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The Blue Funk in the Fish-Tank: A Study on the French *Banlieue* Riots

The problems of French suburbs came to the fore in the early 1980s, particularly during what was known as "Hot Summer" of 1981. This study investigates the social polarization between the poor and the affluent caused spatial segregation in the *banlieus* of France. Situated about fifteen kilometers east of Paris in the area of Seine Saint-Denis, the housing projects, or *habitation à loyer modéré* (HLM) as they are known in France, of Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil were constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s mostly in peripheral areas. HLM were considered as an answer for the increasing housing needs after the Second World War, particularly for low-income families, although large numbers of middle-class families lived there in the early post-war period. And in their early years, they improved the living conditions of many families. Today the neighborhoods are mostly inhabited by multicultural minority groups, a mix of low-income, immigrant, North African, and Muslim groups. The multicultural *banlieues* are isolated and suffer poor infrastructure and poor transportation links to the urban center and neighboring towns. This study focuses on the causes of violence and crime and the relationship of power and powerlessness in an urban context. Gentrification enters in to the picture in the recent years for the *banlieues*' cases as globalization has pushed renewal projects into city peripheries and old city centers across the world.

"All you are homicides! Let's shoot! It's easy! We don't have guns! We only have stones!"

Mathieu Kassovitz's movie *La Haine* (Hate) begins with these words from a youth in a Paris *banlieue* (Fig. 1). A full decade before the 2005 riots in France, the film *La Haine* announced a long-standing reality of French *banlieues*, depicting a day in the life of Hubert, Said, and Vinz, of African, Arabic, and Jewish descent, respectively. The plot demonstrates a life in a closed, humiliated world of youngsters with little hope and no clear exit, where the youngsters have much time on their hands but little to do; the male residents of *banlieues* spend their time talking, joking, listening to music, break dancing, boxing, and in some cases vandalizing property, dealing and using drugs, and committing theft. The despair and social exclusion of the daily lives of the youngsters are brilliantly depicted through street scenes absent any female participation (Soumahoro, 2008).

A full decade after the film was released, France was rocked by urban riots. The predictors of delinquency are structural factors, like racial and ethnic heterogeneity, housing instability, and economic polarization (Body-Gendrot, 2000). Therefore, to better understand the reasons for the riots, one should focus on the location of housing, the demographic structure of the inhabitants, economic polarization as the social dimension of the riots, and the reflection of the society towards the riots.

Situated about fifteen kilometers east of Paris in the area of Seine Saint-Denis, the housing projects, or *habitation à loyer modéré* (HLM) as they are known in France, of Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil were constructed in the late 1960s and early 1970s by private sector initiative as a response to the need for affordable housing in the city (Forgione, 2007). HLM were considered as an answer for the increasing housing needs after the Second World War, particularly for low-income families, although large numbers of middle-class families lived there in the early post-war period. HLM were built mostly in peripheral areas. And in their early years, they improved the living conditions of many families. However, most of them

Fig. 1 - A scene from La Haine (Hate), by Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995.

suffer from a lack of links to public transportation, social and cultural facilities, shops, etc. They were also built of cheap materials and quickly began to physically degrade (Fig. 2) (Dikec, 2007). HLM neighborhoods were first inhabited by highly skilled French workers. However, by the 1970s, with the economic decline stemming from the petroleum crisis, the profile of the French working class changed, and unskilled immigrant laborers replaced skilled laborers. This replacement also caused a change in the workers' neighborhoods. This change at the neighborhood level was part of a broader trend dating back to the mid-1960s, when the period of economic growth just before the petroleum crisis propelled many working-class families into the ranks of the lower and middle income groups. When colonial immigrants began to move in to fill the new jobs left by this shift, mostly the worst industrial jobs, the demographic profile of the suburbs changed too, resulting in white flight

(Newsome, 2009). Compounding this trend was the housing finance reform of 1977, which aimed to increase the number of owner-occupied housing. This provided new opportunities to the early inhabitants of HLM dissatisfied by the living conditions of their neighborhoods, thereby accelerating the process of white flight and bringing socio-economically disadvantaged groups to the HLM housing regions in their stead (Dikec, 2007).

Today the neighborhoods are mostly inhabited by multicultural minority groups, a mix of low-income, immigrant, North African, and Muslim groups. According to the survey of Comité Interministériel à la Ville, by October 2000, only 20 percent of HLM residents owned their own units. At present, the housing region suffers from degrading physical conditions, like defects of construction and insulation materials, as well as problems like humidity, management issues, and isolation due to separation from the highway that was envi-

Fig. 2 - The use of cheap buildings materials caused physical degradation in a short span of time. Clichy-sous-Bois, 2000, http://softmorningcity.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/clichysous.jpg.

WHAT SPARKED THE RIOTS?

After an afternoon playing football, three youngsters were on their way home when they began to be chased by police, who had received a call about a break-in the neighborhood. The youngsters hid in an electrical substation. There was an accident, and two of the young boys, ages fifteen and seventeen, died, and the third, age twenty-one, was injured. The two who died were from North African and Mali, and the third, who suffered severe burns, was of Turkish origin (Dikec, 2007). After the incident in Clichy-sous-Bois, the future president Nicolas Sarkozy blamed the boys and denied that the police had any responsibility for the incident. No attempt at a break-in has officially been proved, so it seems the police chased the boys by mistake. And the police did nothing to prevent the accident, even though they knew the boys had hidden in the electrical substation. The parents and relatives of the dead boys were disrespected by the government and police after the incident, and this is what sparked the urban riots throughout France in 2005. The incident and the riots became an important issue for the public and for historians, sociologists, demographers, writers, and intellectuals, highlighting issues such as the problematic living conditions of immigrants, the use of violence as an expression of public demands, and the need to re-examine the ideals of the Republic. But the first question was about the identity of the protestors: Who were these people?

A MULTICULTURAL MINORITY

The demographic structure of the *banlieue* neighborhoods consists of an amalgamation of unemployed people, Muslims, and immigrants (El Feki, 2007). Although inhabitants are of diverse ethnic origins, they share a multicultural identity is a mixture of religious and ethnic identity. According to Sidenius and Pratto, multiculturalism is most frequently associated with minority and low-status groups because, as a hierarchy-attenuating ideology, multiculturalism challenges the dominant position of high-status groups (Sidanius & Pratto,

sioned by the original project to link the sites to the major employment districts of Roissy and la Ville Nouvelle of Marne-la-Vallée. The isolation of the sites has further marginalized residents who have recently moved into the sites (Forgione, 2007).

The problems of French suburbs came to the fore in the early 1980s, particularly during what was known as "Hot Summer" of 1981. Riots began in the spring of that year after the government issued deportation orders for attendees of North African concerts. Even though the orders were later voided, they triggered riots and urban violence among immigrants in suburban districts (Ireland, 1994). Other events later in the following years led to further unrest: the accidental death of a 25-year-old Beur happened in 1995; a teenager was killed by the police in Toulouse (Le Mirail) in 1998; a youth of Maghrebian origin was shot dead by an inhabitant in Vauvert (Department of Gard) in 1999; four people died while trying to avoid an ID check by police in Thonon-les-Bains (Department of Haute-Savoie) in 2001 (Soumahoro, 2008). However, the unrest that followed in the wake of these events paled in comparison to the three weeks of riots of 2005, in which 10,000 cars were burned, 233 public buildings were damaged (mostly schools and gymnasiums), 4,770 people were arrested, and 217 police were injured (Fassin, 2006).

The question is, what did spark the riots?

1999). In line with this, a 1999 study demonstrated that of the residents in one large housing estate, 39 percent were foreigners, and 27.9 percent were unemployed. In Clichy-Sous-Bois and Montfermeil specifically, 20.7 percent of residents were unemployed, and 30.4 lacked a university degree (Ting, 2010). When viewing these statistics through the lens of multiculturalism, it is perhaps not surprising that these communities embrace multiculturalism in an effort to maintain their own cultures, nor that majority-group members perceive ethnic minorities as a threat to their group identity and status position (Barker, 1981; Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998). Multiculturalism relates directly to structural adjustments and the notion of equality. It addresses disparities, inequality, and structural discrimination (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2006), all of which are distinctive characteristics of globalization. For Oatley and Byrne, the spatial concentration of poverty as a symptom of globalization is due to the uneven distribution of wealth under the market economy, which promotes social and economic exclusion. The social polarization between the poor and the affluent caused by uneven gains has corollaries in spatial segregation, for the affluent choose to separate themselves from disadvantaged people and places. To overcome this, a new macro-planning approach is a vital requirement in modern society (Carpenter, 2006). According to Soja, the postmodern city of the global world is fragmented, polarized, and the scene of new "hybridities"; Soja mentions a new urban structure in which political power, rather than reducing inequalities between social strata, reinforces friction and fosters the flexibility of "transversal" identities (Soja, 2006). Islam, one might argue, has become the major element in multiethnic identities for the inhabitants of the *banlieues*, because it has provided a system of management for their communities based not around a local or governmental institute but around local Islamic leaders, like imams. Institutional violence and racism have only strengthened this trend. While the government and the bureaucrats have worked to dominate and manipulate minority groups, the authority of religious ideas has stood as a means to defend them against oppression and to uphold a lifestyle rooted in religion. But the tension inherent to the dynamics of the struggle between majority and minority here make the situation a fraught one.

Sidelined because of their multicultural identity, the inhabitants of the Paris *banlieues* are further marginalized through association with drugs, thievery, muggings, and crime, all marginal activities linked to globalization. The global city has spawned new discontinuities in regional, financial, economic, cultural, and intellectual networks. However, this fragmented society has created new ties with the post-industrial economy. For Body-Gendrot, the glocal landscape under the impact of the transnational economy functions through merchandise and marketing, but of heroin-trafficking, money-laundering, high-tech thievery, and other racketeering activities that bring wealth to marginalized populations and independence from police control. Marginalized groups, including minority youths and immigrants, find themselves part of new spatial mechanisms in the social structure as a part of a global system (Body-Gendrot, 2000). This trend is visible in the fast polarization of well-being and ill-being in Paris neighborhoods. According to a 2011 study, the cluster of ill-being increased through 2006 to include all the municipalities between Roissy and Paris's northern arrondissements, concentrating in the center and northern parts of the center while disappearing along the outer ring of Paris suburbs. This is evidence of the strong polarization that had come into existence during this period (Bourdeau-Lepage & Tovar, 2011).

The multicultural *banlieues* are isolated and suffer poor infrastructure and poor transportation links to the urban center and neighboring towns. Spatially excluded and disintegrated, the towering blocks or *cités* of these populations are far removed from most of the city's business and leisure facilities (El Feki, 2007). Comprising only residential facilities, these tower blocks were distributed arbitrarily and designed without any sophisticated strategy for their location, land, and topography. The harmony that was created in the hands of Modernist architects, such as the creation of green belts by separating settlements from the city center, has given way to chaotic transformation. The Corbusian blocks of the HLM were designed by Bernard Zehrfuss according to a single typology that could be repeated anywhere, subjecting the land to a uniform Cartesian grid pattern for the sake of a Modernist universal utopia. This vision dominated the first generation of Modernism and persisted until the 1950s, when the popularity of manifestos and utopias began to wane and a new era of self-generated urban patterns began to spread throughout the world. The ideological structure of universalism gave way to individualism with the rise of industrial popular culture. But by the 1960s, the tension between this individualism and notions of a collective paradise began to become apparent, marking a turning point in the concept of that utopia. The new, individualistic utopia differed in its choice of location in time—today instead of tomorrow—but maintained the previous Modernist ideology's faith in salvation through technology. Architects' endeavors to realize this new utopia centered on one goal: the creation of a residential areas made up of mass-produced houses. But the Modernist utopia resulted in a feeling of placelessness, one that would exacerbate the social disintegration that would eventually undermine the Modernist vision itself. And as a result of social and spatial disintegration, the unemployed people living in the ruins of an old utopia turned to crime, violence, and drugs. According to Body-Gendrot, the true roots of the *banlieues* lie in the Haussmann renovations of the Second Empire, when workers were sent to isolated neighborhoods beyond the city proper. Many of the hotspots of the Paris riots, like Porte St-Denis and other north-east *banlieues*, were former worker neighborhoods of this sort, and delinquency and violence still mark these parts of the city. Yet despite the polarization in these parts of the city, they were neither particularly poor nor particularly racially segregated over the three daces between the Second World War and the 1973 oil crisis. That would only change after the second oil crisis, in 1979, when social exclusion and job losses first really began to be felt experienced in France. These, coupled with a slashing of social policies, ultimately led to the

"hot summer" of 1981, which was the first major response to the era's shift in structural adjustments—namely, the increasing disempowerment of urban minorities and the exacerbation of racial segregation. Violence increased across the globe during this period as neoliberal politics spurred greater segregation, social exclusion, and discrimination everywhere. In France, in order to mitigate the violence, the government established welfare transfers, yet this did not solve the problem (Body-Gendrot, 2000). According to Carpenter, the root of the problem was the disadvantage of living in neighborhoods that were physically and socially excluded. These conditions were compounded by isolation, poor-quality housing, and poor services on the one hand, and, on the other, by discrimination due to the location of one's residence and associated difficulties in accessing the labor market and credit services. Stigmatized in the perspective of institutions, investors, and other citizens, the poor people could not escape the conditions of disadvantage in which their living situation trapped them (Carpenter, 2006).

THE VIOLENCE

To Moser, the causes of violence and crime are closely tied to the relationship of power and powerlessness. In the urban context, crime and violence stem from poverty and inequality. Of the two, however, inequality plays the greater role. According to national data, urban areas marked by inequality are more prone to violence than are areas that are uniformly poor. Because globalization has caused both economic and social polarization, inequalities have grown, which has led to an upsurge in violence in everyday life. In other words, the increasing levels of poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and identity problems generate crime and violence in modern society (Moser, 2004). These same issues are also at the heart of the 2005 *banlieue* riots.
To return to the pivotal day of 27 October 2005: After spending an afternoon playing football, three young men from Clichy-Sous-Bois were on their way home when the police attempted to stop them because of a report of a break-in in the neighborhood. The three men ran into an electrical

substation to escape. An accident then claimed the lives of two of them and severely injured the third. Just a few hours late, Nicolas Sarkozy, then minister of the interior, announced that the three youths had been involved in a break-in but made no mention of the police chase. He blamed the boys for the accident and denied that the police had any responsibility for this incident. In response riots erupted across the Paris *banlieues*, shaking the city for three weeks.
What striking here is that violence erupts from a closed and isolated community so instantly and spontaneously. To Moser, violence can be classified into four categories: social, economic, institutional, and political. One primary aspect of social violence, which includes such things as child abuse and sexual violence, is that it is related to identity and ethnicity. Usually organized, economic violence is associated with street crime, including mugging, robbery, drug use, and kidnapping. Institutional violence is committed by state institutions, particularly by the police and judiciary, though it may also include officials in sector ministries such as health and education; it may also be perpetrated by and other informal institutions, including social cleansing carried out by vigilante groups. Political violence is associated with state and non-state actors that have political power, including guerrilla and paramilitary groups (Moser, 2004). In the 2005 riots, there were a series of violent acts committed by both the state and immigrants. Already stigmatized because of their ethnic origins, the neighborhoods they lived in, and the continual economic violence the faced, immigrant communities were then subjected to institutional violence, which took the form of insults from the police and being chased down in the case of the three youths who escaped into the electrical substation. This police behavior towards the *banlieue* youths was a reflection of just a small part of a much greater institutional violence. Three days before the incident, during a visit to the *banlieue* of Argenteuil, Sarkozy declared that he would "rid them of the *racaille*" (the dregs of the society), using a term the youths used to insult each other. A few months later, when a child was shot in Cité

des 4000 in La Courneuve, he announced that he would cleanse the neighborhood with a *kärcher* (high-pressure hose) (Fassin, 2006).
According to Moser, this institutional violence continued through the use of certain laws. Jean-Claude Casanova, a member of the French Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, cast the burning of cars and public buildings during the riots as a civil war. In response, a law originally enacted in 1955 during the war in Algeria was used by the government to declare a state of emergency; the symbolism of the law was strong and could not have been clearer for the population of African origin, which in turn led to further rioting and additional crackdowns by the state. This was part of a broader cycle of institutional violence in which Paris's multicultural communities had long been locked, as, for example, when the government decision to deport those who had attended North African concerts triggered immediate riots on the part of minority groups. The elite group considered the multicultural minority group a threat and sought to maintain their own authority in the face of that threat; meanwhile, the minority group, using violence as its language of expression, fed further into that antagonism. For Body-Gendrot, the rights of access to resources, supposedly open to all in a democratic society, ends up being unequal in practice. While the global city is in some ways a strategic site for disadvantaged groups to participate in politics from below, the tendency for violence to be used as their mode of expression often undermines their attempts to gain their rights, access to resources, and public respect (Body-Gendrot, 2000).
According to Fassin, after the 2005 riots, retaliatory violence was inevitable, especially given the growing hostility felt toward the Arab, Black, and youth populations. A split emerged in French society, with many throwing their support behind the government: 73 percent declared they were in favor of the curfew imposed after the start of the riots, and an unprecedented 67 percent supported Sarkozy's actions. Yet the riots also went hand in hand with a public reckoning with the reality of economic inequalities, unequal policies, residential segregation, and racial discrimination

toward people not recognized as entirely French. A clandestine color divide was rediscovered. The word "ghetto," long absent from the French lexicon because of its supposed reference to a foreign American reality, came into common use among journalists discussing the stigmatization and humiliation of people not recognized as fully French in various environments, such as schools, or, particularly in the case of Arab and Black people, in the search for jobs or apartments (Fassin, 2006). When the social, spatial, and economic links binding the members of a society to one another break down, the result is social exclusion and the physical disintegration of the neighborhood. The social disintegration and residential segregation faced by immigrants are the tangible products of social exclusion. The results of social exclusion thus go far beyond disparities in income, extending to participation, rights, and redistribution, as well as to marginalization or division, fragmentation, polarization, segregation, and unemployment. Social exclusion thus refers also to the processes shutting people off from the benefits enjoyed by full citizens, processes that fall disproportionately on disadvantaged households in both old neighborhoods and modern peripheral estates (Kesteloot, Murie, & Musterd, 2006). The broader use of exclusion in the French Republican ethos through to the 1980s depoliticized these processes by individualizing them, rendering structural inequalities a fact of life. By the 1980s, however, these structural inequalities began to be the target of criticism, particularly as changes in labor markets made them more visible (Atkinson, 2000).

Atkinson states that the effort to combat social exclusion in general and urban social exclusion in particular went hand in hand with its inclusion as an EU policy priority at the member-state level. Yet the methods for measuring social exclusion still largely ignore the spatial qualities and relational aspects of such exclusion. Attempts to tackle social exclusion can only succeed when this is remedied, when a broader perspective is adopted that goes beyond subjective judgement and political expediency. Today, the EU is experiencing a learning process in its effort to tackle social exclusion, but

Atkinson fears that this protracted learning process may well leave excluded populations disillusioned and cynical about what from their perspective is but the newest in a long line of initiatives that have failed to deliver the promised improvements to their lives (Atkinson, 2000). Yet as Ye´pez Del Castillo notes, a transformation of an area rarely happens overnight, and results are rarely quick, even within the context of a successful regeneration partnership (Ye´ Pez del Castillo, 1994).

Hence, local community participation is especially vital at the very beginning of the regeneration process for ensuring an optimal provision of local services in an area, for that is what will secure the most tangible improvements in people's lives. To be sure, reducing unemployment, delinquency, and racism are not the primary purview of urban policymakers; these issues are dealt with by other policies, often using greater resources, though perhaps not always effectively. The objective of urban policy is rather to make these policies converge on the issue of exclusion and thus citizenship (Ye´ Pez del Castillo, 1994). To Atkinson, the social exclusion within the European Commission was firmly handled and developed as both a concept and policy in 1989 by the launch of the Poverty 3 initiative and the setting up of an Observatory on National Policies to Combat Social Exclusion. Poverty 3 had the explicit remit of supporting innovative approaches to tackle social exclusion within member states. By the early 1990s, Poverty 3 and the Observatory produced a new theory of social exclusion that attempted to combine elements of the French approach and its emphasis on social and cultural exclusion, concentrating on income inequality and material exclusion. This new approach sought to reconcile the French and Anglo-Saxon traditions through the use of the concept of citizenship rights (Atkinson, 2000).

GENTRIFYING THE *BANLIEUE*

Social exclusion is a multifaceted topic that affects virtually every aspect of a society. It is also a dynamic process that requires a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis. In developing strategies to address it, one must take individuals' re-

silience and adaptability into account. In France, urban-regeneration partnerships were largely partnerships between different levels of government, voluntary sectors, and members of the community; community involvement was particularly crucial because social regeneration can only work when individuals and groups are embedded within institutional systems (Atkinson, 2000). To deal with social exclusion, the French government began to develop urban revitalization and renewal projects from the late 1980s. According to Forgiene, between 1989 to 1993, the government began a series of projects under the umbrella of HVS (Habitat et Vie Sociale) and later the DSQ (Developpement Sociale des Quartiers) to overhaul and revitalize housing projects in Seine Saint-Denis, Clichy-sous-Bois, and Montfermeil. Allied with the Grand Projet Urbain (GOU), which launched in 1996, and with the Grands Projets de Ville (GPV), launched in 2001, these projects aimed to extend the perimeters of the housing projects gradually into their broader neighborhoods. These efforts included Bosquets in Montfermeil and, in 1997, the Zone Franche Urbaine (ZFU) (Forgione, 2007). In the following years, URBAN I (1997–2000) and URBAN II (2001–2006) brought a focus on commercial and economic activities to raise the employment rate of the residents [1]. With the passage of the Borloo law, this work continued with the Projet de Rénovation Urbain (PRU), which sought to promote economic activity, link the housing projects to necessary infrastructure in the urban network, build a sense of social solidarity and cohesion, and consolidate relations between community members. The starting point of the project was to refresh the sites, demolish the housing upon them, and to redesign the urban form. According to the project, 1,624 housing units—of which 650 were in Bosquets, 500 were in la Forestière, and the remaining 474 social housings were owned by the HLM Orly Parc Company—would be demolished and 1,488 new three- and four-story housing units constructed in their place. By relocalizing the sites through a process of demolition and reconstruction, the project sought to reorganize commercial affairs in the area and to improve their

management (Forgione, 2007). The PRU aimed to realize urban renewal through an overhaul of the residential mix in the region by improving housing conditions and creating new housing, which would make real estate in the area more attractive. According to Forgione, by 2010, when the first phase of the project was scheduled to be completed, the cost of the project was expected be in the amount of 460 million euros, of which 333.5 million Euro had already been financed in 2004 (Forgione, 2007).

There are immense differences between the new PRU and the earlier public-action renewal projects, with the PRU privileging urban transformation over the improvement of management and social standards. The demolition and reconstruction of housing sites does not overlap with any integrated policy for the betterment of the sites themselves. As Forgione notes, this mismatch is demonstrated by the absence of any linking infrastructure or the provision of high-speed public transport to increase the value of the *grands ensembles*' barycentric position, an absence that jeopardizes the new project's ability to achieve meaningful social integration (Forgione, 2007).

Globalization has pushed renewal projects into city peripheries and old city centers across the world. These projects are mostly composed of mixed-use zones, mixing commercial and residential, recreation and business together in the same place in the hands of an association of governmental and private capital, the majority of which is often international. International finance and support has become an important reality since the internationalization of capital in the 1980s and the ensuing structural adjustment, liberalization, and privatization of the market. Huge projects are designed to lure in private capital, which then takes on a role in creating and suitable conditions.

Meanwhile, urban-renewal projects like URBAN I, URBAN II, and, at the EU level, EUROCITIES partner with the private sector in the form of international architecture firms, real estate markets, and construction franchises. Projects since 2002 eschew the construction of new *banlieues* in favor of turning public-housing residents into urban squatters. In Paris, the city has also distributed

projects over a much wider area. Officials from The Office Public Patrimoine Construction Réhabilitation Aménagement Politique (OPAC) and other city agencies have worked to guarantee that one-fifth of all quarters of the city are public housing, and they have announced that all new buildings in wealthier quarters must include at least 25 percent affordable housing in their programs. To reverse social housing's negative stigma, OPAC has commissioned young and talented international architectural firms to build the city's public housing projects and to oversee the architectural competitions for their designs, including such firms as Lacaton & Vassal, Francis Soler, Edouard François, and Roland Castro (Lubell, 2007).

During the urban-renewal process, neighborhood inhabitants stay temporally in housing provided by OPAC, to be relocated once the construction of the new housing units is complete. One such new unit is an OPAC housing project being built inside a nineteenth-century school on Boulevard Henri IV in the historic 4th arrondissement, which is to be transformed to host large families according to a design by the architects Guillaume Neuhaus and Laurent Niget. The interiors of the old building are to be transformed into normal apartments, while the interior courtyard will be reinstalled and covered completely in gold-colored aluminum panels, a reference to period gilt interiors (Lubell, 2007). While peripheral towns like Bois-Colombes, Villeneuve-la-Garenne, and Clamart have all rebuilt their town centers, another project developed for the 20th arrondissement by Edouard François strives to transform the old neighborhoods into a livery model, dividing the housing units into three long rows separated by narrow pedestrian alleyways, with a rooftop garden as a finishing touch (Lubell, 2007). Another housing project, this one designed by Lacaton & Vassal and architect Frédéric Druot, has revamped revamp the Tour Bois le Prêtre, a seventeen-story housing tower on Paris's northern edge designed by architect Raymond Lopez in 1957. To allow in more natural light, the project replaced most of the partitions of the building's thick concrete façade with a transparent façade and added balconies and large slid-

ing windows (Lubell, 2007). Other architects are developing plans for a new mixed-income neighborhood. Resembling Lacaton & Vassal's project, the young firm Péripheriques is planning an entirely new mixed-income neighborhood in Porte Pouchet. In addition, a public housing project in St. Denis, developed by Beckmann-N'Thepe, features staggered balconies with guard rails composed of a fiberglass-based fabric (Lubell, 2007).

These flamboyant projects are to provide new lifestyles for the inhabitants of the *banlieues*. However, according to Lubell, small towns struggling with poverty do not benefit from the financial and management advantages of Paris. A lack of coordination between suburban localities prevents improvement, and because many buildings are cooperatively owned, large-scale transformation is not an easy task.

Lubell states that alongside urban-renewal projects, the Grand Paris plan strives to address the city's outer circles. Paris's borders have not changed since Hausmann, and improved social housing inside the city is needed to overcome the sense of alienation and resentment felt by residents (Lubell, 2007).

In 2008, an international urban and architectural competition for the future development of metropolitan Paris for the next 40 years was announced. Ten teams—a mix of architects, urban planners, geographers, and landscape architects, including Jean Nouvel, Christian de Portzamparc, Antoine Grumbach, Roland Castro, Yves Lion, Djamel Klouche, Richard Rogers, Bernardo Secchi, Paola Vigano, Finn Geipel, Giulia Andi, and Winy Maas—proposed projects for Paris and its suburbs that will define future developments in Greater Paris for the next four decades (Fig. 3) (Bustler Editors, 2009). In 2009, Sarkozy unveiled his own plan for Grand Paris: improving transport links to integrate the city and its sprawling suburbs, with funding from the state, local governments, and corporate partnerships. Sarkozy also announced the goal of building 70,000 new homes a year in the region, double the current rate, to try to offset the mismatch between supply and demand. A total of 1.5 million homes will be needed by 2030 (Fig. 4) (Saltmarsh, 2009).

Fig. 3 - Image: Antoine Grumbach, Jean Nouvel, representative of the Ateliers Jean Nouvel/Michel Cantal-Dupart /Jean-Marie Duthilleul team. http://www.bustler.net/index.php/article/ten_scenarios_for_grand_paris_metropolis_now_up_for_public_debate/.

Fig. 4 - Planned metro lines. http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/com-mons/b/b2/Reseau_primaire.svg.

CONCLUSION

Referring to Castells, Body-Gendrot argues that only by associating disadvantaged groups with crime can market franchises reach out to the rich people capable of funding a transformation of poor regions, to the benefit of real estate interests. Body-Gendrot states that the same phenomenon is experienced in some French housing projects, which are depicted as being under the thumb of a few drug lords and under the pall of a law of silence (Body-Gendrot, 2000). But as new money pours in, it only exacerbates a process of gentrification that leads to increasing social and spatial polarization and segregation in the urban environment (Sassen, 1991).

The roots of the Haussmann *banlieue* lay in workers being sent to isolated neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city (Body-Gendrot, 2000). These *banlieues* were an attempt to adapt the cityscape to the rise of the bourgeoisie and their leisurely lifestyle, clearing out slums and their immigrant residents to install new institutions, public buildings, parks, squares, infrastructure, and new boulevards in the center of the city (Pinkney, 1972).

In the post-war era, HLM were built en masse in urban peripheries where land was inexpensive and available. The implementation of this single plan without regard for topography or environment resulted in a particular pattern of suburbanization: the *banlieue*. Though the term literally means "suburb," *banlieue* has a different connotation. It shares the same root as the words "ban" and "banishment"—as in *étre/mettre au ban de la société*, meaning "to be outlawed/to outlaw from society"—which points to the element of exclusion inherent in the *banlieue* (Merlin, & Cohoay, 2000; Dikec, 2007). Over the years, the *banlieues*, the Modernist utopias of the HLM, have continued to bear their literal meaning of "places of exclusion" as a type of ghetto. For the years, their residents comprised outsiders to the homogenous elite, ignored and invisible. The riots of 2005 changed this, igniting a spark that rendered this world visible to all. Recent mixed-neighborhood projects, one could argue, are designed to distribute these newly visible residents to into gentrified neighborhoods, eroding their social capital to make them invisible again. Architectural designs that install transparent façades into low-income housing units effectively turn them into fish tanks, making the insides of the apartments visible to outside eyes even as they bring in the sunlight necessary for a healthy living space.
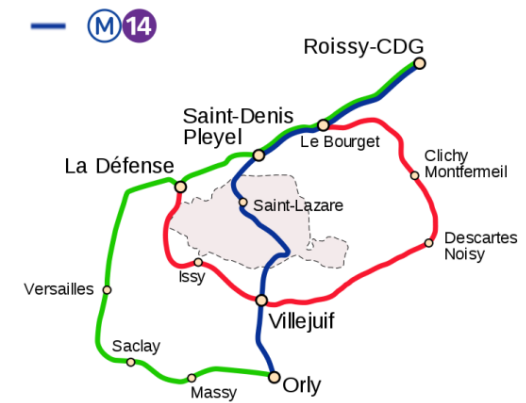
The emergence of super-gentrification in Paris, one could argue, is evidence of the accelerating trends of globalization. The violence of minority groups is actually in real estate markets' interests. Gentrifying projects are spreading to every corner of modern cities, including both peripheries and old city centers. These projects erase minority groups by dispersing them across wealthy areas through the creation of mixed neighborhoods, resulting in a commercial, residential, recreational, and business transformation through a combination of governmental and private capital. Though gentrification first began to be felt in the 1980s, it has become an undeniable reality since 2000, in line with the changing demands of the real estate market. With the new "network-type organization" process that developed between cities on a global scale under the umbrella of the EU [2], cities have begun to interact in a way that transcends even nation-states. Where cities once transformed their peripheries and subcenters, it is now these subcenters and peripheries that transform their cities.

Today, the old city districts of Paris are transforming once again. If the brilliant master plans of the government, the EU, and star architects and urban planners succeed, at the micro scale, in achieving

cohesion between groups of different incomes, races, and ethnicities, the result will be social integration. Yet if the government's push to add new transportation facilities and new housing projects in city districts serves only to displace low-income and minority groups, if urban-renewal projects are carried out without attending to the needs of diverse groups, then the result will be only further social disintegration. The creation of mixed neighborhoods could well help minorities benefit from the same institutional, transportation, and social infrastructure as affluent people. However, whether minority residents will be able to continue to reside in their new neighborhoods is an open question. Few policies address the long-term viability of these efforts for social integration. What is needed is for minority stakeholders to have a hand in process of gentrification; it cannot be dictated by the government and the EU alone. If minority stakeholders manage to secure such a role, the result could be new transformations of elite and minority settlements, perhaps in the form of the consolidation of minority areas through better housing, services, and facilities and greater employment and education opportunities. For this to happen, the government must create a space, at the municipal level, for minority participation in planning processes. According to Garbaye, in France, the central government's engagement of local communities is weak, which in turn undermines the quality of municipal services at the community level. The structure of cooperative federalism places the interests of immigrant workers in the hands of centrally controlled agencies and local authorities (Garbaye, 2002). For efforts for social integration to be successful and sustainable, new bonds need to be created between local communities and the central government. Otherwise, the only result will be the repetition of dynamics plaguing the old city:

Policeman: Shut up!
Young man: You tell us to shut up, but we haven't done anything wrong, sir.
Policeman: Do you want me to take you to a power transformer?
Young man: Sorry, sir, you're not talking nice to me. I wasn't talking [that way] to you, sir.

Policeman: So don't talk to us!... We're telling you to move back, move back!
Young man: Listen, sir, we're addressing you respectfully [on vous vouvoie] *and your colleague's not answering the same way* [il nous tutoie]*! We're being respectful!*
Another young man to one of the officers: Well done! You have cancer! You've lost all your hair!
The officer responds: Hey, you wanna fry with your pals? You wanna go into a power transformer? You just keep going, and we'll take you.
The first young man: If you behave like this, do you really think the neighborhood is going to calm down?
Policeman: We don't give a shit whether the neighborhood calms down or not. In a way, the worse the shit, the happier we are [3] (Dikec, 2007).

NOTE

[1] Founded in 1994, the first URBAN Community ran from 1994 to 1999 with strong support from the European Parliament. URBAN II was launched in 2002 as an extension of URBAN I. It aimed to find answers to the economic, social, and environmental problems caused by social exclusion at sites selected by the Community. The Community funded and managed a range of projects until 2006. More recently, these projects are being handled by EUROCITIES (Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/cities/cities_en.pdf).

[2] Friedmann is one of the first to have identified this process that is re-described through economy and culture, and in which states are henceforth a step behind and cities are establishing new connections among themselves across a network. In 1968, Friedmann grouped this process under the following headings:
–During urban development processes, the integration of the city with the global settlement network depends on the role the city plays within this network.
–There is a certain hierarchy in the network; at the topmost echelon are the command and control centers of global hubs, at the middle echelon are centers that hinge dependent settlements, at the lowermost echelon are the dependent centers.
–The spatial and social organization of world cities depends on global control functions. –World cities are key sites for capital accumulation and concentration.
–World cities are magnets for migration.
–The major contradictions of industrial capitalism emerge as social and spatial polarization in world cities.

–The social cost of world city growth can exceed the fiscal capacity the local government (Friedmann & Dunford, 1986).

[3] This dialogue took place while police were conducting identity checks on a group of young men, one of whom protested. The scene was a broadcast on TFI on 6 November 2005.

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