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Governing diversity without naming it: An analysis of neighbourhood policies in Paris

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Abstract

Cities are places of diversity and notions of super-diversity or hyper-diversity have recently been proposed to provide for a more accurate description of the increased diversification of urban populations not only in terms of ethnicity, but also in terms of demographic profile and lifestyles. In the French context, however, urban policies have mainly been implemented following an income-based definition of population diversity that does not formerly acknowledge 'ethnicity', by contrast to other countries such as the UK. How do French urban policies adapt to the challenge of the increased diversification of urban populations considering they do not take into consideration ethnicity, to begin with? Do they simply ignore the ethnic dimension of urban life or do they find ways to address it? In this article, we analyse the ways in which French urban policies deal with the diversification of urban populations through the scope of equality, without recognizing ethnic difference. We take the example of Paris as a highly diverse but also divided city, in terms of income and nationality of origin. Based on a critical analysis of public policy documents and interviews with key stakeholders, we highlight the paradox of dealing with diversity in a colour-blind context: the focus on socio-economic characteristics makes it difficult to consider the intersectional dimension of inequalities.

Keywords

Diversity, governance, neighbourhood policies, Paris, social-mixing

Introduction

Cities are places of diversity with regards to functions and population groups, and this urban and social diversity is shaping social interactions (Simmel, 1999 [1908]). In the urban research literature of these past 10 years, the notion of 'super-diversity' has been coined to refer to the increasing variety of ethnic origin and individual trajectories with regards to migration in large metropolises such as London (Vertovec, 2007). Moreover, the term 'hyper-diversity' has been developed to account for the many differences within each ethnic group, with respect to lifestyle, attitudes and activities (Tasan

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Koç et al., 2013). However, urban policies are mostly designed to respond to dimensions of inequalities that are social and spatial (Van Kempen and Bolt, 2009). How do urban policies adapt to the challenge of the diversification of urban populations?

In this article, we want to assess the ways in which urban policies concerned with social inequalities respond to the multidimensional aspect of diversity (including ethnicity, age, socio-economic status and individual trajectories with regards to migration). Although the theme of 'diversity' has emerged in urban research on public policies in the past 10 years (Fainstein, 2010; Fincher and Iveson, 2008; Uitermark et al., 2005), the concept mostly developed in pluralist political systems where cultural differences are acknowledged, such as in the UK, Canada, Australia and the USA. In countries such as France, where cultural differences are confined to the private sphere and not formally recognized by the state, the notion is less in use in public policy discourses. This should not overshadow, however, the challenge produced by the increased diversification of the population in a city such as Paris. How do the French 'govern' diversity and diverse cities in the absence of an official recognition of difference in public policy discourses? Some authors have already discussed the invisibility of difference in various fields of public action in France, including urban policies (Blanc, 2010; Doytcheva, 2007; Lapeyronnie, 1993; Sala-Pala, 2005). They have demonstrated that there are practical implications of such an invisibility: the difficulty to address the specific needs of ethnic minorities and the lack of knowledge on their socio-economic trajectory.

In order to contribute to this discussion, we take the example of Paris and analyse the city's 'governance of diversity'. The empirical basis for this paper is formed of 26 interviews with governmental and non-governmental actors at national and local levels of public policy implementation, an analysis of policy documents and an in-depth analysis of 10 local initiatives targeting diversity issues in the North-East of Paris.[1] We argue that the area-based approach to urban policy interventions is a way to deal with ethnic concentration in deprived neighbourhoods without naming it. Motivated by the French integrationist approach, the response to diversity issues does not mention ethnic diversity, but local arrangements and initiatives address numerous dimensions of diversity, such as age, ethnic background and immigrant length of residence. What are the implications of such a choice in terms of policy implementation and social justice? Is the local level adequate to design programmes tailored to the diverse needs of social groups or is the national integrationist approach too much of an obstacle to the recognition of difference? We argue that dealing with ethnic concentration without naming it leads to a paradoxical situation where policy-makers are willing to design compensatory policies fostering disadvantaged minority rights to housing, employment, citizenship and participation. However, they are not able to accurately assess inequalities according to ethnicity, and therefore miss a crucial dimension of diversity.

In the first section of the paper, we review the emergence of the notion of diversity in urban research in relation with other dimensions of political and urban theory, such as multiculturalism, equality and social justice. The second section analyses French urban policies pertaining to ethnic concentration and social inequalities and analyses their evolution in a 'colour-blind' context. In the third section, we turn to our case study on Paris and analyse the discourse and policies dealing with urban diversity. We contrast the policy discourse with the actual acknowledgement of differences through programme implementation that is area-based and targets specific groups.

The changing meaning of diversity

There has been an increasing use of the term 'diversity' since the 1990s, both in European policy and research. However, 'diversity' takes on a different meaning from one national model to another. It is associated with recognition and rights in countries that have a pluralist understanding of identities, such as the USA, Canada and the UK (Kymlicka, 1995; Wieviorka, 2012), even though the definition of group difference may vary: in the USA, the colour line is one of the main criteria of group differentiation, but ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation also play an important role in identity politics (Young, 1990); in Western Europe, it has been mainly associated with immigration and the claim of post-migration groups (Triandafyllidou et al., 2011); in the UK, there is a combination of groups defined according to ethnicity, race and nationality of origin (Modood, 2005). By contrast, the notion of diversity does not sit comfortably in the political culture of universalist countries where there is a low level of group recognition in the public sphere. For instance, in France, the state does not recognize any intermediary group between the national community and citizens, and the French 'philosophy of integration' is based on immigrants' individual incorporation into the French political community (Favell, 1995). A consequence of this has been to resist the inclusion of direct measurements of ethnic origin in the census and other major data sources (Alba and Silberman, 2002; Masclet, 2012).

National models have come under sharp criticism lately. Multiculturalism has been described as neglecting the economic and social dimensions of inequalities (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010). As for the French 'colour-blind' approach, it has come under criticism in view of continued racial discrimination. The exposure of discrimination in employment (Meurs et al., 2006), together with the European incentive to implement anti-discrimination policies following European Union (EU) directive 2000/43/EC (Geddes and Guiraudon, 2004) provided for an important change in policy implementation: the workplace became a site of experimentation for various *diversity* programmes, which took the diversity of the workforce as a sign that discrimination does not occur (Bereni, 2009). Empirical evidences show that the limited adoption of the term 'diversity' in France did not remain unquestioned: diversity remains associated with cultural differences and the very fact that differences are acknowledged is often interpreted as a sign that individuals are not equally considered (Bereni and Epstein, 2015).

Arguably, there is a level of uncertainty around the interpretation of the concept of diversity that is not only specific to universalistic colour-blind countries, such as France. In the USA, where there is a legal obligation to foster diversity as a way to fight discrimination, there is a discussion between the notion as a useful tool to reach equality or as a value per se (Sabbagh, 2007). In general, there is a lack of a settled agreement on the meaning given to diversity, not least in the specific field of urban research and policies.

In urban research, diversity first belongs to the vocabulary of urban population description. It is a way to refer to cultural and ethnic differences of individuals, among other characteristics. The concepts of 'super-diversity' (Vertovec, 2007 and 'hyper-diversity' (Tasan Koç et al., 2013) move beyond a focus on ethnicity and are not so far from the intersectionality approach: they aim at showing how ethnic backgrounds and identities, chosen or assigned, intertwine with other dimensions such as gender or class (Vertovec, 2015: 18).

Moreover, geography and planning scholars have discussed the ways in which the recognition of difference and inequality has shaped urban policies. They aim at providing critical tools for the analysis of policy interventions in a spatial perspective on social justice (Fainstein, 2010; Harvey, 1973; Fincher and Iveson, 2008). According to Fainstein, taking into consideration the diversity of urban populations is a key step in providing equal access to a variety of groups (2010). In addition, the socio-spatial perspective offered by these authors emphasizes the physical forms of the place of living in the centre of the discussion on inequalities (Saunders, 2011). It lays the emphasis on planning and neighbourhood policies as relevant tools to guarantee a redistributive social justice and to contribute to a more egalitarian society (Sandercock, 1977). Therefore, diversity as an answer to the diverse needs of social groups can be regarded as a guiding principle for city planners.

In France, by contrast, urban research has mainly developed following an income-based approach to social inequalities and the analysis of urban policies unfolds differently. This is mainly due to the influence of the Marxist sociology and its analysis of urban planning as contributing to increasing class divisions and segregation (Lefebvre, 1968). This approach considered social groups in terms of the domination of one group – the elite – over the other one – the working class – and paid less attention to the level of individual interactions. This is one reason why the mainstream of urban research in France defined inequality in terms of unequal resource distribution, and not through other categories of differences, such as gender, ethnicity and race. This approach led to a productive debate on the articulation between social and spatial justice. It allowed for the creation of the concept of the 'right to the city' by Henri Lefèvre that accounts for the social production of space in the city and launched a discussion on spatial justice (Soja, 2010). The literature on spatial justice aims at addressing the link between social and spatial inequalities. It did provide for some developments with respect to other categories of inequalities, such as gender and sexual orientation (Hancock, 2011). However, the bulk of French urban research remains rather alien to the pluralist dimension of diversity and policy implementation is articulated around the concept of equality.

Governing diversity in France through the objective of equality

France has a long-standing tradition of urban policies referring to the objective of equality. When urban issues started to be identified as public policy problems in the 1980s, a rhetoric of redressing spatial inequality was deployed (Donzelot, 1994). The first programme to be implemented was designed to fight the formation of 'ghettos', understood as the unequal concentration of poverty in specific urban areas. Neighbourhood Social Development (*Développement social des quartiers*) had two objectives: improving the state of the unfit housing stock, and reducing social conflicts. Although distinct, these two objectives were regarded as intrinsically linked: once the issue of housing conditions was solved, the social life of the inhabitants could improve. In practice, it consisted of allocating more means to disadvantaged areas and rebalancing the unequal distribution of resources and incomes on the French territory (Dubedout, 1983). From an experimental basis, the programme became institutionalized with the creation of a Ministry of City Policy in 1990.

The decision to label urban development policies 'City Policy' (*politique de la Ville*) can be misleading, as they only target specific disadvantaged neighbourhoods within the city, and are decided at national level. They are neighbourhood policies, with a universalist scope. They implement the principle of spatial solidarity throughout the country. They consist of transferring financial contributions from rich areas to poor areas and support the implementation of urban regeneration programmes.[2] These poor areas used to be labelled Urban Sensitive Zones (ZUSs) and were renamed City Policy Neighbourhoods (QPVs) in 2014.[3] They do not overlap with a particular district or municipality, but rather, they consist of a selection of neighbourhoods that qualify as disadvantaged, according to the level of income per inhabitant. This approach to spatial inequalities was recently re-defined under the concept of 'territorial equality', a reaffirmation of the principle of equality through an objective of national balance in terms of economic growth and social justice (Wendeln, 2014).

Related to the objective of equality is the belief in social-mixing. In France, social-mixing is based on the idea that the concentration of low-income inhabitants in one neighbourhood is an obstacle to social integration. Its strategy is twofold: on one hand, the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Law consists of legally obliging municipalities with less than 20–25% of their housing stock as social housing to build more social housing and to provide housing to low-income households (SRU Law, 13 December 2000 and adjustments); on the other hand, it consists of introducing middle-class families in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

French urban policy-makers conflate the objective of equality with the imperative of equal treatment of all citizens 'regardless of their ethnic origin, race or religion' (1958 French Constitution of the Fifth Republic, article 1). This has consequences in terms of urban policy implementation and evaluation. In terms of implementation, the target population is never described as ethnic in urban and social housing policies. It is even illegal to resort to some ethnic criteria in social housing allocation (Sala-Pala, 2013). However, the concentration of immigrants of the same national origin is regarded as an obstacle to their integration and is a concern for policy-makers. It is based on the assumption that the French population results from a fusion between various peoples and that newcomers incorporate into a melting-pot (Noiriel, 1996). Social-mixing policies are therefore unofficially targeting immigrants and their offspring, and are often coupled with programmes that seek to foster social interactions among inhabitants (Epstein and Kirszbaum, 2003). They are based on the premise that greater social diversity increases the level of interactions, opportunities and liveability in a neighbourhood (Lelévrier, 2013: 409). In terms of policy evaluation, disadvantaged neighbourhoods are always described according to socio-economic criteria rather than ethnic categories, even though the presence of immigrants is a common trait to most neighbourhoods that qualify as ‘disadvantaged’ (Lelévrier, 2005). As such, indicators of socio-economic vulnerability are used as proxies for the description of immigrant populations and notions of ‘social exclusion’ or ‘social vulnerability’ work as periphrases to refer to processes that affect immigrant families primarily.

A closer look at the issue of immigrant populations and housing shows a more complex picture, however. Immigrants, as described by the National Office of French statistics, are foreign-born individuals who may or may not have acquired French nationality after five continuous year of legal residence in France: in 2013, 40% of immigrants living in France were French (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques (INSEE), 2016). Moreover, children of foreign-born parents automatically become French when they reach 18 years old. When one considers their distribution across the French territory, they do not massively live in the deprived neighbourhoods that are the target of French urban policies. Rather, they concentrate in the degraded parts of the private housing sector of inner cities. Arguably, immigrants are over-represented in the deprived neighbourhoods that the City Policy targets: 52% of the inhabitants were immigrants or descendants of immigrants, versus 20% of the population outside of the deprived neighbourhoods (ONZUS, 2012). However, the notion that these priority neighbourhoods concentrate immigrant populations is also a political and media construction that labels as ‘immigrant’ everything that has something to do with migration-related diversity, regardless of the nationality of the individual. This last point is clearly perceived by the people living in these neighbourhoods: only 57% of French people with an immigrant background feel that they are considered as French by the rest of the population, versus 79% for those who live outside of these neighbourhoods.

The emphasis on equality and the fact that City Policies target the immigrant population without naming them has been highlighted by several scholars (Blanc, 2010; Dikec, 2006: Doytcheva, 2007; Kirszbaum, 2004; Lelévrier, 2010; Moore, 2001). In the following case study, we contribute to this discussion, through a critical analysis of the implementation of City Policies in Paris.

Paris as a diverse city: Discourse and policy implementation

Paris qualifies as a diverse city in terms of urban function, but also in terms of inhabitant socio-economic profiles and ethnic backgrounds. Paris has a concentration of central administrations, business centres, institutions of higher education and numerous cultural amenities. In 2012, it had a higher level of median income per capita (€24,623) than the national average (€18,355), but it also had high rates of unemployment in some parts of the city (13.3% in the 19th district, in comparison to the national average of 10.9%). Moreover, Paris has a higher rate of foreign-born residents (20%) in comparison with the rest of the country (8.4%).[4] The demographic fact of diversity is a vivid feature of Paris population growth: Paris has always been and is still a city of immigration and a place that receives newcomers from France and abroad. In the 19th century, Paris hosted migrants from Italy and Belgium (Blanc-Chaléard, 2000). Throughout the 20th century, they have been assimilated in the Parisian crucible (Chevalier, 1967) and paved the way for the arrival of new waves of migrants.

However, Paris is also a divided city. The northern and the eastern parts have concentrations of higher proportions of social housing (see Figure 1). Newcomers are concentrated in the private and public housing stock of those disadvantaged parts of the city. With urban renewal operations, and the possibility for middle-class owners to move to the suburbs, Paris has experienced a critical process of

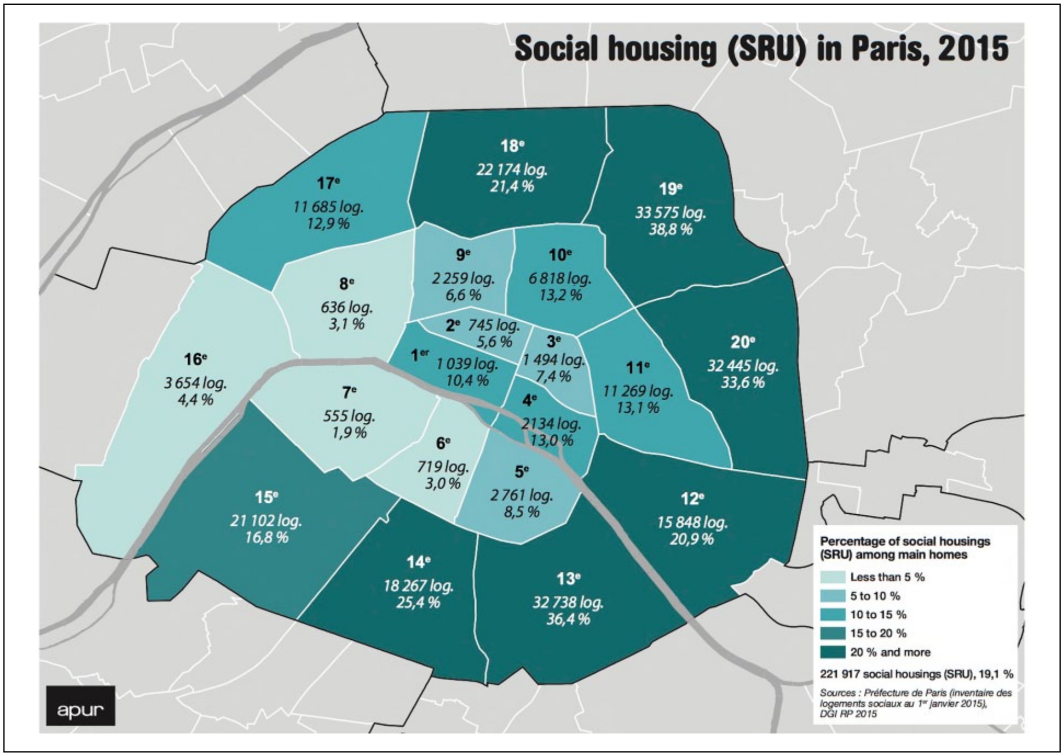
Social housing (SRU) in Paris, 2015
18e
22 174 log.
21,4 %
17e
11 685 log.
12,9 %
19e
33 575 log.
38,8 %
9e
2 259 log.
6,6 %
10e
6 818 log.
13,2 %
8e
636 log.
3,1 %
2e 745 log.
5,6 %
3e
1 494 log.
7,4 %
20e
32 445 log.
33,6 %
16e
3 654 log.
4,4 %
1er
1 039 log.
10,4 %
11e
11 269 log.
13,1 %
7e
555 log.
1,9 %
4e
2134 log.
13,0 %
6e
719 log.
3,0 %
5e
2 761 log.
8,5 %
15e
21 102 log.
16,8 %
12e
15 848 log.
20,9 %
14e
18 267 log.
25,4 %
13e
32 738 log.
36,4 %
Percentage of social housings (SRU) among main homes
Less than 5 %
5 to 10 %
10 to 15 %
15 to 20 %
20 % and more
221 917 social housings (SRU), 19,1 %
Sources : Préfecture de Paris (inventaire des logements sociaux au 1er janvier 2015), DGI RP 2015
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Figure 1. Percentage of social housing in Paris in 2015.

socio-spatial division and segregation over the years (Chevalier, 1967). The northern and eastern districts have experienced a process of gentrification, which is a challenge to the preservation of the social diversity of the city (Clerval, 2013).

The meanings of diversity: The discourse of governmental actors

Because the notion of diversity is not common in public policy discourses in France, we start with a discourse analysis of who understands what in connection with this concept.[5] As mentioned above, the City Policy is decided at national level and implemented at local level through the cross-functional Department for City Policy and Integration (DPVI), so we analyse both national and local discourses of diversity. At the national level, we compare the discourse of the national representative for City Policy (the General Secretary of City Policy) with the official discourse of the Human Rights Defender's Office that is formally in charge of anti-discrimination policies. At the local level, we analyse the discourse of other governmental actors in the Paris administration. This serves to highlight the changing meaning of diversity according to the area of public policy implementation: anti-discrimination, gender equality or participatory democracy.

The discourse analysis shows that diversity per se is not a relevant category of policy implementation for institutional actors, because it is not considered as an operational category of public action in the field of urban policies: 'Diversity is not a word that is used in our professional vocabulary', said an interviewee.[6] The absence of the notion of diversity can be understood through the general reference to the Republican and assimilationist conception of the French nation-state and is more willingly replaced by other concepts such as 'equality', 'cohesion' or 'integration'. As a consequence, governmental actors do not share a common understanding of what diversity means, and what diversity policies should entail. More precisely, the discourse analysis helped us identify three sets of reasons why diversity is *not* a category of public action in France.

Firstly, diversity is understood as a category to describe the target audience of public policies. The fact that diversity resonates with culture – 'cultural diversity' – and alludes to the cultural origin of individuals rather than their social condition appears problematic. 'Diversity in France is used too much with reference to origins', says a governmental actor at the national level of policy-making.[7] What is articulated at national level is conveyed at local level accordingly. Project managers in charge of the Paris City Policy also associate the notion of diversity with that of ethnicity: 'When diversity is mentioned, in fact, it is ethnicity that we are talking about.'[8] In this sense, 'diversity' as a concept suffers the same stigma as 'ethnicity' in the French context: it is seen as permanently assigning identities to individuals and infringing upon their freedom of choice (Wieviorka, 1993).

> I've always had a hard time with the word ethnicity that is imported from the United States and that does not translate well in France. - It is like race. - Identities are permanently re-invented so we do not know what we are talking about when we talk about ethnicity. Those things are always undone and redone.[9]

Although the discussion of the fact that identities such as ethnic identities are fluid and constructed co-exist with diversity policies in other contexts (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000), this point is seen as impeaching the further elaboration of the concept in the French context.

Arguably, there is a reference to the immigrant background of the population targeted in the City Policy programme. The city policy contract (signed between the State, the Region and the city) that guides the implementation of City Policy does mention 'immigrants', along with 'youth' and 'elderly people' (CUCS, 2007: 15–16). Moreover, the notion that individuals with an immigrant background should be taken into account with regards to their possible exposure to discrimination was formally introduced in 2012 (ONZUS, 2012). However, only social and economic indicators are provided by the aforementioned governmental actors. This does not mean that they are not aware that the description of the diversity of the target audience is insufficient. As a case in point, a governmental actor in the DPVI underlines the lack of information on individual trajectories:

> Paris is a diverse city, because there are life spaces that are different, life trajectories that are different, although I am not entirely sure that a statistical analysis of the territories gives us an adequate picture of these differences in trajectories.[10]

However, the fact that the statistical description of the diversity of the target audience is insufficient does not call for more criteria of description – such as ethnic criteria, for instance – but results in the impression that diversity *cannot* be measured.

As a result, diversity refers, at best, to the specific profile of priority neighbourhoods with higher rates of foreign-born, low-income households and unemployment and, at worst, to a cultural understanding of difference that pertains to assimilationist and paternalistic views, and that is no longer desirable: 'We do not use this word. […] We no longer take care of the integration of inhabitants in our buildings; we do not tell families how they are to live in these apartments'.[11]

Secondly, diversity is understood as a principle of redistribution that recognizes differences. In this sense, it is seen as clashing with the French understanding of equality that should apply to all citizens regardless of their origin, race or religion. As argued by a high-ranking official in the Office of the Human Rights Defender, 'diversity is a word that I do not like because for me it should be equality that we refer to'.[12] In the following quote, another high-ranking official in the French central administration refers to this principal embedded in the law:

> The principle of equality structures French public law, which has long been an obstacle to the acknowledgement of diversity. […] The whole framing of the French constitution is based on equality and not on diversity. All citizens are equal and it is forbidden to consider that some are more equal than others. Territories are equally governed: city councils are organised the same

> way and regional councils work along the same rules. Uniformity is the rule and if diversity is not recognised, it is regarded as liberating.[13]

Although the recognition of cultural differences has been regarded as liberating in some pluralist contexts (Taylor, 1992), it is the absence of difference that is regarded as such in the French context. For this governmental actor who operates at the national level of policy-making, uniformity is necessary to guarantee equality.

Arguably, the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation in 2001 challenged French reluctance to identify sub-groups by acknowledging that individuals could be discriminated based on their ethnic or racial belonging (real or perceived). The awareness of being discriminated as a group sometimes precedes group mobilization and results in group recognition in policy implementation (Sen, 1992). However, the fact that the legislation stems from the EU Employment Equality Directive and has mainly been applied in the workplace has linked the issue with the so-called 'business case for diversity' that seems to be at odds with the imperatives of local governmental actors implementing social policies. 'It is something mainly supported by corporations that relies on principles that we do not agree on: individualism, role model…' says a government actor at the local level of urban policy implementation.[14] The business approach to diversity and economic achievement proves incompatible with urban policies and their imperative to reduce social inequalities at the local level.

Thirdly, diversity can be understood in terms of 'urban functional diversity' and 'social diversity' in housing. In this sense, it is mainly articulated in terms of 'social mix', rather than 'diversity'. Social-mixing policies are relevant for Paris. Firstly, the City implements the Solidarity and Renewal Urban Act (SRU Law, 13 December 2000 and adjustments), which aims at favouring social diversity in wealthy areas. With less than 20% of social housing, Paris has to produce more social housing, according to the Solidarity and Urban Renewal Law (2000). Secondly, the City implements state-funded urban renewal and neighbourhood policies, which seek to increase social diversity in deprived neighbourhoods. In a wealthy city such as Paris, the lack of social housing is correlated with the concentration of high income, so the use of some economic criteria makes sense. However, with a high proportion of newcomers, the concentration of immigrants is also a concern for policy implementers. Yet, practitioners are not allowed to use any ethnic criteria in the description of their target population. When asked about diversity, the Director of a social housing agency dwelled on the criteria they use: family size, age and level of income. He associated diversity with ethnicity and the legal impediment to allocate social housing according to any ethnic criteria, and made it clear he would rather use 'social-mixing' as a term than diversity.

The discourse analysis of interviews and policy documents thus highlighted the unease with which diversity is talked about as a category that describes target audiences. Indeed, French urban and housing policies cannot be associated with a 'recognition'-based approach, which consists of making visible people/groups' cultural or social attributes in a positive way so as to reduce harm done to them because of those attributes (Fincher and Iveson, 2008). The notion of diversity is rejected and perceived negatively. It is considered as blurred, too much related to ethnicity and not relevant in the field of urban policies. Paris's urban policies demonstrate a greater proximity with redistribution, rather than recognition approaches, which appears even more clearly when looking at policy programmes.

The means of diversity: Policies and programmes

The analysis of policy documents consolidates the argument that the governance of diversity through equality translates into a stronger emphasis on the redistributive tools of urban policies, as exemplified by Paris social-mixing policies. There are 100,000 demands for social housing units (25% from tenants asking to be relocated) and the objective is to avoid that low- and middle-class income earners move out of the city to the suburbs. The City is engaged in a complex set of programmes that seek to increase the social mix in the South-Western part of the city and improve living standard in the North-Eastern part.

The set of policies that focuses on the North-Eastern part of the city – 18th, 19th and 20th districts – consists of few demolitions, by contrast with what is happening in suburban areas around Paris and other French cities (NPNRU, 2014). The objective is rather to maintain the availability of affordable housing. Notably, the old social housing stock, built in the 1930s–1950s, which consists of small flats inhabited by low-income and incoming migrants, is on the outskirts of Paris. The challenge is to be able to improve these buildings without increasing the rents and pushing out households. As mentioned by the Director of the City Policy Unit in Paris 'We need to keep areas that can receive low-income inhabitants.'[15]

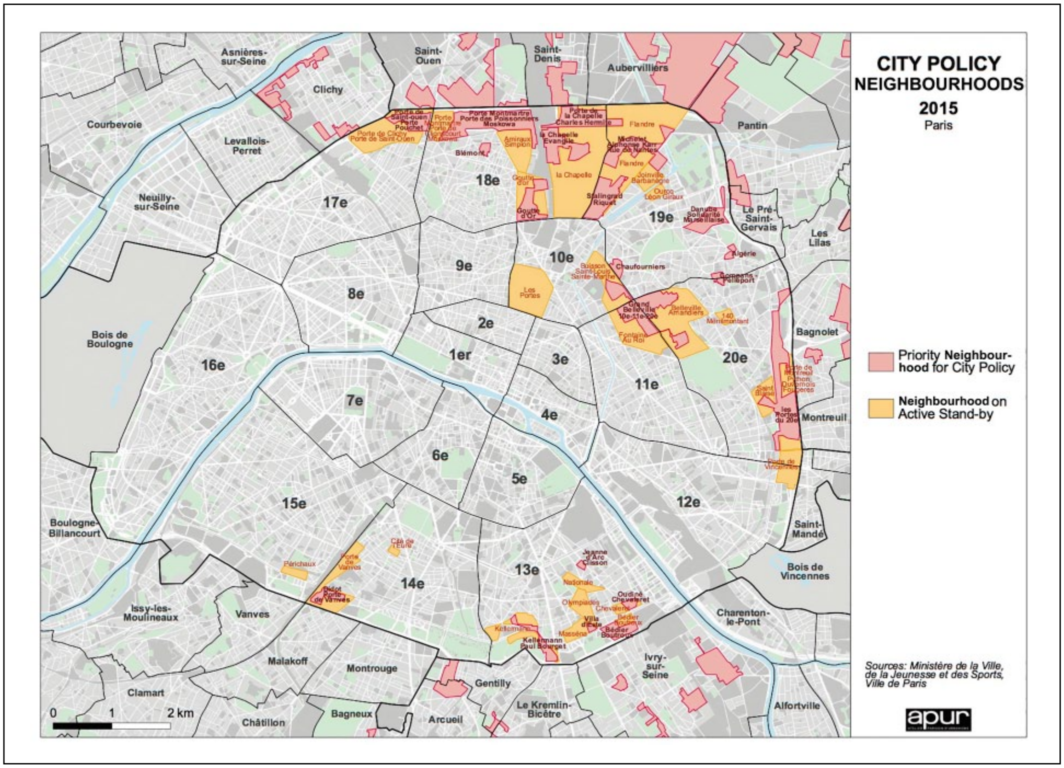
The set of policies that focuses on the South-Western part of the city (16th) is an original strategy developed by the City of Paris, in partnership with Paris Habitat. Since 2001, the strategy has been to diversify housing in the Western part of Paris and allow low-income families to live in rich areas. The city bought empty or partly occupied buildings, renovated flats and devolved their management to *Paris Habitat*. This Acquisition-Improvement Programme implied to change the tenure from private to social rental, and allowed tenants the right to receive housing subsidies. Between 2001 and 2010, 4000 social housing units came out of this process and, between 2000 and 2015, Paris increased its social housing ratio from 14% to 19%.

This ambitious programme displays mitigated results, however. Firstly, building new social housing increased the provision of affordable housing but did not affect the territorial division: the North-Eastern part of the city still has a concentration of 45% of social housing. Secondly, this did not happen without conflict, and protest occurred among the high-income local inhabitants of these areas. Thirdly, according to *Paris Habitat*, the majority of social housing tenants coming from the North-Eastern part of the city aspire to stay in their neighbourhood and are not satisfied with their relocation.[16] This is supported by the findings of a qualitative survey that highlights the numerous challenges in terms of social interaction and local integration that occurred. Notably, it demonstrates that households of African origin who benefit from social housing in wealthy areas do not feel at ease and report more discrimination (Bacqué et al., 2011: 269–270).

It is remarkable that both set of policies are income based, although they end up affecting specific groups: incoming migrants living in the old social housing stock in the North-East and households of African origin in the South-West. This pattern is further observed in the implementation of social programmes in Paris City Policy Neighbourhoods (QPVs).

Paris is a particular case in terms of urban renewal because the city is not undergoing any major demolition and reconstruction of buildings, rather mostly improvements of buildings (*réhabilitation*) and space refurbishment (*résidentialisation*). It is therefore able to allocate relatively equal resources to both urban renewal and the social dimension of City Policy (urban renewal makes up 37% of the budget while Youth and Social Cohesion makes up 41%). In terms of human resources, there is a dedicated team from the City Policy Department Office (DPVI) that oversees the funding of social and cultural activities in the 14 priority neighbourhoods that qualify as QPVs, inside the city limits (see Figure 2).

The implementation of social and cultural activities in priority neighbourhoods operates a mixture of an area-based and a universal people-based approach. In terms of integration, most of the funding is dedicated to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) providing language classes and the translation of brochures in different foreign languages. Although this is aimed at maintaining the city of Paris as 'a welcoming city for foreigners' as a whole,[17] it is mostly implemented in priority neighbourhoods since they are seen as 'important places of prime arrival' for immigrants.[18] In terms of anti-discrimination, the policy is officially not area-based. However, since there is a higher rate of immigrants in priority neighbourhoods (30% in comparison with Paris: 20%), it supports the idea that the means should be concentrated in these areas. Finally, in terms of participatory democracy, the Department for Users, Citizens and Territory of the City of Paris oversees the work of the 122 Neighbourhood Councils established all around the city following the adoption of the 2002 Vaillant law fostering local democracy (Humain-Lamoure, 2010). However, the


CITY POLICY NEIGHBOURHOODS
2015
Paris
Priority Neighbourhood for City Policy
Neighbourhood on Active Stand-by
apur
0 1 2 km
Asnières-sur-Seine
Saint-Ouen
Saint-Denis
Aubervilliers
Clichy
Pantin
Courbevoie
Levallois-Perret
Neuilly-sur-Seine
Le Pré-Saint-Gervais
Les Lilas
Bagnolet
Montreuil
Saint-Mandé
Bois de Vincennes
Charenton-le-Pont
Bois de Boulogne
Boulogne-Billancourt
Issy-les-Moulineaux
Vanves
Malakoff
Clamart
Montrouge
Châtillon
Bagneux
Arcueil
Gentilly
Le Kremlin-Bicêtre
Ivry-sur-Seine
Alfortville
1er
2e
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18e
19e
20e
Porte de Saint-ouen Porte Pouchet
Porte de Clichy Porte de Saint-Ouen
Porte Montmartre Porte de Clignancourt Moskowa
Porte Montmartre Porte des Poissonniers Moskowa
Amiraux Simplon
Blémont
Goutte d'or
Goutte d'Or
Porte de la Chapelle Charles Hermite
la Chapelle Evangile
la Chapelle
Flandre
Michelet Alphonse Karr Rue de Nantes
Joinville Barbanègre
Ourcq Léon Giraux
Stalingrad Riquet
Danube Solidarité Marseillaise
Algérie
Chaufourniers
Buisson Saint-Louis Sainte-Marthe
Les Portes
Compans - Pelleport
Grand Belleville 10e-11e-20e
Belleville Amandiers
140 Ménilmontant
Fontaine Au Roi
Porte de Montreuil Python Duvernois Fougères
Saint Blaise
les Portes du 20e
Porte de Vincennes
Jeanne d'Arc Clisson
Nationale
Olympiades
Oudiné Chevaleret
Chevaleret
Villa d'Este
Bédier Boutroux
Masséna
Kellermann
Kellermann Paul Bourget
Cité de l'Eure
Périchaux
Porte de Vanves
Didot Porte de Vanves

Sources: Ministère de la Ville, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, Ville de Paris

Figure 2. City Policy Neighbourhoods (QPVs) in Paris in 2015.

work of this Department has been dedicated, since 2008, to reach Parisians who keep away from these structures, should it be for their lack of information or assumption that it is not for them. This policy has been articulated in universal terms: ‘reaching to all Parisians’,[19] even though it is based on the observation that the composition of these councils is homogenous (mainly white men of higher socio-professional categories, sometimes retired), which is clearly advocating for a diversification of the composition of these councils in terms of ethnic origin, age group and gender.

The constant shift between the rhetoric of universal people-based policies and the practice of initiatives targeting de facto specific groups appears as a pattern in diversity policy implementation. It is linked to the fundamental ambiguity between the legal impediment that prevents governmental actors from officially targeting specific groups – such as immigrant groups, for instance – and the necessity for them to adapt to the demographic reality of the neighbourhoods they work with, namely their high share of young people with an immigrant background. It is consolidated by the observation of programme implementation in coordination with local non-governmental organizations.

The implementation of the social part of the area-based initiatives of the City of Paris is done via funding to NGOs that deliver various activities. The analysis of a set of 10 programmes run by NGOs in Paris shows an interesting gap between the formal position adopted in the documents and the city discourse on the one hand, and the micro-local practices of local NGOs on the other hand (for more details, see Escafré-Dublet and Lelévrier, 2014). While the perspective of non-governmental actors on the issue of diversity may vary according to their background and professional trajectory, the necessity to adapt their activity to the institutional demand leads them to articulate a discourse in universal terms, even though they target specific groups. For example, a programme of social cafés for ageing immigrants was initially refused because it targeted specific ethnic groups. However, when it became clear that the specific needs of ageing migrants were *not* accommodated by the ordinary law system and that the organization could help fill this gap, the organization was embraced by the administration and it was later featured in the highlights of their communication documents (APUR, 2010).

The same findings emerged from another initiative that seeks to structure the garment and fashion industries of the historic immigrant neighbourhood of *La Goutte d'Or*. The *Golden Drops of Fashion and Design* initiative puts a wide range of professionals in contact with one another, providing them with skill development and helping them promote their productions outside the neighbourhood. The discourse of the project manager is articulated in colour-blind terms ('provide all businesses of the area with administrative support in accounting and client outreach'), although it is clearly targeting the already existing businesses of wax fabric shops and African-run tailors ('some business owners are not familiar with French language and administrative processes').[20] Moreover, the initiative targets a business that is regarded as largely marred with illegal practices in terms of employment, purchase and sale. While the colour-blind discourse can be considered as a way to avoid naming and shaming, it is also a way to implement regulation practices under the guise of support and promotion.

Programme implementation in coordination with local NGOs can be tailored to the needs of the diverse social groups who reside in the area (e.g. ageing migrants, newcomers in the garment industry). The French area-based approach to equality and redistribution therefore allows for a measure of recognition of the multidimensional aspect of diversity (i.e. age, length of residence). However, the span of the programme is limited to specific areas and the monitoring of the action is only done at the aggregated level of Priority Neighbourhoods. The lack of data at the level of inhabitants prevents policy-makers from evaluating the impact of the programmes on individual trajectories. Despite a sophisticated system of redistribution and adaptation to specific needs, the French integrationist approach eventually hinders the governance of diversity.

Conclusion

As shown in our analysis, diversity is regarded as taboo or too broad by French governmental and non-governmental actors, not least due to the fact that it is illegal to identify particular sub-groups of the French population in official statistics and policy implementation. The majority of the interviewees connect diversity with ethnic issues and thus reject it, do not use it or do not feel at ease with this meaning. Some neutralize this connotation by citing general, urban and social understandings of diversity, partly referring to the diversity of cities, neighbourhoods and uses of public space, and partly referring to social-mixing policies based on income criteria – the unique criteria for the selection of Priority Neighbourhoods since 2014, and the main criteria for housing allocation policies. However, diversity can be a category of analysis in urban studies and an explicit concept in anti-discrimination policies, policies that guarantee an equal access to human rights and policies that promote gender equality. In their understanding of diversity, such policies include all kinds of social differences (age, gender, cultural origin, handicap, sexual orientation, etc.).

In French urban policies, neighbourhood and housing policies are the main policies concerned with issues of diversity. They are articulated in terms of social diversity and aim at maintaining a certain level of diversity, in terms of income and family size in housing. However, they end up affecting immigrants when they have low income and live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which is the case in Paris. As such, Paris social-mixing strategies have not reduced the socio-spatial division of the city: there is a concentration of low-income households and immigrants in the most deprived districts. Moreover, in Paris suburbs, urban renewal programmes have not been able to stop the impoverishment and concentration of immigrants in deprived neighbourhoods (Goulard and Pupponi, 2010). On the contrary, urban renewal policies tend to enhance the re-concentration of poor and immigrant families in the most deprived buildings and districts where the most affordable and large social housing units are located (Lelévrier, 2010). This is one of the specificities of the French paradox: not saying that immigrants are the main target of area-based policies, but implementing actions that take into account their cultural background and specific needs at the neighbourhood level (Moore, 2001).

This paradox has multiple consequences. On the receiving hand of policy implementation, the subsequent stages of the research showed that immigrant groups have a very limited knowledge of the benefit of state redistributive policies (Lelévrier et al., 2016). Moreover, due to the uncertainty of what diversity is about, cities and other local actors implement strategies in the name of social diversity that have contrasting results. Some local initiatives may effectively respond to the needs of specific ethnic groups, while other types of measures may encourage the arrival of middle-class newcomers and respond to their needs, to the expense of the already existing ethnic groups in the area. On one hand, redistribution policies dealing with income diversity are substancial in France and especially in a rich city as Paris. On the other hand, the absence of a formal acknowledgement of ethnicity on the part of the policy-makers results in an absence of recognition of these various processes and an enhanced feeling of discrimination among the most disadvantaged segments of the population. The colour-blind approach therefore could contribute to the maintenance of a racial order of things that is pervasive in other research and fields of policy implementation (Fassin and Fassin, 2006; Sala-Pala, 2013).

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Notes

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2. The state created the Urban Solidarity Fund (DSU) to provide for the redistribution of tax-induced income from high-income to low-income areas in 1991.
3. The re-labelling resulted in the exclusion of a number of areas that are not as poor in terms of household income. They are now referred to as Neighbourhood on Stand-by (*quartier en veille*). See Figure 2 for more details on Paris.
4. APUR, 2010.
5. Our approach of discourse analysis is that of *discourse historical approach* (Wodak, 2001). We are interested in understanding the meaning associated with the term 'diversity' in relation to the broader socio-political context of urban policy implementation. Our analysis is 'problem-oriented'; it is informed of the necessity to contextualize the discourse of governmental actors at each level of policy implementation.
6. Interview with a Neighbourhood Project Manager in Paris, 18 November 2013.
7. Interview with the Head of the Anti-Discrimination Department in the Office of the Human Rights Defender, 11 September 2013.
8. Meeting with Neighbourhood Project Managers in Paris, 4 September 2013.
9. Interview with a Project Manager of the City Policy General Secretary, 11 October 2013.
10. Interview with the Director of the City Policy Unit (DPVI), 3 October 2013.
11. Interview with a Neighbourhood Project Manager in Paris, 18 November 2013.
12. Interview with the Head of the Anti-Discrimination Department in the Office of the Human Rights Defender, 11 September 2013.
13. Interview with the Assistant Director of the City Policy General Secretary, 11 October 2013.
14. Interview with a project manager in the Paris City Policy Department, 4 October 2013.
15. Interview with the Director of the City Policy Unit (DPVI), 3 October 2013.
16. Interview with the Assistant Director of Paris Habitat, 17 October 2013.

17. Interview with Head of City Policy Unit (DPVI), 12 September 2013.
18. Interview with Neighbourhood Project Manager, 18 November 2013. French integration policies have been limited to the first five years that immigrants spend in France. They focus on language training and skill attainment (Beaujeu and Simon, 2018).
19. Interview with the Director of the Department for Users, Citizens and Territory, 11 September 2013.
20. Interview with Project Manager, 25 March 2014.

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