

The ambivalent nature of ethnic segregation in France's disadvantaged neighbourhoods

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Abstract

To achieve a better understanding of life conditions in the suburbs (*banlieues*) that erupted in the 2005 riots, segregation in France is here evaluated for the first time. The apparent reduction in class segregation between the last two full censuses and the contrary rise in ethnic segregation are shown. Using longitudinal data and observing the residential mobility of residents in the “sensitive neighbourhoods”, it is shown that: most who move out are upwardly mobile; Africans find it harder to move out and are three times more likely to move into the least advantaged neighbourhoods; The more the neighbourhood is disadvantaged, the more its residents move into another equally disadvantaged neighbourhood.

Whereas discussions about segregation by social class or ethnic group have a long history in America, France seemed to want to overlook the segregation of some of its inhabitants (see for example Massey, 1981; Massey and Denton, 1988; Jargowsky, 1996). This segregation expresses the failure of a deep-seated French republican imaginary ideal based on the three principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The spectacular riots in the autumn of 2005 amazed public opinion, making it hard to persist in ignoring segregation and particularly ethnic segregation. The French republican model of integration, as compared with the criticised community model of their British neighbours, was brutally shaken by a repressed but obstinate reality (Dikeç, 2007).

Like its European neighbours, France is faced with the spatial concentration of groups suffering poverty and discrimination (see for example, Ireland, 2008; Bolt *et al.*, 2008; Finney and Simpson, 2007). Earlier evaluations concerning the Paris region (Préteceille, 2006) concluded that segregation by social class had stabilised between the last two censuses. This was confirmed by Maurin's results based on employment surveys (2004). Maurin noted that, although ethnic segregation was stronger than social class segregation, it had still remained stable. This article seeks to show that class segregation has decreased and yet ethnic segregation has continued to increase. To that end, an evaluation of ethnic segregation requires separating out “communities” of foreigners who are not subject to the same intensity of discrimination for reason of history and physical appearance. Discrimination in France is aimed primarily at African communities (1.3 million North African and 0.4 million black African immigrants in the 1999 census). European immigrants—Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, etc.—although more numerous (1.9 million), have become “invisible” in France (INSEE, 2005). Aggregating the various nationalities consequently evens out any ethnic

segregation and gives a false, understated picture of socio-spatial polarisation in France. As these figures show, the breakdown of immigrants in France is quite different from that in Britain, where they come mainly from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean (Phillips, 1998), but these immigrants do share social difficulties caused mainly by changes in the productive sector after the mid-1970s, requiring less unskilled labour (e.g. Peach, 1998; Wacquant, 2006; Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998).

Imbalances in settlement leading to segregation are theoretically the result of the differential residential mobility of people moving into and out of a given area. An approach to segregation via mobility makes it possible to take our understanding of the mechanisms of segregation further than the snapshot observations of the make-up of areas based on the usual segregation indices (Massey, 1981). We reveal, as in Britain, a residential transition process, whereby after a phase of segregation, there is a phase of integration as ethnic minorities leave the segregated neighbourhoods and move to neighbourhoods that are more mixed (Clark, 1996; Finney and Simpson, 2007). But the effect on African immigrants appears to be ambivalent, because apart from the small proportion engaged in integration there is also an accumulation of Africans in the neighbourhoods with worst employment insecurity (for an overview of North African immigration and settlement in France, see Blanc, 1991)

Contrary to conventional wisdom, residential mobility among the residents of disadvantage neighbourhoods in France is high, and in some cases even higher than in other neighbourhoods (*Observatoire National des Zones Urbaines Sensibles*, 2005). These residents are therefore not all “trapped” and the clichés of “house arrest” and locked-in areas are misleading metaphors rather than tangible realities. However, residential mobility in these areas does not automatically correspond to upward mobility, since the moves are often to other addresses in the same neighbourhood (22%). The socially best-equipped residents (higher qualifications, medium or high socio-professional category) do in fact leave the ZUSs, and more of these are French than African. The arrivals, who are younger (median age 35-38), have poor social characteristics and also account for one-quarter of new African immigrants. This double effect of the retention of the least advantaged and the arrival of low-income residents does not, however, lead to a downward spiral for the social composition of these neighbourhoods, because of the improvement in the residents’ socio-demographic characteristics over time.

This article seeks to reveal the mechanisms and long-term trends of segregation in France by examining two relatively unexplored phenomena: residential mobility and the degree of employment insecurity in the initial and new neighbourhoods of residence. Using French longitudinal data, I have reached the following results:

1. Segregation by social class declined slightly as a result of the general rise in qualification level from 1990 to 1999 and the ageing of the population;
2. Ethnic segregation over this period increased in France. It concerned North Africans and black Africans. The other minorities—Portuguese, Italians, Spaniards, etc.—are not really distinguished from established French people.

3. Africans find it harder to leave disadvantaged neighbourhoods than French nationals.
4. *Ceteris paribus*, African immigrants are three times more likely to move into the least advantaged neighbourhoods.
5. When the residents of ZUSs move, it is usually into a non-sensitive neighbourhood. This is less true for Africans.
6. *Ceteris paribus*, the less secure a disadvantaged neighbourhood is in terms of residents' employment, the more they move into another similarly insecure neighbourhood. I show that this effect tempers the estimated degree of ethnic segregation.

Quite apart from the position in France, it is clear that the five segregation indicators—unevenness, isolation, concentration, centralisation and clustering (Massey and Denton, 1988)—need to be complemented by the degree of disadvantage against which these segregating factors operate, because of its negative impact on individuals. This is particularly true for European countries, which do not have the phenomenon of American ghettos (Ireland, 2008; Simpson, 2004), and where segregation is less marked and neighbourhoods more ethnically mixed.

The first part of the study presents sources, methods and spatial divisions. I discuss the choice of an indicator for determining the degree of a neighbourhood's employment insecurity (*précarité*). I have opted to use aggregate unemployment (it is not the “non-employment” rate referred-to here) as measured for that neighbourhood. Next, the study evaluates changes in segregation between 1990 and 1999. A statistical decomposition of unemployment in sensitive neighbourhoods (see below) provides a fine-grained picture of developments in its social class and ethnic group components over the period, *ceteris paribus*. Finally, I include in multinomial regressions the degree of employment insecurity in movers' home and new neighbourhoods in order to take account of the unobserved variables that are associated with them. To that end, I take a source of longitudinal data that has not been used before in segregation studies, INSEE's permanent demographic sample (EDP), constructed from the last two full censuses, which can be used to study residential mobility throughout France.

Methods, data, employment insecurity indicator

1. Unemployment as a general indicator of a neighbourhood's social insecurity

Adoption of one concept rather than another, as we know, can lead to differing and sometimes widely differing results, and the literature is full of recurring examples over time (e.g., Cortese, Falk and Cohen, 1976; Massey, 1981; Jargowsky, 1996; Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest, 2005). Any use of a new tool rightly arouses suspicion, especially when the researcher is investigating, as in this case, a topic that is not socially uncontroversial. Until now the elements used in France to evaluate segregation have been mainly socio-occupational category, as an approximation to social class. The main failing of this indicator for studying segregation is that it takes as sole discriminating feature the individual's

(approximate) position on the social scale, neglecting other important features such as ethnicity, qualifications, income or even age (see the review of types and explanations of segregation in Van Kempen and Özüekren, 1998). To avoid the reproach of normativity, one must either increase the number of indicators to come closer to the phenomenon under study or produce in a reasoned manner a single general indicator that simplifies the message. The latter needs to be based on the social insecurity of residents so as to identify areas where disadvantaged groups are concentrated.

Robert Castel (1995) points out that social exclusion at present refers to “insecure employment, absence of qualification, unemployment, and uncertainty about the future”. To this may be added a feeling of shame and guilt, a decline in social status, a lack of self-esteem and a negative modification of identity (Schnapper, 1981, Demazière, 1996). Paugam states that “the social stratum to which they [the long-term unemployed] belong is so undervalued that they often internalise the negative judgement that society passes on them.” (2000, p.114). These shortcomings and the internalisation of this negative opinion cause a psychological destabilisation that may lie behind crises within a couple, separation and, more generally, a “dissolution of ties” (Baudelot and Establet, 2003) and end, according to the authors, in social exclusion or disaffiliation. Castel considers that “the lack of participation in any productive activity and relational isolation combine their negative effects to produce exclusion or rather... disaffiliation. Social vulnerability is an unstable intermediate area that combines employment insecurity and weak neighbourhood support” (1995, p.17). In fact, “what the unemployed suffer from is a generalised social trauma that impacts every aspect of daily life and all dimensions of the individual” (Baudelot and Establet, 2003). Unemployment makes individuals less secure by a process of successive loss: of income, of social status, of most work relations (Blanpain and Pan Ké Shon, 1999), and of self-esteem (Schnapper, 1981). There are few social phenomena that are at once so stigmatising, traumatising and extensive in their impact on people. These phenomena, long ago noted by Lazarfeld and his team (1932), became even more acute now that unemployment has been an obsession since the end of the thirty “golden” years following the Second World War. Opinion polls regularly confirm that unemployment is the top concern of French people in general (Boisselot, 2006). Some researchers and politicians, echoing this major concern of French people, agree therefore in identifying unemployment as the main factor in social insecurity. The unemployment rate as an indicator specifically summarises the individual and social fragilities and risks of breakdown that it may induce. In this sense it is the best representation of the social disadvantage of the residents in a neighbourhood. It identifies the groups least equipped to find a job: young people, those over 55, those with low or no qualifications, foreigners, lower socio-occupational categories. The district unemployment rate may be taken as a proxy for the degree of social concentration of disadvantaged groups in a given area, in other words, the degree of spatialised segregation.

Evaluating the insecurity of an urban zone at two dates on the basis of the unemployment rate requires two elements: the contribution of individual characteristics to the likelihood of being employed (changes in the general employment cycle) and the social composition of the neighbourhood over the

period (population structure). Controlling for an area's social composition, a slump in the business cycle will increase the unemployment rate in that area. Similarly, controlling for the general unemployment rate, the arrival of unemployed people or the departure of the employed will raise the area's unemployment rate. In studying changes in spatial segregation, it is necessary to neutralise the business cycle so as to measure the improvement or deterioration due solely to changes in the social composition of the neighbourhood.

2. Statistical decomposition of unemployment from 1990 to 1999

One way of avoiding this difficulty is to use the statistical decomposition proposed by Blinder-Oaxaca and modified for non-linear models by Fairlie (2005). When calculating changes in unemployment in sensitive neighbourhoods from 1990 to 1999, this method separates out what is due to the general level of unemployment over that period from what is due to modifications in the socio-demographic characteristics of residents with respect to unemployment. In this way it is possible to isolate the contribution of each variable to the development of segregation and to determine its nature, whether social or ethnic. The general aim of the method is first to use a regression to neutralise the effects of the business cycle on unemployment between the two censuses. Simultaneous evaluation of the 1990 and 1999 data provides common parameter coefficients, and to some extent neutralises cyclical effects. Next, the variation of segregation is measured using only the variations in the district residents' socio-demographic characteristics from 1990 to 1999.

The unemployment regression comprises 27 variables by sex in order to allow for differential risk between men and women, a total of 54 variables. These are age, qualifications, type of household, number of children, socio-occupational category, aggregate nationality. The contribution of each variable to unemployment variation over the period was estimated by difference. The contribution of X_i to the variation between the two dates is expressed as follows:

$$\frac{1}{N^{90}} \sum_{i=1}^{N^{90}} F(\alpha + X_{1i}^{99} \hat{\beta}_1^* + X_{2i}^{99} \hat{\beta}_2^*) - F(\alpha + X_{1i}^{90} \hat{\beta}_1^* + X_{2i}^{90} \hat{\beta}_2^*)$$

Where

F is the cumulative function of the logistical distribution

N^{90} is the 1990 enumerated population

X_{1i}^{90} , X_{1i}^{99} is an independent variable in 1990 and 1999

$\hat{\beta}_1^*$ is an estimated coefficient for a pooled sample

It remained only to evaluate the contribution of each variable to unemployment variations, one after another by moving range from the 1990 census variables to the 1999 ones to obtain by difference the estimates of the contribution of each.

3. Sources

Population censuses of 1990 and 1999

These censuses were used to calculate the unemployment rate for each neighbourhood in metropolitan France (see below) for 1990 and 1999. These figures make it possible to evaluate social changes in each neighbourhood and especially sensitive ones. The distribution of unemployment aggregated by neighbourhood can also be introduced into multinomial regressions to capture the effect of unobserved variables linked to a neighbourhood's degree of employment insecurity.

Permanent demographic sample

The permanent demographic sample (EDP) aggregates information from general censuses. The data collection method used by the new French census cannot now be used to provide exhaustive data for the EDP, or to monitor residential mobility (Pan Ké Shon, 2007). No other French source at present is available for the longitudinal monitoring of population groups at neighbourhood level for the whole of France. For that reason I have used the full censuses of 1990 and 1999. As a one-per-cent sample, the EDP identifies the location of residents in disadvantaged areas on the census date and provides a measure of any mobility. There are no data for mobility on the actual date it occurred. The move may have taken place closer to 1999 or 1990. Substantial modifications may occur in individuals' characteristics over that period: household arrangements, employment, tenancy, etc. Other characteristics display more inertia, whether absolute or relative: date of birth, qualifications, and nationality. Except where noted, the part of the sample used is the one that identifies nearly 500,000 people for whom there was a census return in both 1990 and 1999, omitting births, deaths and absences from either of the two censuses.

4. Spatial divisions used

Sensitive neighbourhoods or "sensitive urban zones"

The sensitive urban zones (ZUSs) were administratively defined by urban policy. There are 751 of them in France, and 717 excluding the overseas possessions. ZUSs are defined in law by the presence of "major high-rise estates or areas of poor housing and a sharp imbalance between housing and employment" and by a joint analysis of local elected officials and central government services. Some of the sensitive neighbourhoods are evaluated by their variation between their social characteristics (proportion of unemployed, under-25s, unqualified) and those of the whole built-up area. This classification determines the volume of State aid in the form of tax concessions to local authorities and enterprises, and for urban renewal. These neighbourhoods contained 4.5 million residents in 1999, nearly 8% of the French population. There are on average 6,000 residents in each ZUS and the larger number is concentrated in 458 ZUSs of between 2,000 and 6,000 residents (*Observatoire national des zones urbaines sensibles*, 2004).

Other neighbourhoods in France

The division used is the 7,571 neighbourhoods (*quartiers*) in France plus towns of under 10,000 populations (excluding the overseas possessions). This division was

developed by researchers establishing a socio-economic typology of France on the basis of INSEE's spatial divisions (Martin-Houssart and Tabard, 2002a). The choice was an obvious one given the similarity in average population (6,000) between the ZUSs and the other French neighbourhoods. However, the range of population in the ZUSs is more dispersed. This neighbourhood division may on occasion overlap to some extent with that of the ZUSs.

Employment areas

Metropolitan France is divided by INSEE into 348 employment areas, each with a working population of roughly 25,000. They are used in this study solely as a more finely-grained statistical decomposition.

Results

1. Relative reduction in social class segregation

Unemployment in ZUSs rose from 19.6% to 25.8% from 1990 to 1999. Three interpretations of this increase may be made. First, residential mobility may have occurred in an unbalanced way: the socially best-equipped residents left and people with poorer sociodemographic characteristics (unemployed, unqualified, manual workers, etc.) moved into sensitive neighbourhoods. Secondly, the rise in unemployment may be due to the general economic decline in employment in France over the period. Thirdly, there may have been a combination of economic decline and employment-disadvantaged settlement in the ZUSs.

In practice, the decomposition of unemployment indicates that segregation in the ZUSs decreased overall from 1990 to 1999 due to an average rise in their residents' socio-demographic characteristics (Table 1). Considering solely the modifications in ZUS social composition, there was a reduction in social segregation of -1.7% from 1990 to 1999. The deterioration in employment in the ZUSs is due mainly to the cyclical effect of unemployment, estimated at 4.5% ($6.2\% - 1.7\%$). The business cycle impacted disadvantaged groups particularly exposed to the deterioration of the labour market. The relative improvement in the characteristics of residents with respect to unemployment tempered the cyclical deterioration in sensitive neighbourhoods. According to our indicator, there was indeed a reduction in social segregation in sensitive neighbourhoods, contradicting the conventional wisdom of increasing segregation in France.

Examination of the contribution of each variable to the increase in unemployment in fact reveals the nature of the changes in social characteristics. Controlling for the other variables, the reduced increase in ZUS unemployment is due 0.7% to ageing, 0.9% to higher qualifications, and 1% to changes in the distribution of socio-occupational categories (Table 1). These moderating effects are not specific to sensitive neighbourhoods. They correspond to overall demographic change (ageing) and changes that occurred in French society over the period (higher qualifications, smaller unqualified categories, increase in supervisory jobs).

2. Increased segregation of North Africans and Black Africans

The various contributions to increased segregation comprise three factors. Growth in the number of single persons and children increased unemployment by 0.2% and 0.1% . The increase in ZUS unemployment due to the increasing number of African

nationals is estimated at 0.7%, contributing to 11% of the variation in sensitive neighbourhood unemployment from 1990 to 1999 (Table 1). The number of North Africans and Black Africans increased by 0.8% in ZUSs, compared with 0.1% in metropolitan France between the last two full censuses. Although the social distribution of the sensitive neighbourhoods slightly tempered employment insecurity in these areas as a result of the socio-demographic changes that affected France over the period, the increase in the number of Africans in these neighbourhoods aggravated it.

The population of the sensitive neighbourhoods fell from 4.67 to 4.46 million from 1990 to 1999. This would appear at first to support the idea that people escape from neighbourhoods considered to be undesirable. Is this a “white flight” from these neighbourhoods, i.e., a departure of French people seeking to avoid foreigners? The census figures confirm that the proportion of French nationals in these neighbourhoods fell from 6.6% to 5.9% from 1990 to 1999. The proportion of African immigrants rose, from 20.3% to 21.1%, and the proportion of other immigrants fell from 12.4% to 11.4%. In the sensitive neighbourhoods it is only the proportion of African immigrants that continued to rise. From 1990 to 1999, 64% of the French nationals and 55% of African immigrants living in ZUSs moved, compared with 56% of the French population in general and 53% of the residents of other comparable urban units of 20,000 or more population (Table 2). Contrary to conventional wisdom, residential mobility among ZUS residents is thus higher than for those elsewhere in France. This is due to a younger population structure, more likely to be renting, living in more crowded housing, reasons that are traditionally incentives for residential mobility. Mobility is apparently easier for French residents of the ZUSs than for Africans, which may be used to identify an initial segregation phenomenon linked to the ability to move. Massey and Denton (1993) explain the lower mobility of African Americans by discrimination limiting their choice of housing. This appears to be the case in France too. We shall see below that discriminatory behaviour is highly probable. Clearly the situation of Africans in France is not similar to that of African Americans, and although there are indeed trends towards segregation in France, this is far less extensive and homogeneous than the segregation in American ghettos (Simpson, 2004; Wacquant, 2006; Ireland, 2008). In this area, French segregation is more like that in the United Kingdom or the Netherlands mainly towards people from their former colonies (Simpson, 2004; Finney and Simpson, 2007; Bolt *et al.*, 2008).

Different groups do not systematically move outside the ZUSs, because the move sometimes occurs within these neighbourhoods. EDP data show that nearly 69% of French migrants, compared with 40% of African in sensitive neighbourhoods moved out of these neighbourhoods. The second segregation phenomenon is related to the “quality” of the migration that “incites” Africans to move more within the same ZUS (45%) or to another ZUS rather than to a neighbourhood that is less employment-insecure. Nevertheless, most Africans leave the sensitive neighbourhood where they lived before. At this stage we cannot decide whether the segregation is social or ethnic, because African nationals often occupy the lowest social positions, and any answer to this question requires controlling for social hierarchy factors (qualifications, SOC, etc.) We return to this point below.

3. Less frequent upward residential mobility for Africans

To understand these segregation processes, the first question that arises when ZUS residents move, is the quality of their residential mobility. Is it upward mobility, level or downward, and is it the same for French nationals and Africans? An initial answer comes from the interpretation of the mobility matrix of ZUS residents (Table 3). The matrix is constructed from the distribution of unemployment rates observed in 1990 for the neighbourhoods left by ZUS migrants. The 1990 unemployment rate is then reattributed to the same neighbourhoods in 1999 so as to avoid any interference due to variations in unemployment during that period. Otherwise, moving house within the same neighbourhood might be upward or downward mobility¹ according to local variations in unemployment. For the same reason the two distributions in the lines and columns of the matrix are set at 1990 values. The unemployment rate in the resident's new neighbourhood is primarily that of the ZUS if they have moved to a ZUS, other of a non-ZUS neighbourhood.

The table diagonal represents a move of from one neighbourhood to another of equal disadvantage. Often it represents moves within the same neighbourhood. The most remarkable point is that most ZUS residents who move are upwardly mobile (the segment to the left of the diagonal in Table 3). It is particularly clear that ZUS residents make their way to neighbourhoods less disadvantaged than those where they lived before. This observation may be criticised as being merely a floor effect: ZUS residents of the least advantaged neighbourhoods can only move one way and that is up. Apart from the fact that this is not what is revealed by examination of the detail of the mobility matrix, whether or not there is a floor effect, mobility is upward in most cases, and conversely, moving to relatively less advantaged neighbourhoods is much rarer. This supports a previous observation that it is not community attraction that explains the segregation of foreigners, since, when they can, they leave the disadvantaged areas where they lived (Maurin, 2004, p. 17-18). As in Britain, the residents of disadvantaged areas move into less ethnically concentrated or better-off areas (Simpson, 2004). Massey and Denton (1993) noted in the United States that it was not ethnically segregated people seeking to stay together that increased segregation but, on the contrary, rejection by dominant groups fleeing from living next to African-Americans. If there is some self-segregation, our results indicated that this is slight. This clear observation, confirmed in Britain, would argue for the model of the Chicago School of an initial separation of newcomer communities followed by longer-term assimilation. Except that the segregational phenomena observed in France are less linear than those described by Park (1926).

Although Africans too mostly move upwards, this phenomenon is less marked than for French nationals. For example, nearly 24% of French nationals and 19% of Africans who moved from ZUSs between the censuses lived in the relatively better off neighbourhoods in 1990. Nine years later, after moving, these figures were respectively 61% and 42%. Conversely, 15% of French nationals and 17.9% of Africans who move out of a sensitive zone during the period lived in 1990 in the 20% least advantaged ZUSs. In 1999, of these former residents, the figures were only 6% French and 12% African. Although, as can be seen, both French nationals and Africans who move leave the worst neighbourhoods, the Africans are less successful at doing so. Among ZUS leavers, there are not only fewer Africans who

leave but their upward mobility is more modest. This key observation does not in itself explain segregation phenomena but does reveal an ethnic polarising mechanism in sensitive neighbourhoods.

However is it really a matter of racial segregation or simply the fact that the social characteristics of Africans are weaker than those of French natives (no education or low educational level, lower professional skills and wages, etc.)? In other words, is the segregation of Africans due to ethnicity or social class? This traditional response in the social or ethnic segregation debate requires mobilising other statistical tools to achieve a more accurate vision. For that a multinomial logistic model is used to measure the likelihood of moving into a neighbourhood that is more disadvantaged or less. Five categories of target neighbourhoods were identified by their 1999 unemployment rates. The neighbourhood considered is first the sensitive neighbourhood, if the individual moved within the ZUS, or else the non-ZUS neighbourhood. Controlling for age, type of household, qualifications, housing facilities, size of town, employment status, housing tenure and degree of employment insecurity in the initial neighbourhood, Africans are 4.4 times more likely than French nationals to move into a highly disadvantaged neighbourhood rather than a well-off one (Table 4) and 3 times more even if moves within the same ZUS are disregarded in order to allow for a possible relationship or community network effect (unpublished model available from the author). Again, this clear result tends to indicate discrimination against Africans.

Does the degree of insecurity of the migrant's home neighbourhood exercise a path dependency effect, in other words, is it a good predictor of the new neighbourhood moved to? The value of this question lies in the interpretation, in terms of action, of social class and ethnic origin. The results are striking. If for convenience we call the neighbourhoods above the median of neighbourhood unemployment rates, "well-off", the socially advantaged residents move mainly to well-off neighbourhoods (Table 4). Conversely the less advantaged residents move to the least advantaged neighbourhoods. Among ZUS residents the children of one-parent families, those whose accommodation was "overcrowded" in 1990, and those with no qualifications are six times more likely to move into one of the least advantaged neighbourhoods rather than a well-off one. The most noteworthy result concerns migrants from the most disadvantaged ZUSs in 1990, who, *ceteris paribus*, are 84 times more likely to move into a neighbourhood of the same degree of insecurity in 1999 (Table 4), and 27 times more likely if moves within the same neighbourhood are disregarded. These figures regularly decline with lower unemployment rates in the home ZUS. We analyse these figures below.

4. Moving into sensitive neighbourhoods: looking for larger accommodation and the first stage for foreign nationals

The unpleasantness and stigmatisation related to living in a sensitive neighbourhood are often discussed. Since the ZUSs are classified as being among the least advantaged neighbourhoods, by moving into one the new residents are likely to be downwardly mobile in a stigmatising manner. And yet, people continue to move into ZUSs. Who are these new arrivals in sensitive neighbourhoods who are able to overcome these disadvantages? The EDP shows two categories of new arrivals. First, those who were not recorded in 1990 as living in France but were

recorded in ZUSs in 1999. They are 56% of new arrivals in ZUSs. In this first group, it is the natural increase due to births that is the main reason for growth (Table 5). There are 64% of children in this group, of whom 54% are births (for the UK, see Simpson, 2004; for Sweden, see Bråmås, 2006). It also includes the first arrivals of immigrants in France, who account for 34% of the new arrivals in this group, of whom 20% are Africans.

The second group of new residents are those who were recorded as living in France outside the sensitive neighbourhoods in 1990 and who had moved into one between 1990 and 1999. Foreign nationals are far less numerous in this group, only 12%, of whom 5.5% Africans. There appears therefore to be no community-based attraction for Africans. The fact that their numbers are boosted by immigrants rather than by existing residents suggests a move due to lower rents or benefiting from a family or friend solidarity network. For new arrivals in the country, sensitive neighbourhoods are one of the first stages in their residential trajectory in France. The network apparently acts as an initial mediator between the home country and the host country, and once the immigrant is settled they can break free of it.

This arrival is made easier by the concentration of social housing in ZUSs; 65% of those absent from France in 1990 and 57% of other new arrivals in the ZUSs present in France were living in social housing (HLM) in 1999. Two-thirds of the first group and 59% of the second were concentrated in cities of over 200,000 population. The arrivals of immigrants in France are relatively low, annually some 163,000 foreign immigrants in all. Compared with the United Kingdom, the figure is 2.2 times lower, with an identical proportion of immigrants from former colonies, 38%. This corresponds to 62,000 for France (Thierry, 2004). So there would appear to be about 12,000 African immigrants that the sensitive neighbourhoods of France absorb each year.

Examination of new arrivals² in ZUSs by means of multinomial regression can only be done with those who were already recorded in the 1990 census, for whom pre-migration information is available, because the independent variables only make sense for the period before mobility (for example, one may be employed before the move and unemployed afterwards, and the reverse is not the same). This forces us to omit those new arrivals in the country for whom there is no earlier information. This means disregarding recent immigrants, who are more numerous, more marked statistically and less able to be choosy about housing. New African immigrants in ZUSs arriving during the period account for nearly 29% in the least advantaged neighbourhoods in 1999 (two worst deciles for unemployment), compared with 23% for French nationals and 16% for immigrants from other countries.

Bearing in mind this limited population of reference, it is nonetheless clear that Africans have a higher likelihood than French nationals of moving into a more disadvantaged neighbourhood, rather than into a neighbourhood better placed on the employment insecurity scale (Tables 4 and 6). This greater difficulty of Africans compared with French nationals and even other foreigners in finding housing in the less insecure neighbourhoods cannot be directly interpreted as a discrimination in housing since the data do not make it possible to account for such factors as household income. Indeed the average income per consumption unit in

immigrant households was 22% lower than for all households in 1996 (Boëldieu and Thave, 2000). This lower income of foreigners may at least partially explain the match between low-income households and sensitive neighbourhoods, where rents are low. The concentration of social housing is high and 61% of households are HLM tenants (*Observatoire national des Zones Urbaines Sensibles*, 2004). However, these authors note that 28% of all immigrants had been on the social housing waiting list for at least three years, compared with only half as long for the waiting list population as a whole, and this result is valid even when restricted to households of four persons at least, in order to disregard differential demand for larger apartments. Again, this would seem to indicate ethnic discrimination. The effect of the neighbourhood on the likelihood of moving into a neighbourhood of greater or lesser disadvantage makes it possible to go further and reveal a penalisation specific to coming from Africa in the “quality” of mobility.

5 – The neighbourhood expresses the effect of unobserved features of class and “ethnic” group

The high predictive power of the degree of employment insecurity in the initial neighbourhood for that in the new neighbourhood leads one to suppose that a number of class or “ethnic” variable are omitted when evaluating residents’ mobility (Tables 4 and 6). It would be premature to conclude that there is a context effect. That would suppose that success in moving into a well-off neighbourhood would be influenced by the social characteristics of the residents of the home neighbourhood other than the individual, which does not make sense (see Manski, 1993, p 532-533). The censuses that the EDP uses provide no information about income or any data that can be used to statistically identify the descendants of immigrants. In the absence of adequate data, the model cannot therefore directly address this. These unobserved features correlating with the neighbourhood’s degree of employment insecurity are consequently expressed by the distribution of unemployment in that neighbourhood.

Let us examine the matter from another angle before going any further. The degree of employment insecurity in initial neighbourhoods used in the regressions (Tables 4 and 6) contains a proportion of the explanatory power of class due to unobserved variables in the quality of the new neighbourhood. Because the observed characteristics of a resident of a well-off area are extremely likely in fact to be different from those of a resident of a poor area. For example, the differences in income of a factory worker or even an executive are of the order of 30% on average according to whether they live in a sensitive neighbourhood or not (Pan Ké Shon, 2005). Other characteristics of the residents of sensitive neighbourhoods are unobserved (professional experience, personal presentation, particularly decisive in obtaining a job or accommodation, etc.). In these circumstances, with controlled variables and unobservables expressed by the neighbourhood’s disadvantage, the clear persistence of the effect of coming from Africa rather than France on the individual’s residence in a less advantage area would tend to support the hypothesis of discrimination related to individual’s national origin.

Furthermore, not all population groups potentially subject to discrimination are statistically identified: *harkis* (Algerians who fought in the French Army during the war of independence), other native Algerians holding French nationality from

when Algeria was French, naturalised French nationals and, not least, descendants of immigrants (or perceived as such) born in France (Blanc, 1991). The American example of the segregation of African Americans and Native Americans reminds us that one does not need to be an immigrant or a foreigner in order to be segregated. All these groups are potentially subject to discrimination but since the information is not available from the French census, it is not possible to take account of it statistically. However, many observers note that the descendants of immigrants have more difficulty in getting a job and consequently housing (in particular, Beaud & Pialoux, 2003; Borgogno *et al.*, 2004; Domingues Dos Santos, 2005; Meurs *et al.*, 2005). Statistically speaking, these groups are added to the French variable while being discriminated against nearly as much as African nationals. This reduces the observed variation in the numbers of people moving into or out of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the regressions by smoothing out contrasts. In other words, ethnic segregation is underestimated. Tanter and Toubon noted that “housing policies as defined... have aggravated the ethnic spatial segregation they were intended to combat. By delegitimising immigrant families in the areas where they were accommodated, these practices have contributed to their not being accommodated elsewhere, particularly in new social housing nearer to city centres, and to increasing their concentration in stigmatised areas.” (1999 p. 83). This observation of ethnic segregation in France confirms the convergent results of other researchers in the field (such as Blanc, 1991; Simon, 1998; Tanter and Toubon, 1999; Maurin, 2004; Prêteceille, 2006b). The *Haut Conseil à l’Intégration* (2007) makes the negative judgment: “But the vast majority, indeed most, of the discriminatory behaviour with respect to housing is based on the nationality or origin of the applicant, their surname or racial or ethnic characteristics. These factors clearly play a preponderant, almost exclusive, role in discrimination in access to housing.”

The French censuses show that African immigrants are the only residents whose number rose in the sensitive neighbourhoods from 1990 to 1999. They are nearly three times as numerous proportionately in ZUSs than in metropolitan France as a whole (21% compared with 7%). Over 30% of the North African population is to be found in sensitive neighbourhoods, although the ZUSs contain less than 8% of the total French population (Observatoire National des ZUS, 2004, p.36). French nationals were 6.6% of ZUS residents in 1990 and 5.9% nine years later. Non-African immigrants fell from 12% to 11% during that period. Furthermore, according to the EDP, the sensitive neighbourhoods took in 25% of all migrants of African origins³ and 12% of all non-African migrants from 1990 to 1999. Segregation does not only affect African nationals. It also penalises people perceived as being descendants of immigrants, and including them would considerably increase the level of ethnic segregation. In 2005, the employment survey estimated that 26% of those over 15 in ZUSs had at least one parent from Africa, compared with 8% elsewhere.

Discussion and conclusion

It is clear that there are contradictory but consistent movements that remove the best advantaged individuals, retain the least qualified and “attract” poor residents to sensitive neighbourhoods. However, these phenomena, which ought to aggravate spatial segregation, do not seem to have given rise to a vicious circle of class

segregation over the period from 1990 to 1999. The ageing of the population and higher qualifications combine to automatically reduce social class segregation, although the deterioration of the labour market during the period widened the gap in unemployment between sensitive urban zones and the others.

The housing trajectories of Africans in sensitive neighbourhoods show two opposing trends. Some of the Africans from ZUSs move to neighbourhoods with less employment insecurity than their initial one, which indicates that a certain number are being integrated in housing, without being replaced by immigrants of a different ethnic origin, as has happened in Los Angeles (Clark, 1996). Seen optimistically, this high upward social and residential mobility, in volume and quality, is particularly encouraging. It shows that what is happening is not a “white flight” or a “white avoidance” due to xenophobic rejection, but rather a “flight of all colours”. The rejection of these neighbourhoods by all ethnic groups is simply harder to achieve for Africans. For them, the segregation pattern observed resembles that described by Robert Park, namely initial polarisation followed by a move to more mixed areas, thereby demonstrating a process of assimilation (1926). It is crucial to update this phenomenon in the identification of problems and consequently of solutions to be found, because it contradicts the hypothesis self-segregation commonly expressed in academic and political circles. This suggests that aid to residential mobility would have an effect on the social mix. But first one must overcome the institutional reluctance of municipalities and social housing trusts to accommodate Africans in their areas.

Until now segregation has been perceived more as a “stock” than the result of a continuous flow, a view supported by a pessimistic image of internal exile, a sort of perpetual immobility. A perception of spatial segregation including the mobility of arrivals and departures leads to a re-examination of the very sense of segregation in France by introducing the dimension of time. For many of the residents, living in sensitive neighbourhoods is a short period of their lives, a residential transition. The pernicious effect of segregation in France comes from the types of groups who sink into the ZUSs, particularly Africans who find it harder to “circulate”. However, in this “flight of all colours”, we cannot tell if the motivations of French nationals and Africans are the same. Are the French nationals who move out seeking to be with their own, persistently shunning foreign or foreign-seeming groups in a reflex of xenophobia? Do Africans move out as part of an upward mobility that may be interpreted as *de facto* residential integration? According to Wacquant (2006), the aversion felt by ZUS residents comes less from latent racism than from the negative stigmatisation of their addresses and the difficult relations they may have with young men raging against various perceived social injustices. The fall in the population in the ZUSs from 1990 to 1999 would, therefore, be due to these disadvantaged neighbourhoods’ burden of stigmatisation and nuisances. In fact, individual experience and motivations for leaving sensitive neighbourhoods are many and varied (Pan Ké Shon, 2009), but according to the observations made they are linked to the employment insecurity there. This dimension of social insecurity would appear to offer a fruitful area for future research.

Nevertheless, Africans in the sensitive neighbourhoods find it harder to leave than French nationals. Of those living in ZUSs in 1990, 44% of French nationals had moved out of a ZUS, compared with only 22% of Africans. The proportion of

Africans who accumulate in the least advantaged neighbourhoods while the other residents as a whole are upwardly mobile poses a problem. The number of them in ZUSs increases annually as families living in France grow bigger and seek affordable larger accommodation. The number of immigrants in sensitive neighbourhoods is mainly maintained by new immigration flows which increased continually until 2003 despite restrictive policy on entry to France, and have remained since at around 100,000 new arrivals from Africa a year (Thierry, 2004). These phenomena of natural increase and foreign migration in segregation are not specific to France. They have already been observed in Britain (Simpson, 2004) and in Sweden (BråmÅ, 2006). We have shown that coming from Africa does indeed add a further burden to the risk of being segregated, and this tends to reveal the presence of discrimination whereby African nationals are concentrated in the most disadvantaged sensitive neighbourhoods. Based on this research, we can conclude that ethnic segregation in France results from a combination of three factors: the more frequent channelling of incoming migrants towards sensitive neighbourhoods, the demographic increase in family size and the specific difficulties faced by Africans in achieving residential mobility, notably upward mobility.

The attempts at social integration with nationals that immigrants are supposed to make in order to assimilate, a point made in the “reception and integration contract”⁴, do not appear to be the real problem or the real solution. When they can afford it, most of them engage in upward residential mobility that could be called “residential integration”. Wacquant has shown that the sociodemographic indicators of the descendants of immigrants and nationals were close, demonstrating a convergence in family and cultural behaviour (2006). On the dark side, as public policy towards less advantaged neighbourhoods is scaled down, the flight of some ZUS residents is likely to increase and thus concentrate either the least advantaged who cannot leave or those who best tolerate deteriorating living conditions, particularly new immigrants. The convergence of these two types of segregation would then start a process for which the American “dark ghetto” would be the “sociological blueprint”, as Wacquant puts it (1993), with segregated neighbourhoods and the problems that arise from them.

According to various authors, the reasons behind spatial segregation arise from individual behaviours, “the tyranny of small decisions”, the avoidance of socially disadvantaged people or places, the desire to be with one’s own (Maurin, 2004; Bolt *et al.*), the avoidance of some young people’s anxiety-arousing behaviour (Wacquant, 2006), protection of educational and property assets, aversion to public disorder, lack of facilities, etc. These reasons are not only individual. They also depend on institutional decisions that favour or hamper access to housing (BråmÅ, 2006 reaches in the same hypothesis for Sweden), especially social housing, and the distribution of this housing throughout the country. Examples are local councillors’ policies for allocating and building social housing (SRU law, unevenly applied, “requiring” towns to have 20% social housing), and housing agencies’ renting and “settlement” strategies when they reserve their least desirable accommodation for Africans and apply immigrant quotas on the grounds of social mix, arguing on the basis of a “tolerance threshold” (Vieillard-Baron, 1996; Simon, 1998; Tanter and Toubon, 1999; G.E.L.D., 2001; Tissot, 2005). It is now easier to

understand the special difficulties that Africans have in upward mobility when the choice of possible housing is institutionally restricted. Is this a serious matter, or should one agree with the widespread view that segregation also has advantages, such as access to community resources? In addition to the fact that potential access to these resources is not rigorously evaluated, it is important to remember that segregation causes negative externalities, which handicap the education of young people by maintaining a culture of opposition to the values of the majority group, poorer school success or getting a job, a breakdown of the social cohesion, etc. (Clark, 1965; Bénabou *et al.*, 2005). This perpetuates ascribed social positions and makes the equality of opportunity on which democracies are founded illusory (Maurin, 2004; Bolt *et al.*, 2008). Unlike the United Kingdom, France has not adopted a proactive policy to reduce ethnic discrimination, because of its desire to be “colour blind”. This country still seems to find it hard to propose measures of affirmative action when faced with French voters reluctant to the problems encountered by immigrants (Blanc, 1991). Dikeç emits a more radical criticism by analyzing in his work the French riots of 2005: “The problem is not that republicanism is inherently incompatible with diversity. The problem is that the republican imaginary is so white and so Christian that any manifestation of discontent – either on the streets or in the spaces of institutional politics – by the republic’s darker and non-Christian (or thought to be so) citizens quickly evokes concerns about the values and principles of the republic.” Instead, there has been a repressive political shift in urban policy, assistance for home ownership and urban renovation that is hard to understand without the political (post-11 September, extreme Right in France) and economic (free-market economy and economic recession) context. In addition, ethnic segregation depends on migration, which is fed by the needs of people in the South and involves national and European policy. The complexity of these interactions shows that cheap housing, operating like a residential poverty trap, is not the only engine of this multi-layered phenomenon (Bolt *et al.*, 2008). Segregation needs to be apprehended in its general movement, observing it at various levels: individual, institutional, national and international, in order either to act on it or endure it.

Table 1 - Non-linear decomposition of unemployment rates in ZUSs from 1990 to 1999
Contribution of variables to variation in unemployment from 1990 to 1999

	Contribution %	Standard variation	Contribution/ variation %
National of African country	0.7	0.0286	11.3
Age	-0.7	0.0253	-11.3
Qualification	-0.9	0.0528	-15.1
Type of household	0.2	0.0336	3.6
Number of children	0.1	0.0242	1.5
SOC men	-0.13	0.0344	-2.2
SOC women	-0.94	0.0389	-15.2
Total	-1.7	-	27.4
Proportion due to economic cycle and unobserved variables	4.5	-	72.6

Unemployment rate: in 1990 19.6%, in 1999 25.8%.
Unemployment variation 1999-1990 = 6.2%

Population of reference: economically active in ZUSs in 1990 and 1999

Source: Censuses 1990 and 1999.

Interpretation: Differences in residents' social characteristics relevant to unemployment from 1990 to 1999 explain a reduction of 1.7 percentage points in the unemployment variation 1999-1990. The 1% rise in unemployment (0.7%+0.2%+0.1%) due to the rise in the numbers of African nationals, changes in type of households and number of children was counteracted by a parallel 2.7% reduction (0.7%+0.9%+1.1%) due to qualifications, age and socio-occupational categories. Without these changes in residents' characteristics, average unemployment in ZUSs in 1999 would have been 27.5% instead of 25.8% (25.8% + 1.7%).

Table 2 – Migrants who were living in ZUSs in 1990 and who left them

	%				
	Non-ZUS	Same ZUS	Other ZUS	Total	Migrants as share of national group
French nationals	68.6	21.2	10.2	100	63.7
Africans	39.7	44.5	15.8	100	55.4
Other nationals	56.4	30.9	12.7	100	56.3

Population of reference: ZUS residents who moved after 1990.

Source: Permanent demographic sample (EDP), INSEE.

Table 3 – Mobility matrix of ZUS residents from 1990 to 1999

Home ZUS in 1990	New neighbourhood in 1999										Proportion of migrants	
	Unemployment rate deciles for neighbourhood within or outside ZUSs											
	[1st- 2nd]		] 2nd - 4th]		] 4th - 6th]		] 6th - 8th]		>8th			
	Frenc h	Africa n	Frenc h	Africa n	Frenc h	Africa n	French	Africa n	Frenc h	Africa n	Frenc h	Africa n
[1st – 2nd]	88.5	87.1	7.4	7.2	2.9	4.3	0.8	0.9	0.4	0.5	23.5	19.1
] 2nd – 4th]	66.2	40.6	28.2	53.4	3.6	4.2	1.0	1.2	1.0	0.6	23.1	29.4
] 4th – 6th]	55.5	36.1	11.5	11.5	28.8	48.1	2.1	3.3	2.1	1.0	20.5	16.9
] 6th – 8th]	46.9	25.2	14.5	11.3	8.6	8.7	27.1	50.9	2.9	3.9	17.0	16.7
> 8th	35.0	16.9	16.3	8.9	10.7	10.6	5.9	4.8	32.1	58.8	15.9	17.9
Proportion of arrivals by 1999	61.0	41.9	15.6	22.5	10.6	13.6	6.4	10.5	6.4	11.6	100	100

Population of reference: ZUS residents who moved between 1990 and 1999.

N.B.: The two distributions of unemployment are taken from 1990. In order to observe the moves of ZUS residents without the interference of economic cycle changes during the intercensal period, the neighbourhood unemployment rate within or outside ZUSs is attributed to the ZUS migrants' new neighbourhoods. The unemployment rate considered for 1999 is first that of the ZUS, when the new address is in a ZUS, otherwise that of the non-ZUS neighbourhood.

Source: Permanent demographic sample (EDP), INSEE.

Table 4 – Relative likelihood of ZUS migrants of moving out of their ZUS and into a neighbourhood in given decile
(Multinomial logit, ref. class the top five deciles of neighbourhood unemployment rates)

		Odds ratio														
Non-ZUS unemployment rate deciles in 1999		] 5th – 8th]			] 8th – 9th]			] 9th – 9.5th]			] 9.5th – 9.8th]			] > 9.8th]		
		Odds ratio	Confidence interval		Odds ratio	Confidence interval		Odds ratio	Confidence interval		Odds ratio	Confidence interval		Odds ratio	Confidence interval	
Nationality	French	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-
	African country	1.7	1.4	2.0	2.4	1.9	2.9	2.7	2.2	3.4	3.2	2.6	3.9	4.4	3.5	5.5
	Other	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.5	1.7	1.4	2.0	1.4	1.1	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.8
ZUS	] 1; 2]	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-	Ref.	-	-
Unemployment	] 3; 4]	0.9	0.8	1.0	0.9	0.8	1.1	2.1	1.7	2.4	4.5	3.5	5.8	1.9	1.2	2.9
Rate	] 5; 6]	1.4	1.2	1.5	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.8	1.5	2.3	10.3	7.9	13.3	9.5	6.3	14.2
Deciles	] 7; 8]	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.3	1.1	1.6	2.5	2.0	3.1	10.7	8.2	14.0	23.6	15.7	35.3
In 1990	] 8; 9.5]	2.1	1.8	2.5	2.6	2.2	3.2	3.7	2.9	4.7	11.3	8.4	15.3	68.8	45.6	103.7
	] 9.5; 10]	2.6	1.8	3.7	2.2	1.4	3.4	5.6	3.7	8.7	16.4	10.2	26.3	84.0	50.5	139.8

Population of reference: 1990 ZUS residents who moved during the intercensal period.

N.B.: This table is an extract from the model controlled by age, standard of accommodation, type of household and position in household, qualification, employment status, housing tenure, size of urban area.

Source: Permanent demographic sample (EDP), INSEE.

Table 5 - Moving to a ZUS neighbourhood

	In ZUS in 1999		Metropolitan
	Absent from EDP in 1990	Present in non-ZUS in 1990	France
Child within couple	49.0	13.6	30.9
Child in single-parent family	14.8	8.4	4.5
Single parent	3.2	7.7	2.7
Living alone	5.1	18.7	8.3
Not in family	4.5	6.5	3.2
As a couple	23.4	45.2	55.2
Total	100	100	100
Nationality ¹ : African country	20.2	5.5	2.1
Other foreign country	13.7	6.3	5.2
French	66.1	88.2	92.7
<i>of which DOM (overseas possessions)</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>0.4</i>
Total	100	100	100
Urban area of less than 200,000 pop.	34.1	40.8	62.5
Urban area of more than 200,000 pop.	41.1	40.1	22.6
Paris. Île-de-France region	24.8	19.1	14.9
Total	100	100	100
House owner ²	13.2	18.0	61.7
Non HLM (social housing) tenant ²	17.1	18.9	18.6
HLM (social housing) tenant ²	64.9	57.0	14.6
Furnished accommodation or hotel ²	3.0	2.5	1.1
Free accommodation ²	1.9	3.7	4.1
Total	100	100	100

Population of reference: Column one, those absent from the EDP in 1990 and living in a ZUS at the 1999 census.

Column two, those present in the EDP in a non-ZUS neighbourhood in 1990 and living in a ZUS at the 1999 census.

¹ Nationality and *département* of birth for overseas possessions.

² Adults only

Source: Permanent demographic sample (EDP)

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¹ The use of the employment insecurity indicator with the model fixed at 1999 accentuates the differences.

² The new arrivals for whom there is information before their move, namely in 1990.

³ The figure is calculated from all those absent from the EDP in 1990 and present in 1999.

⁴ The 24 July 2006 Act requires that all new arrivals in France must sign a reception and integration contract.