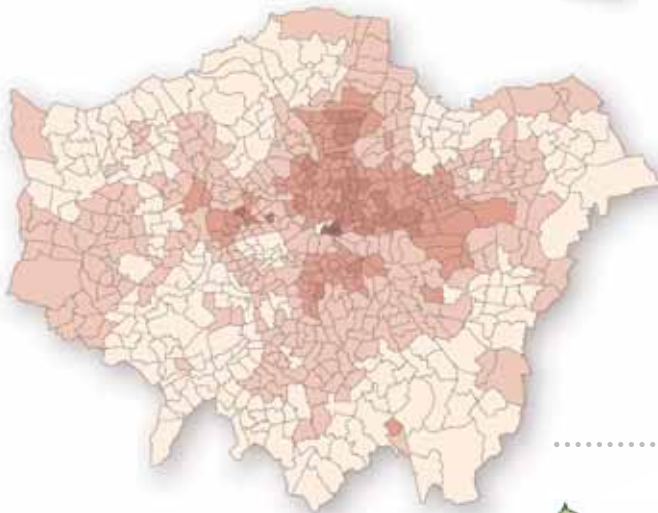
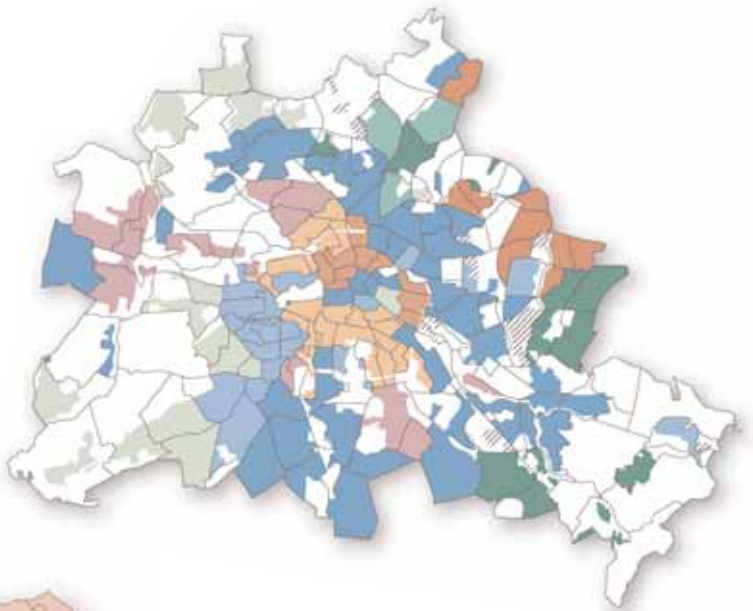
Three examples of social mapping

Berlin

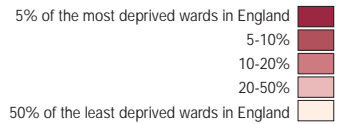
Typology of the districts in Berlin
according to development trends between 1997 and 1999



Source : Département de l'Urbanisme
du Sénat de Berlin, A. Kapphan, S. Wiese.
Septembre 2000.



Greater London
Classification of wards on a British scale
Level of deprivation of London wards
relative to the national average in 2004



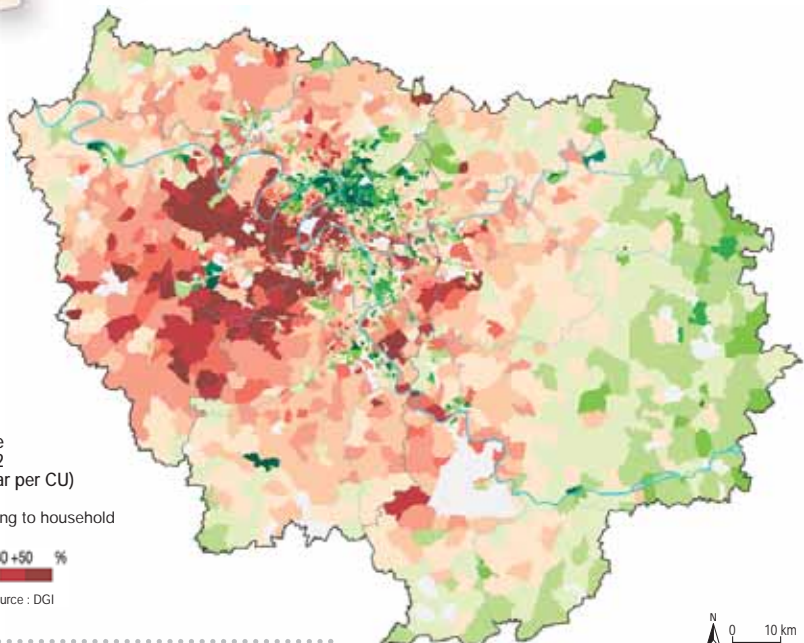
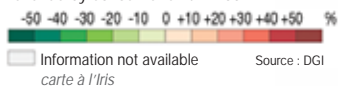
Source : Office of the deputy Prime Minister, *Indices of Deprivation 2004*
produit par GLA, DMAG.



Ile-de-France region

Deviation from the median income
in the Ile-de-France region in 2002
(regional median 18,388 euros/year per CU)

Deviation from regional median relating to household
revenue by consumer unit in 2002



an explosion in property prices in all of the cities analysed, apart from Berlin, since the mid-1990s.

Policies focusing on disadvantaged neighbourhoods

The social welfare systems implemented during the first half of the 20th century in the northern countries, and considerably later in Spain and Italy, have been unable to face the growing poverty since the first oil crash or attenuate the segregative effects. The different countries studied were confronted with a huge increase in their social expenditure in a declining economic context. In order to control their budget expenditure, these countries made two decisions: State disinvestment with regard to conventional redistributive policies, first and foremost *“aide à la pierre”* (or construction aid), and the focusing of public aid on the most disadvantaged populations and regions.

A long-standing model in the northern cities

Since the end of the sixties, a number of policies focused on deprived areas have been implemented. However, these became more extensive in France and Great Britain at the beginning of the eighties. The impetus behind the policies has come from the State in response to urban riots and social problems which have affected certain high-rise flats (Vaulx-en-Velin, Brighton, etc.) and are related to social housing issues. The focus placed on disadvantaged districts is more recent in Germany. In France, Great Britain and Germany, these policies are cross-disciplinary, contractual and based on partnerships between the State and the local communities.

Emerging developments in the South

In Spain and Italy, these policies are much more recent. They are supported by the European Union's regional policies. These have helped convey the belief that the juxtaposition of rich and poor in prosperous European cities is unacceptable. They have encouraged the spread of cross-disciplinary and partnership-based public action to benefit these districts.

A range of measures to benefit disadvantaged areas

The policies focusing on the disadvantaged areas have enabled numerous operations which are more or less permanent, and have led to positive improvements in the life of the inhabitants. A wide range of measures has been implemented. Certain similarities in the operations and goals may nevertheless be identified in the northern cities.

Working to benefit populations or districts: an eternal debate

An important part of investment concerns the property sector (restoration, demolition, reconstruction, increasing the range of available housing, etc.) and the urban sector, urban inte-

gration, infrastructure, public land, etc.). Certain cities, Berlin and Barcelona in particular, have set their sights on improving the urban quality of these districts, working towards territorial equity (re-development of public land, improving cultural and leisure resources, upgrading infrastructure). At the same time, a number of measures focusing on the populations have been implemented in various areas: access to public services, setting up cultural activities, support for training and integration, access to employment, etc. Generally speaking, these “population-based policies” have been developed to a lesser extent than the “area-based policies”.

The operations carried out in these districts, particularly in the northern cities, have several objectives: social support, assistance for local activities or economic integration, adaptation of services and equipment to resident requirements, and the fight against discrimination. An innovative policy was implemented in Great Britain in 2001 with regard to the latter theme. Its objective is to improve the quality of public services in terms of employment, education, safety, environment, health and housing, etc. in these districts. The challenge lies in reaching a level equivalent to the national average.

An ascending or descending approach?

The role assigned to civil society (inhabitants and associations) and to the local level in the implementation of these policies differs from one city to another. This comparative study shows a basic contrast between two types of approaches: the French centralised, descending approach, and the more participatory, pragmatic, ascending approaches following the German example.



© B. Guigou/IAURIF

Construction and renovation of housing in Ciutat Vella (Barcelona).

The challenge of urban cohesion in Europe: update and public policies

The Berlin approach favours an ascending model. The *Land* plays a central role whereas the State fulfils more of an incentive and supporting role. The operations are developed and implemented with civil society and the measures are defined within the context of dialogue between professionals, elected representatives and civil society. The measures implemented are considerably limited by questions relating to the efficacy of public spending. Focusing public action on certain districts comes face to face with an institutional culture and a local political tradition of participatory democracy and pragmatism which favour the efficacy of targeted district policies. This relies on taking the characteristics of each area into consideration, and mobilising local players and specific resources in each district. The procedure adopted in Milan is also implemented on a local level and based on a dialogue with inhabitants; however, the area based policy is significantly less developed in comparison with the northern cities. The second approach corresponds rather to a descending pattern, defined by the State on the basis of the principles and values to be applied throughout the territory as a whole. France is an example of this: the State plays a central role and civil society is involved to a lesser extent in defining and implementing area based-policies.

A more intermediate situation is observed in England. Civil society plays an important role, through associations and the community. This is accompanied by the recognition of cultural diversity, part of the British tradition (for example through the translation of administrative documents into languages most widely spoken by the migrant population). This facilitates exchanges with institutions and adaptation to the needs of the different social

and cultural groups (for example, opening a community health centre specifically for health and prevention in the fight against drug addiction, etc.). This involvement is based on local strategic partnerships, responsible for defining and implementing the projects alongside elected representatives, together with private sector and State representatives, unlike the Berlin model, however, in terms of the definition of directions and objectives, in connection with the regional level responsible for strategic planning. The private sector is also a vital partner with regard to project funding.

Divergent interpretations of the concept of social mixity

Social heterogeneity, as a central value of urban policy, remains a French characteristic. In the other cities analysed, the objective of diversifying housing and the population also exists, but is implemented in a more pragmatic manner and is not perceived as the primary condition for urban cohesion.

A pragmatic perception of social mixity

In Berlin, London, Barcelona and Milan, the diversification of available housing is thought out both in social, economic and demographic terms: maintaining a solvent clientele so as to guarantee the presence of nearby businesses in Berlin, different generations living side by side in Milan, different nationalities living side by side in Barcelona, the construction of private housing to balance out the urban renovation operations in London, etc. Different resources are implemented in order to achieve this level of heterogeneity: quotas for affordable housing in building and



© M.-A. Portier/laurif

Renovation of Floreal-Saussaie-Courtille areas (Saint-Denis).

urban renovation projects, lessors granted room for manoeuvre in fixing rental tables according to local contexts, etc.

Unlike the French situation, these resources may be adapted to the local context, usually through negotiation with private and public players. This is particularly the case in London where the application of quotas for affordable housing is negotiated on a case-by-case basis by public and private players. Again unlike France, the local municipalities are at the forefront in defining these directions. In Barcelona, the quotas represent a line of conduct defined on both a regional and municipal level. In Germany, the 2001 housing law gives lessors the option of adapting their contracts and moving away from the rental ceilings for their properties in order to maintain a degree of population diversity within difficult areas.

However, although Germany draws inspiration from the French concept of social mixity, more so than the other countries, this is based on a case-by-case evaluation of the social situation and the introduction of housing. This heterogeneity is also perceived as a means of making the areas more dynamic, preserving businesses and public services, and encouraging the mechanisms for obtaining a financial balance.

The challenge of urban cohesion
in Europe: update
and public policies

Specific characteristics relating to France

By comparison, the national urban renovation programme, initiated by the law of 1 August 2003, consolidates this particular French characteristic by highlighting heterogeneity as the main objective to be reached. This reflects a descending approach, defined by the State on the basis of values which are applied across the territory as a whole. This quantitative and homogeneous perception of heterogeneity has certain paradoxical effects, particularly since it centres the debate on the property sector of the project and on the population, to the detriment of certain other issues at stake: socioeconomic integration, quality of services etc. The difficulties in implementing the French *Solidarité et renouvellement urbains* law (*loi SRU*), the objective of which is to bring all districts comprising more than 3500 inhabitants situated within an urban area of more than

50,000 inhabitants to the 20% threshold for social housing, emphasises the limits of the French approach.

Towards greater involvement on a local level?

These analytical aspects emphasise the influence of national cultural policies and methods of governance. It is likely that policies focusing on disadvantaged districts will be increasingly borne by the local communities (regions, districts, etc.). The expansion of Europe to include countries with a low GDP on the one hand, and the stability of the financial budget dedicated to European regional policy on the other hand, carry the risk of disinvestment in disadvantaged districts in the West. Furthermore, the different States have begun to delegate a number of areas of expertise traditionally reserved for the State, in

terms of urbanism, transport, housing and training through the decentralisation process in its various stages. Hence, in the field of housing, despite the diversity of the policies implemented, similar processes may be observed in Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy: State disinvestment benefiting the local levels, reduction in construction aid, the opening up of social housing, and the focusing of aid on the most disadvantaged populations. The situations in the cities analysed are representative of the contradictions inherent in the methodological and ideological debate on the role of common law policies and policies focusing on populations or regions.

This new order also raises issues relating to the varying degree of suitability between the administrative limits and functional limits of the cities, and the governing role to be implemented around shared objectives.

For more information:

- Davy A.-C., Guigou B., Sagot M., *Ségrégation urbaine et politiques publiques : étude comparative – Synthèse*, IAURIF, décembre 2005.
- Davy A.-C., Guigou B., Mandon O., Sagot M., *Ségrégation urbaine et politiques publiques : étude comparative – Île-de-France*, IAURIF, juillet 2005.
- Davy A.-C., *Ségrégation urbaine et politiques publiques : étude comparative – Berlin*, IAURIF, juillet 2005.
- Guigou B., *Ségrégation urbaine et politiques publiques : étude comparative – Barcelone*, IAURIF, juillet 2005.
- Guigou B., *Ségrégation urbaine et politiques publiques : étude comparative – Le grand Londres*, IAURIF, juillet 2005.
- Sagot M., *Ségrégation urbaine et politiques publiques : étude comparative – Milan*, IAURIF, juillet 2005.

INSTITUT D'AMÉNAGEMENT ET D'URBANISME DE LA RÉGION D'ÎLE-DE-FRANCE

Directeur de la publication : François Dugeny
Rédactrice en chef : Catherine Grolée-Bramat
assistée de Marie-Anne Portier
Article : A.-C. Davy, B. Guigou
et M. Sagot, DDHEGL

Conception-réalisation : Studio Iaurif
Maquette : Yohan Desbleds
Diffusion par abonnement :
76 € les 40 numéros (sur deux ans)
Service diffusion-vente Tél. : 01.53.85.79.38

Le numéro : 5 €
Librairie d'Île-de-France : 15, rue Falguière
75015 Paris - Tél. : 01.53.85.77.40
<http://www.iaurif.org>
ISSN 1267-2580
