
 FOUR

Making new from old in France: urban change through housing renewal in two Parisian districts

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Urban transformation in France has a long history but its ideas, methods and objectives have changed over the past 20 years (Driant and Lelevrier, 2006; Lévy-Vroelant, 2007[[**not in references**]]; Deboulet, 2008; Lelevrier, 2010). A distinction should be made between ‘urban renewal’, which corresponds to the more common notion in English-speaking countries of the ‘urban regeneration’ of older sectors of the city, and urban redevelopment, a political notion associated with government intervention in France since the 1950s to 1960s. The principle of intervention to achieve urban and housing renewal is well established and now takes the form of a contractual arrangement between administrative areas (municipalities, urban areas, conurbations) and the *Agence Nationale pour la Rénovation Urbaine* (ANRU) (National Agency for Urban Renewal), created by the Act of 1 August 2003 on the orientation of planning for cities and urban renewal, sometimes referred to as the ‘Borloo Law’. It is a high cost programme: the work scheduled for the period 2009–14 is valued at nearly €40 billion, with ANRU contributing up to €10.9 billion.¹ It consists of large scale projects, including demolition, for renewing urban areas dating mainly but not exclusively from the post-Second World War reconstruction period (1950–60). The areas are selected and defined on criteria such as levels of poverty, the concentration of populations of migrant origin, and the prominence of older social housing units. *Zones Urbaines Sensibles* (vulnerable urban areas), of which there are 751 across the whole country, are the target of the ANRU-approved programmes, where a policy of social mix is explicitly provided for by law,² using social housing on the one hand and promoting home-ownership on the other, with a view to achieving a tenure and a socio-economic ‘rebalance’ aimed at greater ‘social mixing’.

1 Present-day urban renewal in the broadest sense (namely, beyond
2 ANRU operations) includes not only the transformation of old
3 and outdated dwellings into modern housing but also the renewal
4 of urban space already allocated for housing, under powers vested
5 in municipalities or groups of municipalities.³ Under the notion of
6 'residential itineraries' land can be used for a succession or chain of
7 housing purposes, often culminating in home ownership. This calls
8 for a variety of funding mechanisms over time including government
9 subsidies to builders; the combination of private and mixed capital,
10 private companies' funds, and tax exemptions (Pollard, 2011; Driant,
11 2011), as well as the provision of local authorities' subsidies and
12 assistance to households (Fijalkow, 2011). Furthermore, the 2003 Act
13 strengthened the contribution of an important player, the *Foncière*
14 *Logement*,⁴ a non-profit organisation created by companies and trades
15 unions to provide financial support for the construction of rental
16 housing mainly for private sector employees, in locations including
17 ANRU urban renewal areas. These financial mechanisms are subject to
18 government regulation and approval (Epstein and Donzelot, 2006[[**not**
19 **in references, is Donzelot and Epstein, 2006**]]); they are clearly
20 defined and have a specific focus. Their modes of operation, however,
21 along with the decentralisation process, take the form of arm's-length
22 or 'remote government' (Epstein, 2005), marking a break with the
23 previous authoritarian and centralised methods of post-war planning
24 and renovation which prevailed in France until the end of the 1970s.

25 The situation in France is characterised both by a shortage of
26 affordable rental housing, reflected in the 4 to 5 million people who
27 are badly housed, or the 130,000 who are homeless (Fondation Abbé
28 Pierre Annual Report, 2013[[**not in references**]]⁵, and by a housing
29 stock enlarged by mass construction from 1965 to 1985. Thus, the
30 issue in France, at least in part, is that of overhauling an abundant
31 but ageing stock, 34 per cent of which was built before 1948.⁶ It is
32 against this background that the chapter presents examples of recent
33 policy, through case studies of two urban renewal areas in Paris.
34 Paris is one of several major cities in France that are well known for
35 their modernisation, from the nineteenth century to the present day,
36 through the adoption of public health and planning principles, such
37 as those of Baron Haussmann, which remain highly valued (Rossi,
38 1966; Loyer, 1987). On the other hand, despite its modernisation, the
39 city continues to be marked by inequalities and contrasts (Pinçon and
40 Pinçon-Charlot, 2004[[**not in references, is Pinçon-Charlot and**
41 **Pinçon, 2004**]]): these are a major challenge for urban and housing
42 renewal. So, too, is the fact that problems are often more extreme in

Paris than elsewhere: for example, 60 per cent of the city's housing stock was built before 1948, compared with 34 per cent in France as a whole, yet it has to deal with all the pressures and imperatives of being a global city.

The case studies presented in this chapter are in two rather different Parisian districts. La Goutte d'Or in the 18th *arrondissement* appears from previous studies (Toubon and Messamah, 1990; Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006) to be an ideal case for interpreting area-based policies in older working-class districts. Located in intramural Paris, about 3 km north of the city centre, most buildings in La Goutte d'Or date from before the Second World War and some from the nineteenth century. Much of the housing is very run-down. The area has been inhabited for decades by working-class people, including many of immigrant origin, especially from Africa, and in recent years, it has become a key target of urban policies. By contrast, the other case study of Porte Pouchet in the neighbouring 17th *arrondissement* illustrates another area-based policy in a more recent housing development built in the 1960s. Here, some radical choices have been made, including mass demolition, demonstrating that although both case study areas are ANRU-supported projects,⁷ the approach and solutions adopted reflect differences between the areas.

The remainder of the chapter has three parts. A brief review of the development of housing renewal policy in France is followed by an account of the two case study areas in Paris. Finally, the chapter considers the social transformations brought about by renewal in the case study areas, where the dominant emphasis is on the renewal of housing.

The winding road of housing renewal policy

Legislation on housing renewal in France can be grouped into three main categories: (a) laws relating to public health, expropriation or compulsory purchase, aimed at improving the management of already developed sites; (b) laws relating to town planning, including planning for redevelopment, such as building standards and spatial planning; and (c) laws with social goals including social mix, 'rebalancing' and local development. These policies have evolved over time, usually in fits and starts, depending on the issues of the moment and the weight of different lobbies. The aim here is not to present a detailed account but rather to highlight significant points in the evolution of policy over time.

1 *From the nineteenth century to the aftermath of the Second*
2 *World War*

3
4 The first Act dealing with substandard or 'unhealthy' housing was in
5 1850. It was introduced as part of a process of identifying old buildings
6 and dilapidated areas which needed to be demolished. It followed a
7 public health way of thinking, combining medical knowledge and
8 urban engineering, especially in Paris where city development efforts
9 were associated with statistical measurement of housing conditions
10 (Fijalkow, 1998[[**not in references**]]). The 1850 Act led to housing
11 being considered a public matter, on which anyone could express
12 a view and where local power struggles enabled the inhabitants of
13 well-to-do districts to complain about undesirable neighbours (Kalf,
14 2009[[**not in references, is 2008**]]). The spread of public health
15 ideas thus went along with the spatialisation of urban policies. The
16 clearance of unhealthy housing areas, whose boundaries were based on
17 the incidence of deaths from tuberculosis, was implemented, however,
18 only from 1945 onwards under authoritarian procedures initiated by
19 the war-time Vichy government towards private property. In the
20 post-Second World War period, selective clearance, often by small
21 developers and property agents, led to the de-densification of the
22 built-up areas and of the population, for example in the Marais district
23 of Paris; while much larger-scale clearance was seen elsewhere, as in
24 the 13th *arrondissement* to the south-east of the city centre (Coing,
25 1966). Everywhere, such demolition resulted in reduced housing and
26 population densities and the rejection of the poor (Lévy-Vroelant,
27 1999).

28 In the early years following the Second World War, France faced a
29 housing crisis: 20 per cent of the housing stock had been destroyed
30 or damaged, and the population was growing rapidly. House building
31 between the wars had been insufficient, especially in urban areas, and
32 a policy of rent control had made investment in housing unattractive
33 to landlords. Through a government charge on rented property, a
34 fund was established in 1945 for the improvement and maintenance
35 of rural and urban housing; it was managed by *Crédit Foncier*. Because
36 of the housing shortage, however, the Rent Act 1948 maintained
37 rent control for buildings constructed before that date, providing a
38 continuing disincentive to housing maintenance and accelerating
39 the transfer of property ownership in old districts (Lévy and Saint
40 Raymond, 1992[[**not in references**]]). From then on, modernist
41 trends in French society, following the principles of the 1933 Charter
42 of Athens put forward by Le Corbusier, began to regard older built-up

areas as antiquated and degraded. These trends led to large amounts of new construction, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, but the relatively central location and modest rents of the older properties continued to be attractive to many people, even though the condition of the properties was often extremely poor.

From the 1950s to the late 1970s

The ability of the state to compulsorily acquire land for redevelopment was strengthened by an Act in 1957 which enabled the creation of 'priority urbanisation zones' ('ZUPs' or *zones à urbaniser en priorité*). The Act gave authorities the means to acquire sites for building both on the outskirts of towns and cities, and in the heart of old districts. Using industrialised building methods, large scale rental estates, often of poor quality, were developed. These were sometimes used as 'transit' areas, causing a sense of instability or impermanence for residents. The measures did nothing to improve the quality of the remaining older housing (Topalov, 1995[[**not in references**]]) which large social landlords preferred to demolish and 're-urbanise'. For example, the Amandiers district in the 20th *arrondissement* of Paris was extensively cleared in the 1960s: older housing was replaced with social housing and apartment blocks, with community facilities including schools following many years later. Much of the original population was re-housed outside Paris, for example at Sarcelles in Val d'Oise where there are many social housing units; only a few residents, often the better-off, were re-housed within Paris itself.

This type of town planning, strongly linked with unrestricted real estate speculation, faded away by the end of the 1970s. A new deal resulted from several factors: the traumatising experience of redevelopment on the people affected; the complexity of having a multiplicity of organisations involved; the decline of state funding through a reduction in the financial assistance offered to home owners; and the emergence of an eco-cultural dimension in urban and housing affairs. In 1967, the introduction of concerted development zones ('ZACs' or *zones d'aménagement concerté*) encouraged the public and private sectors to work together in development planning, with the aim of sharing costs more equally between them. In 1970, the 'Vivien Act' introduced a policy of rehabilitating unhealthy housing, requiring its improvement, closure, or transfer to another owner, as appropriate. This was followed in 1971 by the creation of *L'Agence Nationale pour l'Amélioration de l'Habitat* (ANAH, the 'National Housing Agency') from the former National Fund for Housing Improvement (FNAH).

1 Its brief was to rehabilitate and improve the stock of private sector
2 dwellings, as an alternative, in suitable circumstances, to slum clearance
3 and redevelopment (Gaudin, 1995; Bourdin, 1984; Joseph, 1998).

4 By the end of the 1970s, real estate speculation had not abated
5 and the consequent reallocation of properties from public to private
6 ownership displaced local populations. This became a structural
7 problem and public authorities were criticised for acting as prime
8 movers in a situation where private actors, especially landlords, were
9 free to increase rents for each new tenant in line with the increased
10 value of the improved properties (Authier, 1995[[**not in references,**
11 **is ANRU and Authier, 1995**]]), leading to the exclusion of poorer
12 households. Through the 1970s, the main participants in renewal and
13 redevelopment were no longer the public or semi-public builders,
14 such as the SCIC (*Société Central Immobilière de la Caisse de Dépôts*, a
15 subsidiary of the state finance house and the leading building promoter
16 in France) which had transformed working-class areas by building
17 mainly for affordable home ownership. The new context was marked
18 by a scarcity of building land as well as changing attitudes to old
19 districts, which by the 1970s were considered to be part of the national
20 heritage and hence to have intrinsic value. Private owners, estate
21 agents and mixed economy companies now had the upper hand. For
22 a while, real estate speculation was fuelled by seemingly limitless city
23 financing (Renard, 2008) but it aroused opposition and alternative
24 views on urban planning (Biau and Tapie, 2005[[**not in references,**
25 **is 2009**]]). By gaining significance and value, heritage designation
26 implied shifting the power struggles towards culture and memory, or
27 rather to antagonistic cultures and memories: national, immigrant,
28 and subordinate, and often rooted in the colonial past (Hayden, 1994;
29 Massey, 1995; Lévy-Vroelant, 2011).

30 The heritage movement was already well on its way because of
31 the Malraux Act of 1962 which, among other measures, enabled the
32 creation of conservation areas and gave tax advantages to landlords
33 who improved old buildings to let. The Act was supported by those
34 who wanted the protection of heritage to go beyond the preservation
35 of historic monuments. These 'conservatives' or 'conservationists'
36 opposed the modernists and their desire for the wholesale clearance of
37 older housing areas. Since 1967, when the first concerted development
38 zones (ZACs) were introduced, the idea was endorsed that a zone
39 might retain older built-up areas; and in French town planning, a
40 consensus was established around this view, in favour of heritage
41 designation. The process was thwarted, however, by the 1970 Vivien
42 Act which reinforced procedures for dealing with unhealthy housing,

including 'adapting older areas to modernity' by eliminating housing deemed to be beyond rehabilitation. This approach was in line with the thinking of the national housing renewal agency, ANAH.

Through these differences of policy and approach, the notion of 'rehabilitation' became heavy with symbolic meaning: it was said that it could 'return value' to what had 'gone to pot'; restore the image of an area; and 'reintegrate into the market' what had become antiquated, degraded and unworthy of the modern city. Where buildings were improved, the aim was to provide comfortable housing, to strengthen building structures and to give them a proper facelift. Yet many of the processes carried out by powerful operators were also emblematic of a certain vision of the city, in which all that remained of an area's heritage were the restored façades of older buildings in which few, if any, of the original residents still lived.

The modernist tendency received a big setback in 1973 when the Guichard ministerial circular announced the decision to bring to an end the construction of large social housing estates, or *grands ensembles*, in order to counteract social segregation. The government wanted to draw a line under town planning based on towers and blocks: '*les tours et les barres*'. The circular led to a renewed emphasis on the future of small scale older housing, which could be rehabilitated through a reconsideration of its heritage value. In the Programmed Housing Improvement Operation (OPAH) introduced in 1977 and supported by ANAH, the aim was to massively upgrade the private rental stock and to integrate older housing districts within the wider process of urban change and development.

Towards a new urban policy: from the 1980s to the 2000s

In 1981, policy turned to the question of poverty in urban areas, looking positively at the physical and human resources of older housing areas and the opportunities to improve them. In the context of the first disturbances or 'riots' in a suburban ZUP in Lyon (les Minguettes, Vénissieux) the idea was not only to repair the housing and to re-establish the social fabric of the city in districts by-passed by modernity, but to create a new sense of place for these areas. Social development, working with local residents, was at the heart of the approach.

The late 1980s saw further attempts to tackle the problems of older areas: in particular through the treatment of substandard housing (1989) and new legislation on urban redevelopment (2003). The socialist government at this time, inspired by pre-war public health legislation

1 and on grounds of social justice, attempted to eliminate bad practices
2 by landlords in the older rented stock by strengthening the legal and
3 regulatory framework against inadequate and unsatisfactory housing.
4 This policy, first implemented by left-wing municipalities, was
5 gradually adopted by all the municipalities containing the more than
6 700 districts identified by the state as 'Underprivileged Urban Areas'
7 (ZUS's). The government remained highly critical of the modernist
8 urban planning of the 1960s; it did not see the large housing estates
9 as 'heritage'; and was aware that 10 to 20 per cent of estates (Lévy-
10 Vroelant, 2009, 113) were areas with major public safety concerns.
11 Combating segregation and insecurity would require 'multifaceted
12 action, closely coordinated at national and local level' (Peyrat, 2002,
13 95). The combination of issues affecting both older and more recent
14 housing areas lay behind the 'return of the state' in local affairs.

15 Thus, housing production and the eradication of sub-standard
16 housing are initiated by public authorities and carried out locally,
17 taking account of the endogenous dynamics of the districts concerned.
18 This process is followed in Paris where much of the housing is old and
19 often substandard: a matter of concern for the socialist municipality
20 since the turn of the 2000s (Dietrich-Ragon, 2011). The policies
21 adopted are a mixture of coercion and incentives, but because of
22 housing market pressures it is seldom possible for households with
23 low to average incomes to afford social housing built in areas where
24 older housing has been demolished. In this respect, intra-mural Paris
25 is different from its suburbs, having at present a higher percentage of
26 non-working-class tenants in social housing (Pinçon, Prêteceille and
27 Rendu, 1986). This has led to a mix of activity where 'very social
28 housing' and 'standard' social housing are provided for different income
29 groups, alongside 'intermediate' private renting for middle income
30 households and rehabilitation schemes run by private investment.⁸ In
31 2009, loans for 'very social housing' (PLA-1) accounted for 22 per
32 cent of social housing production in Paris, compared with 18 per
33 cent nationally. This emphasis on trying to increase the provision
34 of affordable housing for low income households is characteristic of
35 the social housing sector in Paris (Dumont, 1992; Flamant[[**not in**
36 **references, is Flamand, 1999**]], 1999), when compared with most
37 other large and medium sized towns in France. It reflects the policy
38 that a large part of Paris is designated by the city authorities as an
39 area within which social housing is expected over time to account
40 for at least 25 per cent of all housing in estates larger than 800 m²,
41 and for 20 per cent of the entire housing stock by 2014[[**can this be**
42

updated, to reflect that by the time book is published 2014
will be nearly over?]] .

Two examples of housing renewal in Paris

New from old: La Goutte d'Or

La Goutte d'Or/Château Rouge district in the 18th *arrondissement* lies between Boulevard de la Chapelle to the south, Rue Ordener to the north and Rue de Clignancourt to the west. The Gare du Nord is nearby and the railway lines running into the station form the eastern boundary of the district. Renewal activity in the area combines renovation and rehabilitation involving multiple partners who have worked together on a comprehensive programme aimed at improving housing, educational, social and neighbourhood facilities. These partners include local community or neighbourhood associations that have supported change, while attempting to limit its segregative effects.

Since the Second World War this district, where more than 90 per cent of the buildings date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has specialised in housing people first of North and then of West African origin, and in providing multi-occupied dwellings (Toubon and Messamah, 1990). Flats have been divided into individual furnished rooms: this takes them out of rent regulation and makes them profitable for their landlords (Faure and Lévy-Vroelant, 2008[[**not in references, is 2007**]]). Between 1962 and 1982, there was no public intervention in the area, even though it would have met the criteria for declaration as a slum. As early as 1962, the demography reflected migration into the district; and over time, La Goutte d'Or gradually accommodated the highest proportion of international migrants in the whole of Paris: nearly 12 per cent of household heads in 1962 rising to 35 per cent in 1982. It was also a strongly working-class district, with workers accounting for 51 per cent of the economically active population in 1962 and 49 per cent in 1982. The housing stock consisted mainly of old, small rental units with no internal plumbing: for example, 50 per cent were without an inside water closet in 1962, and 30 per cent in 1982. The area was losing population, with 38,000 inhabitants in 1962 and 29,000 in 1982. By 2006, according to the Census, there were 22,000 inhabitants, 14 per cent of housing units lacked basic amenities, compared with 7 per cent in Paris as a whole; and 32 per cent of residents were of international origin, compared with 19 per cent in Paris. These trends are persistent in spite of the

1 other changes that have taken place in the area over the past 50 years
2 or so.

3 In the early 1980s, the city of Paris began to implement a
4 comprehensive improvement project for the area, consisting of
5 three main actions. The first was 'hard' renovation, resulting in the
6 demolition of some 1,400 rooms and their replacement by 900 social
7 housing units, among which were a number of large flats. This work
8 was carried out by the most prominent social landlord in Paris, a
9 partner of the municipality. It swept away a whole sector in the south
10 of the district that had functioned as a kind of informal social housing
11 area for very low income people in very old and poor quality buildings,
12 but with high rents per square metre. The redevelopment turned
13 the sector into an area of conventional social housing, financed by a
14 single lender and subject to rent regulation. The second action was
15 to apply procedures from the Malraux Act (1964) and the Vivien Act
16 (1970) to more than 30 buildings. These allowed the municipality to
17 compel home-owners to carry out improvement work, failing which
18 the properties could be compulsorily acquired, on the grounds of their
19 'heritage status' or 'improvement potential'. The success or otherwise
20 of these measures was hardly assessed in the face of the municipality's
21 determination to see the process through to the end.

22 It was the third action, the Programmed Housing Improvement
23 Operation (OPAH), applied to the district from 1987 onwards, which
24 aimed to induce private landlords to make improvements, assisted by
25 grants from ANAH, the National Housing Agency. The goal was to
26 improve the condition and comfort of a stock of 14,000 housing units
27 to provide quality housing in the rental market, in place of a degraded
28 working-class habitat. After six years of relatively slow progress,
29 however, Semavip, a joint development company of the city of Paris,
30 took charge of the acquisition and demolition of 45 older buildings
31 considered obsolete and unsuitable for improvement. They were
32 replaced by social housing units intended for middle-class occupants
33 so as to diversify the population, especially in the southern part of
34 the district. Thus it can be seen that, in the pressurised context of the
35 Parisian housing market, private and public investment has tended
36 to favour the middle classes in various ways, and has brought new
37 people into La Goutte d'Or/Château Rouge through gentrification
38 (Chabrol, 2011). Even though housing costs in the district remain
39 among the cheapest in Paris, their rate of increase has been spectacular:
40 from an average of €1600/m² in 2000 to €6000/m² in 2012. In 2006,
41 according to national fiscal statistics (INSEE IRCOM, 2009[[not
42 **in references**]]), the income gap between the richest households

Figure 4.1: Making new from old in La Goutte d'Or, Paris [[please add reference to figure in text]]



Photo: Claire Lévy-Vroelant

(bottom decile) and the poorest households (top decile) by person (UC) was 11.3 in La Goutte d'Or compared to 9.2 for the whole of Paris.

The city's plan for the renewal of La Goutte d'Or district, beginning in the 1980s, aroused considerable opposition, especially from the numerous local associations that were formed to defend the interests

1 of the people who lived and worked in the area. Criticisms centred
2 on: too much renovation, too little respect for the heritage of the
3 area, uncontrolled rent increases, and lack of consideration for people
4 living in rooming houses who at the time had no legal right to be re-
5 housed. These protests were often successful and the City authorities
6 back-pedalled more than once in the face of such opposition: for
7 example, by developing programmes to improve older housing, by
8 implementing an exception regime for the occupiers of rooming
9 houses, and by integrating the district into the national programme for
10 improving older housing. A process of consultation developed between
11 the associations and the public authorities on issues such as security,
12 education services, employment, cleaning and health. In this way the
13 associations could exercise leverage in promoting the district, making
14 it more 'liveable' for existing residents, and 'attractive' to new ones,
15 although in 2000, when the municipality went to the left, the new
16 residents of the district created their own associations. They wanted
17 to break with the image of La Goutte d'Or as a 'special district' due
18 to its large and well-established population of migrant origin. They
19 argued for 'the right to a quiet neighbourhood', 'the right to French
20 shops', 'the right to a quality public space', and 'the right to mixed
21 schools'. Many of these claims were legitimised at the highest level by
22 government (Peyrat, 2002) and endorsed locally. Programmes for the
23 area were refocused on possibly less contentious objectives, which were
24 more environmental than social. The ANRU programme, for example,
25 led to more demolition rather than the improvement of unhealthy
26 housing, the smartening up of public areas, and the building of social
27 housing to promote social mix, in particular by attracting average
28 income households (Launay, 2010).

29

30 *'Revitalisation' through demolition: Porte Pouchet*

31

32 The renovation of the Porte Pouchet district in the 17th *arrondissement*
33 is governed by two schemes: an Urban Contract for Social Cohesion
34 (CUCS)⁹ associated with the national Urban Policy, and a Major Urban
35 Renewal Project (GPRU)¹⁰ under the national Urban Renovation
36 Programme created by the Act of 1 August 2003 to undertake the
37 demolition and reconstruction of so-called deprived areas. The
38 renovation includes activity at three different spatial levels: the city
39 perimeter, the district and the housing itself.

40 In some respects, Porte Pouchet is characteristic of many
41 developments on the perimeter of the city of Paris. With a population
42 of about 13,000, the area is enclosed to the north by the Boulevard

Périphérique at the boundary between the city and the neighbouring municipalities of Saint-Ouen and Clichy. To the south, the area extends slightly below the Boulevard Bessières, one of the Boulevards des Maréchaux which also encircle Paris, into the district of Porte de Clichy. The land between the two major roads bears the mark of different phases of urbanisation, in particular the 'red belt' of HBM (*Habitations à bon marché*) buildings from the 1930s and the towers, blocks and cul-de-sacs from the mass housing programme of the late 1950s/early 1960s. 'Green belt' features include sports grounds, gardens and other green spaces, but these sit alongside unattractive but necessary municipal services such as a car pound and parking for heavy goods vehicles. The peripheral highway, completed in 1970, acts as a barrier and heightens the isolation of the area from its neighbours. At the meeting place of well-to-do and working-class districts of the capital, Porte Pouchet is distinguished by its poor quality urban and architectural character. Unattractive and seen as a 'dead end', the area is 'weakened by its downtrodden image and looked down on by outsiders'.¹¹ Thus, at the city scale, the aim is to revitalise Porte Pouchet as one of a large number of run-down peripheral urban areas, by making it more attractive as a place to live, creating job opportunities, and developing high quality public spaces.

At the social level, the city's policy for Porte Pouchet is focused on the district. In the early 2000s, as part of a CUCS,¹² a specialist team of three salaried staff was assigned by the city to coordinate social activity across the whole project. The team is based locally; its mission covers employment, education and housing. Working to a Head of Project located outside the area, it has prepared reports, organised meetings and developed information campaigns during the whole demolition/renovation process (Dietrich-Ragon and Fijalkow, 2013). Throughout the district, social fragility is expressed in many ways: for example, there are large proportions of young and of elderly people (30 per cent aged less than 25 years and 20 per cent aged over 60 years); an overrepresentation of large families with three children or more; a high proportion of single parent families (39 per cent); and problems of integrating migrants at school and in the job market. Economic fragility is another issue: according to Paris-Habitat, the main social landlord of the area, 10 per cent of households have no income except social subsidies (compared with an average of 8.5 per cent in the 14 other CUCS districts in Paris); and more than 70 per cent of tenants have net incomes below the qualifying level for 'very social housing'. The integration difficulties experienced by many young people lead to

1 intergenerational cohabitation: 39 per cent of children who live with
2 their parents are over 20 years old.

3 At the level of the housing itself in Porte Pouchet, it can be said that
4 the dominance of social housing is part of the area's problem. In tenant
5 surveys prior to 'revitalisation', social researchers found sometimes
6 contrasting views about the buildings of the area.¹³ For example, the
7 Borel tower (Figure 4.2), overlooking the Boulevard Périphérique,
8

9 **Figure 4.2: La Tour Borel, Porte Pouchet, Paris**



42 *Photo: Claire Lévy-Vroelant*

was said by residents to have ‘satisfactory social functioning’ while being ‘exposed to unbearable traffic noise’. The design of housing units, especially of kitchens and bathrooms, was strongly criticised; so too was the dilapidated condition of the buildings and the parking difficulties in the area. The Bois le Prêtre tower was said to be ‘socially problematic’ with prostitution and squatting, and general degradation of the common areas. Moreover, the presence of several large families was criticised for causing ‘neighbourhood feuds associated with noise and different ways of life’. According to the housing managers, these social tensions were ‘made worse by insufficient maintenance and management of the building’. People living in the Borel block expressed ‘feelings of insecurity’ and concerns about poor physical conditions. In the surveys of these three buildings, nearly three-quarters of tenants favoured demolition and rebuilding to obtain better housing, the exception being the Bois le Prêtre tower where 50 per cent of the tenants, especially those who had lived there for more than 30 years, argued for its retention and refurbishment: this was done. The authorities decided to demolish the other two buildings and tenants were offered transitional or permanent re-housing across the whole of the 180,000 social housing units in Paris, in advance of the building of new housing within the Porte Pouchet district, either at the newly created Rue Pierre Rebière, or in a neighbouring project. Reconstruction is a long process, however, and this new housing is not apparently intended first and foremost for the previous inhabitants of the low-rent housing at Borel tower and Borel block: prices are definitely too high for them.

Conclusions and lessons

*The choice of renovation and/or rehabilitation*¹⁴

The two districts La Goutte d’Or and Porte Pouchet form part of the city’s urban programme. The formal relations between the local communities and the state are conducted through the *parastatal* agencies ANAH and ANRU, and through the involvement of mixed economy development companies such as Semavip. Land acquisition and re-housing projects follow strict procedures. Nevertheless, the governance of a project is more formal and rigid when social housing is dominant in an area and managed by a single developer, as in Porte Pouchet, where all parties, including tenants, must follow a process agreed by the landlord and the development company as a means of achieving the future plan for the district. By contrast, in La Goutte d’Or, the

1 importance of the private rented sector and the recent involvement of
2 a number of social landlords appear to give greater flexibility in terms
3 of renovation or rehabilitation choices, but also less certainty about
4 what, in effect, will happen in the future.

5 In both districts, the institutional framework of the city's urban policy
6 has supposedly strengthened the contacts between the municipality,
7 other agencies and the residents. In La Goutte d'Or, the weight of the
8 residents is real: they influence the direction of change by questioning
9 the analysis and assumptions on which proposals are based. In Porte
10 Pouchet, the agencies are less evident and residents are consulted
11 through opinion polls and neighbourhood meetings organised by the
12 landlord. Since residents are not party to the professional diagnosis of
13 the area's problems and have no control over future implementation,
14 however, their participation levels are rather low and the influence of
15 public meetings on planning decisions seems limited. An exception,
16 however, was the influence of residents on the decision to rehabilitate
17 the Bois le Prêtre tower, and their involvement is held up now as
18 an example of 'good practice' for the whole district (Gromark and
19 Paadam, 2013[[**not in references, is 2012**]]).

20 When comparing the results of both renovation and rehabilitation,
21 consideration must be given to the diversity of the actors involved,
22 the duration of the work from decision to completion, and the social
23 cost to the local population. The decision to renovate or rehabilitate
24 is influenced strongly by the condition of the existing housing stock
25 although a true diagnosis requires the cooperation of the people who
26 live there. The social aspect is sometimes ignored or given insufficient
27 weight by the agencies responsible. For example, when renovating
28 La Goutte d'Or, the agencies had to cope with the problem of large
29 scale sub-letting, a practice which was well-known but 'ignored'. Sub-
30 tenants without a legal occupancy title were considered at first not to
31 have a right to re-housing, even when they had been living in their
32 flats for many years. Other problems were in condominiums with low
33 income owner occupiers, often a majority of those living there, who
34 could not afford the housing to which they were expected to move;
35 and in situations where gentrification had resulted in the amalgamation
36 of neighbouring flats: this process was not financed, nor could it be
37 controlled by the public authorities. Finally, households with children
38 affected by lead poisoning, mainly from lead-based paint in housing
39 built before 1948, may have strategies for using the situation as a
40 stepping stone to re-housing in the social sector, or for the palliative
41 improvement of their existing accommodation. This poses difficulties
42 for housing organisations that prefer to create homogenised 'solutions'

rather than to treat individual situations on their merits (Dietrich- 1
Ragon, 2011). 2

The decision to demolish Borel tower in Porte Pouchet stemmed 3
from a technical plan based on a sample survey, consultation and 4
information exchange with residents and neighbourhood meetings. 5
Little account was taken of the advantages of the tower: a good 6
view over Paris and the relatively spacious flats. The decision was 7
influenced by concern about the noise from the peripheral highway, 8
the perception of the district as being disadvantaged by its isolation, 9
the presence of young adults living with their parents, and of single- 10
parent families. A long time elapsed before the tower was demolished; 11
its residents were re-housed and most did not expect to return. The 12
demolition itself was presented by the authorities as the symbol of a 13
new future for the area, though many residents remain in doubt about 14
the eventual outcome of a project that has been in progress since the 15
early 2000s. 16

In La Goutte d'Or, new residents were 'waiting for gentrification' 17
(Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006) while for existing residents, renovation 18
and rehabilitation did not follow the same pace. Renovation 19
was initiated by the public authorities to their timescale, while 20
rehabilitation was dependent on the take-up of financial incentives by 21
landlords and residents: often, the latter wished to see the effects of the 22
renovation before agreeing to move. Over time, the area has become 23
more gentrified, with a noticeable and perhaps symbolic dichotomy 24
between the housing, now occupied increasingly by the middle class, 25
and the public space, with its many ethnic shops (Chabrol, 2011). 26

Changes in the local population 27 28

In La Goutte d'Or, a major effect of the renewal programme has 29
been the growth in the provision of social housing in the area, which 30
increased from 1 per cent to 13 per cent of the housing stock between 31
1982 and 2010. Most of the new provision has been financed as 32
'standard' social housing ('PLUS' housing) to which maximum social 33
rents apply, thus favouring middle- to higher-income people, rather 34
than those on lower incomes. This housing is mainly in the south part 35
of La Goutte d'Or, whereas in Château Rouge intermediate social 36
housing ('PLS' housing) has been built for middle-income households. 37
There has also been a trend for some of the older flats in Château 38
Rouge to be sold at a premium: for example, prices trebled from 39
2000 to 2005 as local residents and landlords sold to incoming buyers 40
in middle-class occupations (Bougras, 2008[[not in references]]). 41
42

1 During this period, half the flats sold in Château Rouge lacked basic
2 amenities such as a bath or shower but prices were 30 per cent higher
3 than in the rest of the district as the potential for housing improvement
4 was recognised by incoming buyers. In these ways, a noticeable
5 differentiation has been created over time between parts of La Goutte
6 d'Or/Château Rouge district.

7 In Porte Pouchet, the changes of population resulting from
8 renovation are still too recent to be analysed in detail. The social
9 housing programme in ANRU's pipeline included the replacement of
10 140 housing units through the demolition of 96 units in Borel tower
11 and 44 in Borel block. Their replacement was to include 92 social
12 housing units and 49 housing units for owner occupation, including
13 some for first-time buyers. The use of PLUS financing for the new
14 social housing and the introduction of owner occupiers into the estate
15 suggests that the new residents are in higher income groups than those
16 who lived there before; and that a gentrification process is at work
17 within the renovated project. Moreover, the introduction of owner
18 occupation, even on a small scale, has been seen as a driving force for
19 the whole area, and has tended to pull the market upwards, through
20 the combined activities of the architects and developers, and some tax
21 incentives for building owner-occupied housing within an ANRU
22 project. Environmental innovation such as vegetal façades, and energy
23 efficient dwellings are seen by the developer Semavip as an important
24 argument to justify the large scale of the work.

25

26 *Concluding comments*

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28 By the early 1990s, the action taken to achieve the gradual
29 improvement of older housing in parts of La Goutte d'Or was seen
30 as an example for many other working-class districts in the eastern/
31 northern part of Paris. It appeared to be an endogenous approach,
32 developed from within, using the local resource of the existing built-
33 up area to produce high quality urban space. The public authorities
34 at this time acted as a catalyst, encouraging private action to achieve
35 better housing conditions. Local community associations were brought
36 into the process. They supported the idea of improving the existing
37 housing, rather than viewing it as antiquated and suitable only for
38 demolition, which had been the prevailing view in the 1950s and
39 1960s. In this way, social development and partnership in the cause of
40 social integration indirectly served the market and was seen as a boost
41 for what the area had to offer. Sometimes, however, too much was
42 done to promote a new image: for example, in the installation by the

city of Paris of a 'fashion street' in La Goutte d'Or where the products of fashionable milliners seemed out of place with the character of the district. Similarly, a centre for music making, established on the initiative of the municipality, attracted people from outside the district, and was criticised for that reason. Views and attitudes on such matters have often been contradictory. Sometimes the district is portrayed as a 'den for drug addicts'; and sometimes as a place that is 'on the move', or becoming more 'liveable' (Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006). Some local residents' associations are strong supporters of existing populations, such as teenagers or African communities, others have developed a discourse on the quality of 'living together' in the district, while others prefer to emphasise the area's 'problems'.

In the 2000s, the renewal of Porte Pouchet did not develop from the 'bottom-up'. The project created new streets, such as Rue Ribière. The public areas and shops were 'reconfigured' and may even have been the inspiration from which the whole renewal project stemmed. An alliance to promote the development and to 'look at the area in a different way' was formed between the main actors: the architects Périphériques, the real estate company Nexity, the semi-public development company Semavip, the social housing organisation Paris-Habitat, and the municipality. Existing and potential future residents were not really part of this process.

In La Goutte d'Or, by contrast, residents and community associations have had an influence on rehabilitation policy and on the integration into the area of middle-class inhabitants. This has brought in other actors such as the mixed economy company *Société immobilière d'économie mixte de la ville de Paris* (SIEMP) which builds, improves and manages housing projects on behalf of the city of Paris. In 2003, SIEMP was designated by the city as the coordinating agency for the improvement of 'degraded habitat' in Paris. Semavip is also active in neighbouring Château-Rouge, where it is building a foyer for elderly migrants).

Ultimately, the choices for locating urban renewal either in an old densely built up district (La Goutte d'Or) or close to the city boundary (Porte Pouchet) more or less follow the same strategies: taking account of social aspects, such as a target of, say, 25 per cent of social housing in all *arrondissements* while maintaining a 'middle-class element'; and increasing the attractiveness of run-down areas without discouraging private property investment. In this respect, Porte Pouchet has been successful in attracting private investment while still providing opportunities for those who need social housing. On the other hand, developers have not rushed to La Goutte d'Or at any time in the

1 20 years since the first shovelful of earth was turned. The district will
2 long maintain the exotic and transnational cachet inherited from its
3 history as a cornerstone for attracting global urban culture.

4 In housing and area renewal the political nature of the project is
5 vitally important. The fragile boundary between the 'social' and
6 the 'free market' is clearly visible and there are steadily increasing
7 discrepancies among and between districts. Everything unfolds as if
8 some areas were destined to keep the immigrants, the poor and the
9 key-workers, while others were meant to house the middle classes,
10 with their limited but generally secure incomes. In this scenario, the
11 former areas are partially written off. As shown by Neil Smith (1996),
12 however, the social destiny of districts as regards urban gentrification
13 is not fixed in advance; the cultural choices of households and their
14 economic status, especially when the structure of property prices is
15 reversed, remain key factors enabling the middle and upper classes to
16 live in old working-class districts.

17

18 **Notes**

19 ¹ At 1 September 2009, a total of 375 projects had been approved by ANRU
20 and 335 agreements signed relating to 196 priority sites in 474 districts. These
21 projects represented work valued at €39.8 billion programmed over five years
22 and covering a population of 3.2 million. The projects were to be financed
23 by a contribution from ANRU of €10.9 billion allowing the construction of
24 more than 120,000 social housing units, the rehabilitation of about 300 000,
25 the demolition of 130,000 and the improvement (called 'residentialisation')
26 of more than 300,000 housing units of this type'. National Urban Renewal
27 Programme, www.senat.fr/rap/a09-105-8/a09-105-85.html.

28 ² One of the aims of the Law 2000-1208 of 13 December 2000 on Solidarity
29 and Urban Renewal was to establish greater social mix: Article 55 set 20 per
30 cent as the minimum level for social housing in urban municipalities.
31

32 ³ So-called EPCI, *établissements publics de coopération intercommunale*, adopted
33 in 2000 by the Reform of Local Authorities.

34 ⁴ *Foncière Logement* is a non-profit organisation created in 2002 by companies
35 and trades unions under an agreement with the State. It aims to 'produce
36 rental units for wage-earners so as to diversify housing supply in areas
37 being rehabilitated, and in others where housing supply is scarce', www.foncierelogement.fr/Qui-sommes-nous/Moyens-9.html. Through investment
38 in its property portfolio, *Foncière Logement* benefits the supplementary pension
39 schemes of private sector employees. It uses non-agricultural private employers'
40 payroll contributions (formerly known as the 1 per cent housing fund and
41
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today as *Action Logement* (Housing Action)) to fund its work, much of which is in urban renewal areas. *Foncière Logement* commissions housing in new schemes and in existing schemes with renovation work, and contracts the management of the housing to professional organisations in the private or social sectors.

⁵ The exact figure is a matter of debate but the source is considered authoritative.

⁶ La structure du parc de logements en 2011, Chiffres et Statistiques n°341, August 2012.

⁷ Both districts, La Goutte d'Or/Château Rouge and Porte Pouchet, as well as being ANRU projects, are part of the City of Paris *Grand projet de renouvellement urbain* (GPRU), which focuses on 11 priority areas across the city: see www.paris.fr/projetsurbains.

⁸ Social housing for different income groups is financed by three main types of housing loan. PLA-1 loans finance 'very social housing' for lower income households (max 5.67 euros/m² in Paris); PLUS loans are for 'standard' or general social housing, where maximum rents apply (max 6.38 euros/m²); and PLS loans are for 'intermediate' housing (max 12.45 euros/m²), often provided by private landlords rather than social housing organisations. Income ceilings in 2011 for a couple with two children were 28,000 Euros a year for PLA-1 housing, 52,000 Euros a year for PLUS housing, and 67,000 Euros a year for PLS housing. PLUS is the core funding for social housing organisations.

⁹ As part of a nationwide programme, 14 districts in Paris with a combined population of 300,000 or 14 per cent of the total for the city were covered by the *Contrat urbain de cohésion sociale* (CUCS) under which seven priorities were identified: employment, social inclusion and economic development; the development of social cohesion, access to law and citizenship; improving housing, living conditions and urban renewal; education, youth and sports; health; delinquency prevention; and culture. Starting from the idea that the targeted districts were not doing well on these points, the aim was to turn them into districts 'just like the others'. The CUCS programme was extended to 2014 by Ministerial Decision.

¹⁰ See note 5.

¹¹ According to a 2003 study by the city' council's local development team, see **[[rest of note missing]]**

¹² See note 9.

¹³ In 2003 the *Centre Scientifique et Technique du Bâtiment* conducted a preliminary study with a sample of 50 tenants. In the same year, OPAC (*l'Office Public d'Aménagement et de Construction de Paris*), now Paris-Habitat, conducted

1 a social survey with all the tenants of the project, as well as a technical survey
2 of both the Borel and Bois le Prêtre towers.

3 ¹⁴ The term 'renovation' in this context means the clearance of older housing
4 and its replacement by new building. 'Rehabilitation' is the improvement
5 of older housing to a modern standard, sometimes with infilling by new
6 dwellings.

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