SciencesPo
URBAN SCHOOL

TRANSFORMING TERRITORIES • LESSONS FROM THE LAB

N°1
FALL 2024

THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS.

TOWARDS GREATER ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ?

Picture : « Une ferme dans la ville », Béatrice Prève, website of the DR collective, March 10, 2021 Lyon, Auvergne Rhone Alpes, France.

FRANCE 2030

CONTENTS

ABOUT **THE COLLECTION**

The “Lesson of the Lab” collection aims to fuel public debate on major contemporary territorial and urban issues, drawing on the results of collective projects carried out by students at the Sciences Po Urban School. Some forty collective projects are carried out within the Urban School each academic year, with as many institutional, public, private and associative partners as possible. This is the fruit of intense work by nearly 200 students in first year of the Master's program as well as the Executive Master program in territorial governance and urban development. They are accompanied throughout the year by a tutor who is an expert in the subject in question. It is a comparative and forward-looking work on a diversity of territorial issues, covering various French, European and international fields, from metropolises to small and medium-sized towns. The question of transitions, and first and foremost, the ecological transition, occupies a central place. Our partners have taken the gamble of relying on the reflections of the younger generation of urban governance professionals to understand better what is at stake in a context of uncertainty and to identify possible responses to these numerous and sometimes contradictory challenges. We believe that dialogue, organised and fueled by field surveys conducted using robust social science methods, is the only way to move forward collectively.

The purpose of this collection is to provide information for professionals. Each issue is a transversal synthesis, on a given theme, of the main lessons from several collective projects carried out in the four Master’s programs of the Ecole Urbaine. The collection is part of the TIERED* project (Transforming Interdisciplinary Education and Research for Evolving Democracies), a strategic institutional project for Sciences Po that aims to respond to the challenges facing democratic systems in the context of significant environmental and digital transformations. To this end, the project launches a new phase in developing research, education and disseminating knowledge on these two themes. The results of collective projects by Sciences Po students are part of this dynamic, supported by TIERED through this collection.

This synthesis contains information exclusively from the collective projects of the Urban school students, which you can access in the "Find out more" section at the end of this issue.

** TIERED is funded by a French government grant managed by the Agence nationale de la recherche under the France 2030 program, under reference ANR-22-EXES-014.*

PRESENTATION OF **GROUP PROJECTS**

THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS AND TERRITORIES

Master in Urban Planning, 2024

Students : Anna CHIAMBARETTA, Léa FERNANDES, Virgile DELESALLE, Paul WALTHER

Partner : Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture (PUCA)

Tutor : Émeline BAILLY, urban planner

What are the specific challenges of the relationship between environmental and social issues in working-class neighbourhoods? Given the significance of the link between transition challenges and public spaces, the students decided to focus on citizen initiatives linked to the ecological transition in "quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville"[1]. At the crossroads of social, environmental and urban concerns, the project aims to answer the following question: *How is the issue of the socio-ecological transition addressed by the inhabitants in the public space of the QPV ?*

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[1] "Areas of urban concentration of a low-income population" (ANCT)

THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF SOCIAL HOUSING

Master Governing Ecological transition in European Cities, 2023

Students : Marie JAMART, Manon LAINÉ, Valentine MACHUT, Solène MARTIN

Partner : La Fédération des Entreprises Sociales pour l'Habitat (ESH)

Tutor : Guillaume PAVAGEAU, operations Manager at Espacité

The project aims to provide the ESH Federation with food for thought so that they can bring their contribution to the ecological transition. The students suggest action strategies to strengthen the commitment of actors involved in social housing for a more sustainable society, by answering the following question: *What levers can be mobilized for the ecological transition of social housing?*

les entreprises sociales pour l'habitat

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Master Regional and Urban Strategy, 2023

Students : Jeanne LAUNAY, Manon LEROY, Alice LUNEAU, Gabriel PÉRUS

Partner : Impulsion75

Tutor : Nadine ROUDIL, sociologist

At the crossroads of the urban, sociological and generational dimensions of the environmental crisis, this report focuses on the involvement and relationship to the environment of the youth, including young people from working-class neighbourhoods, by trying to answer the following question: *Once identified, how does the involvement of young people from working-class neighbourhoods for the environment materialize?* The students recounted their surprises,meetings and reflections in podcast format in order to highlight existing commitments and question the frameworks and narratives of the ecological crisis.

IMPULSION LES HUMANITÉS

LARGE SOCIAL HOUSING ESTATES AND BIODIVERSITY

Master in Urban Planning, 2023

Students : Alice HOUSSET, Héloïse LECRIQUE, Keynes Pofd Kacinthe TAMO NWAFEU et Jazmin VASQUEZ GONZALES

Partner : Plan Urbanisme Construction Architecture (PUCA)

Tutor : Hortense SERRET, ecologist

In a context where the issues at stake are both the densification and the preservation of biodiversity in urban environments, this collective project focuses on the specific case of the housing development morphology from the 1960s urban planning. The aim is to answer the question: *Under what conditions can large social housing estates built in the 1960s contribute to the ecological fabric of cities?* The report provides a number of ideas for a better integration of biodiversity into urban renewal projects that these large social housing estates are very often subject to.

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Montreuil. Anna Chiambaretta, Léa Fernandes, Virgile Delesalle, Paul Walther.

Part 1

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The four collective projects on which this publication is based build on a comprehensive understanding of the ecological transition in all neighbourhoods, including the most vulnerable. It goes beyond the energy transition and the decarbonisation of materials, by encompassing biodiversity issues, the circular economy, water management, as well as the adaptation of buildings to climatic hazards or sustainable mobility.

EFFECTS AND PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE CROSSROADS OF MULTIPLE INEQUALITIES

The environmental crisis can be understood in many different ways. This issue will focus on the **sociological dimension**, particularly environmental inequalities. These inequalities may be due not only to socio-economic factors but also to gender, age, etc. The **concept of environmental inequalities** has been gaining ground since the 2000s.

Cyria Emelianoff, professor and researcher at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), and Jacques Theys, doctor in mathematics and economics, offer an interesting definition:
«They are related to inequalities in access to the living environment, combined with inequalities in exposure to urban pollution and industrial and natural hazards. In an approach more open to the issues of developing countries, these inequalities refer to the unequal distribution of resources (water, air, soil, energy) from one country to another, but also to inequalities in access to the necessities of life (food, health, etc.), and to unequal opportunities to protect oneself against local and global environmental degradation[1]».

The question of the clash between social and environmental concerns is becoming increasingly salient. The "**Gilets Jaunes**" movement has highlighted the growing gap between environmental aspirations and many families' economic difficulties. This protest movement, which began in November 2018, emerged in response to government policies perceived as penalising low-income citizens, particularly fuel tax increases.

Walk for the climate in Paris, March 25 2022, Jeanne Launay.

Abstract of the article « Climat et gilets jaunes : comment le social et le vert coagulent face à Macron », Marianne, Laurence Dequay, published on September 21 2019.

Abstract of the article « Marches pour le climat : l'union des 'fins du mois' et des 'fins du monde' », web media Reporterre, par Alexandre-Reza Kokabi et Éric Coquelin, published on December 10 2018.

[1] Laigle, L., Moreau, S., Justice et environnement. Les citoyens interpellent le politique, p. 17, 2018.

The 2020 health crisis highlighted the issue of territorial and social inequalities regarding the distribution of nature in the city, and the link between social and environmental issues emerged as an unthought. Yet, residents of low-income urban areas (known as "quartiers prioritaires de la politique de la ville" or QPV in France) are **more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change**, even though they contribute the least to it through their consumption. Research into environmental inequalities[2] shows that, on average, **working-class neighbourhoods** have higher levels of pollution, nuisance and energy insecurity than the rest of metropolitan France and less access to green spaces and other essential infrastructures and services. Regarding local action, we are witnessing an unprecedented multiplication of initiatives and collectives created to link these two issues (Verdragon, Collectif Toxic Tour, Les fourmis vertes, Banlieues Climat...). At the same time, other associations, initially with a social vocation, are working to develop specific programs based on environmental issues.

Among the various inequalities affected by climate change is the inequality **between generations**, while youth is at the heart of media and institutional attention in the fight against global warming. One of the groups most affected by these inequalities is young people from working-class neighbourhoods, at the frontier between their supposedly committed generation and their social class, perceived as less familiar with the dominant ecological codes. However, several studies [3] show that these young people are just as concerned about environmental issues as those from more affluent backgrounds and suffer even more from the difficulty of feeling legitimate and supported in the public debate.

Young people from working-class neighbourhoods have different ways of dealing with environmental issues, both in terms of the **sensitive dimension**, understood as "the sensitivity that individuals may have towards environmental issues, and the way they conceive them", and in terms of the material dimension, i.e. "the conditions of material production of environmental degradation: how we consume, pollute" and so on[4]. On a sensitive level, individuals do not approach environmental issues similarly, depending on the social class to which they belong. For example, a 2018 *Centre de Recherche pour l'Etude et l'Observation des Conditions de vie* (CRÉDOC) study shows that the concept of sustainable consumption is not approached in the same way according to the level of education, socio-occupational category or gender: educated populations tend to consider environmental issues through abstract categories (environment, consumption, production, etc.), while less educated populations refer to more concrete indicators (food, electricity, gas, etc.). Yet most surveys of the French population focus on the more abstract way environmental issues are viewed and are therefore often "oriented towards the perceptions of the dominant classes".

In material terms, the carbon footprint increases with the standard of living[5]. In addition to income, other factors can be considered, such as the location of individuals. For example, among households in the first decile of the standard of living, those living in rural areas emit almost a third more CO2 than those living in urban centres[6]. In addition, there are different approaches to **sustainable consumption** depending on the socio-economic category of individuals: "distinctive" ecogestures (consumption of "ecological" products) are practised mainly by people with high cultural capital who are sensitive to environmental issues. In contrast, frugal ecogestures (reduced consumption) tend to be practised by people with lower economic capital.

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2 Comby, J.-B., & Malier, H. (2021). Les classes populaires et l'enjeu écologique. Un rapport réaliste travaillé par des dynamiques statutaires diverses. Sociétés contemporaines, 124(4), Art. 4.

3 Boy, D. & RCB Conseil. (2022). *Représentations sociales de l'effet de serre et du réchauffement climatique—Vague 23* (Expertises, p. 38). Ademe ; Bien vivre dans les quartiers prioritaires, ONPV report, July 2020, p. 49.

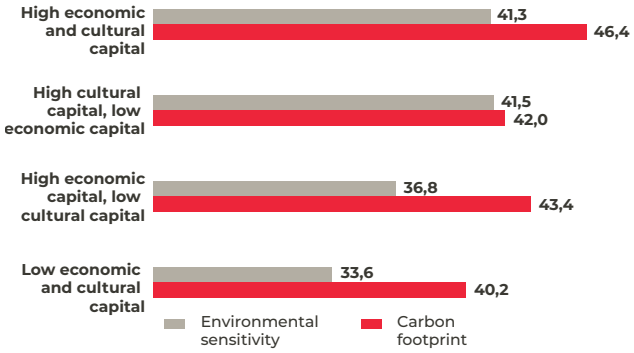
4 Comby, J.-B., & Malier, H. (2021). Les classes populaires et l'enjeu écologique. Un rapport réaliste travaillé par des dynamiques statutaires diverses. *Sociétés contemporaines*, 124(4), Art. 4.

5 «Tendances de consommation» survey, 2018, CRÉDOC, idem.

6 However, we must not ignore the scientific controversies that have been raging for the past twenty years or so about the links between types of territories (dense cities, suburban areas, rural areas, etc.) and the environmental footprint of residents, since the «barbecue effect» was first put forward, according to which the inhabitants of central cities would compensate for their short daily commutes with longer occasional commutes to offset their relative spatial discomfort.

UPPER CLASSES CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT BUT POLLUTE MORE THAN OTHERS

Average score estimating the carbon footprint and the environmental sensitivity (see box) according to the economic and cultural capital* (%)

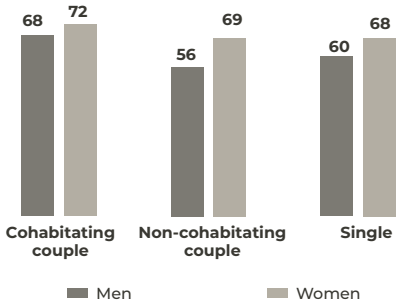


Source : Consumer trends survey, 2018, CRÉDOC.

***High economic capital:** belonging to the wealthiest 40%, i.e. the upper middle classes and affluent categories. In contrast, having low economic capital means belonging to the rest of the population, i.e. the "poorest" 60%.

***High cultural capital** means having a higher education diploma (above the baccalauréat), which is the case for 43% of the French population. Low cultural capital means having a diploma lower than or equal to the baccalauréat, which is the case for 57% of the population.

FEELING OF HAVING A ROLE TO PLAY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT BY GENDER AND MARITAL STATUS (%)



Source : INJEP-CREDOC. DJEPPVA Youth Barometer, 2020.
Scope: All young people aged 18 to 30.

Policies in favour of ecological transition also have a **normative, even exclusionary, dimension.** Indeed, certain actors have conceptualised the notion of environmental commitment in a depoliticised way. This contributes to erasing inequalities in the face of environmental challenges and constructing norms on environmental commitment based on the more privileged classes' understanding and appropriation of the subject.

Finally, taking **gender inequalities** into account is also fundamental to understanding the differences in environmental commitment. When the prism of gender is crossed with young people's commitment, significant disparities emerge. Several studies show that women are more likely to take individual ecological action daily. This is part of a general inequality trend in the distribution of household tasks and gender dynamics in the public and private spheres[7]. Gender also impacts environmental awareness: the graph below shows that, whatever their marital status, women feel more strongly that they "have a role to play in helping the environment".

Therefore, the gender prism can be an obstacle or a resource in environmental commitment. This postulate is at the origin of specific currents in ecology, such as ecofeminism, which maintains that there are common dynamics between the system of domination of men over women and that of humans over nature[8]. ■

7 Mansencal, L. B., Coulange, M., Maes, C., & Müller, J. (2020). Baromètre DJEPVA sur la jeunesse 2020. CRÉDOC.
8 D'Eaubonne, F. (2021). Le temps de l'écoféminisme. In Naissance de l'écoféminisme (p. 23-52). Presses Universitaires de France.

THE SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF SOCIAL HOUSING AND WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS

78% of QPV residents believe that *"to improve the lives of residents in a neighbourhood, it is a priority to develop the ecological transition there"*, compared with 73% for the average French person, according to a barometer carried out for the *Agence Nationale pour la Rénovation Urbaine* (ANRU) in 2021. In this context, it's essential to consider the specific features of social housing and working-class neighbourhoods, which present their challenges and assets.

REAL ESTATE ASSETS OWNED AND MANAGED BY COMMITTED PLAYERS

In France, there is a generalist conception of social housing: it is aimed at people whose incomes are insufficient for housing at market prices. The social housing companies (***Entreprises Sociales pour l'Habitat*** or ESH) are among the companies that "produce social housing", whose role is "to build, develop, allocate and manage social rental housing [aimed] at improving housing conditions for people with limited means"[9]. Social housing organisations remain long-term owners and managers of their properties and are therefore interested in investing in the ecological transition of their housing stock.

Social housing agencies are also key players in reconfiguring cities in the face of climate change. First and foremost, social housing agencies are subject to existing legislation. In terms of mobility, for example, the French urban planning code requires social housing organisations to provide their tenants with bicycle parking spaces.

Mirail district in Toulouse. Léa Fernandes, Anna Chiambaretta, Virgile Delesalle et Paul Walther.

Rotterdam, BoTu district. Anna Chiambaretta, Léa Fernandes, Paul Walther, Virgile Delesalle.

[9] Livre IV of the Code de la Construction et de l'Habitat.

Eco-Village des Noés. Marie Jamart, Manon Lainé, Valentine Machut et Solène Martin.

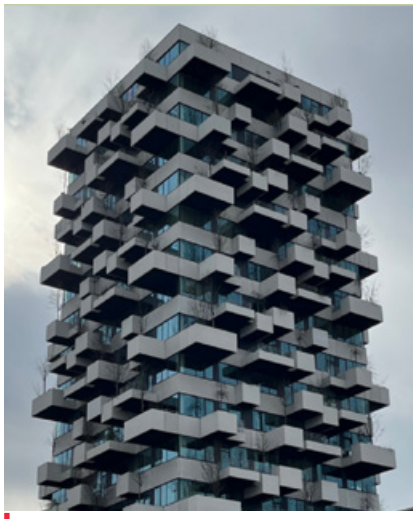
But beyond their obligations, their historical raison d'être makes them **essential players, often pioneers** in social and environmental innovation. For example, they know the need to go beyond efforts to adapt to climate change and towards practices that aim to mitigate it[10]. For several years, ESHs have been running **exemplary programs and initiatives in many private condominiums** (low-carbon construction, land conservation, circular economy, greening and biodiversity, soft mobility, etc.). There are many promising examples of this. In France, several social housing agencies are carrying out particularly innovative projects in terms of ecological transition. Such is the case of ESH SILOGE, one of whose key projects is the “Eco-village des Noés” in Val-de-Reuil on the banks of the Eure, a neighbourhood designed to withstand the ten-, thirty- and one-hundred-year floods of this tributary of the Seine.

Flood expansion areas are home to a rich biodiversity (landscaped park, conservatory orchard) and numerous meeting points (shared gardens, public market, etc.). The district includes 98 social housing units, with hot water and heating supplied by a 100% wood-fired heating plant.

In other European countries, projects have incorporated climate considerations, a high level of biodiversity and mechanisms to reduce urban heat islands into their design. In Vienna, where more than 60% of the city's 1.8 million inhabitants live in social housing units, nature is integrated into the dense urban district of Biotope City. The district includes many vegetable gardens, rooftop green spaces, diverse vegetation, different types of plants and habitats for various animal species, as well as large trees to improve water and air quality.

[10] Adaptation is defined by the IPCC as "an adjustment in natural or human systems in response to present or future climatic stimuli or their effects, in order to reduce harm or exploit beneficial opportunities". (IPCC Glossary). It therefore corresponds to a process of adjustment to the current or future effects of climate change. In parallel with adaptation measures, it is necessary to deploy a mitigation strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote carbon neutrality.

While the Netherlands are home to 38% of Europe's social housing stock, Dutch cities are systematically quoted as exemplary in terms of energetic and ecological transition. In Eindhoven, the first "Vertical Forest" of social housing was erected in 2019 thanks to the social housing organisation Sint-Trudo. This 70-meter-high tower has revitalised a former industrial zone. It houses low-rent apartments, as many trees in large planters staggered along the facades, and 5,100 bushes, shrubs and flowers. Each apartment has a surface area of around 50 m2, with 4 m2 of balcony and 7 m2 of bushes and shrubs. Overall, the building's vegetation absorbs 8085 kilos of CO2 and produces 18,623 kilos of oxygen each year, in addition to promoting biodiversity and the attractiveness of the area.



Vertical Forest - Sint-Trudo. Marie Jamart, Manon Lainé, Valentine Machut et Solène Martin.

View from the roofs of the Biotope City district - Vienna. Marie Jamart, Manon Lainé, Valentine Machut et Solène Martin.

RESIDENTS FACING SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES

People living in working-class neighborhoods also distinguish themselves by the nature of their commitment to the ecological transition, which manifests itself differently from that of the more affluent classes. As social issues are the most mobilising, people's commitment is expressed through "ordinary ecology" practices and a hybridisation with social issues. The two issues most frequently raised by residents of working-class neighbourhoods are **health and food, followed by stigmatization and unemployment**[11]. Indeed, the health crisis has highlighted the inequalities in health and access to care between QPVs and the rest of the country[12]. The challenges linked to population immobility and limited access to healthcare infrastructures are particularly acute.

This issue is closely linked to food since access to quality food is a major concern, accentuated by the food insecurity that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public authorities have also identified an additional challenge: the phenomenon of heat islands, which expose populations to extreme temperatures during heat waves. Green spaces are unevenly distributed, often on the periphery, and even when they are accessible, they fail to counteract the heat islands felt in neighbourhoods. Added to this are the social issues associated with the stigmatisation of QPV residents, which is particularly strong in areas where inequalities between these neighbourhoods and the surrounding areas are most pronounced, such as Marseille or Toulouse, and is an additional barrier to employment.

[11] See *La transition écologique dans les quartiers et territoires populaires*, p 172 (Results).
[12] The Conversation, « Santé : les quartiers prioritaires grands perdants de la crise sanitaire », L'union sociale pour l'habitat, 2021.

Gros Chêne district, Maurepas, Rennes. Source : students (Alice Housset, Héloïse Lecrique, Keynes Pofd Kacinthe Tamo Nwafeu and Jazmin Vasquez Gonzales).

A UNIQUE URBAN HERITAGE: LARGE SOCIAL HOUSING ESTATES

The "grands ensembles" (large social housing estates) are the product of a policy of mass housing production during the "Trente Glorieuses" period (in France, the thirty-year of post-war economic growth), in response to the severe housing crisis and the arrival of new populations. They were built on the outskirts of towns using new construction techniques, offering comfort and urban quality in contrast to dense, often unhealthy, green city centres. These developments feature taller buildings with smaller footprints and more open spaces to create more green spaces. Functionalist, hygienist, and aesthetic thinking prevailed in creating these open spaces intended for daily leisure activities conducive to physical or mental health. The "grand ensemble" is an urban innovation **open to nature**, halfway between city and country.

Nowadays, open spaces are divided between the omnipresence of cars and green spaces. The original intention was to create large, shared meadows and landscaped parks. As a result, public spaces in some of these neighbourhoods have been landscaped, giving them a **qualitative plant heritage** that mirrors the architectural heritage of the large social housing estates. This landscape heritage also embodies a cultural and aesthetic dimension in the relationship between residents and nature. ■

REVERSING THE PERSPECTIVE: THE POTENTIAL OF WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS FOR THE SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

The urban scale is essential for implementing the ecological transition. Urban areas concentrate the majority of the world's population. They are responsible for most greenhouse gas emissions but are also ideal locations for developing effective solutions to combat climate change. Almost 80% of the French population currently lives in urban areas.

A POTENTIAL FOR HOSTING BIODIVERSITY

Once the question of the scale of action has been raised, numerous tensions emerge, such as the one between building densification, reducing the artificialisation of land, and the need to preserve biodiversity. In this context, the contribution of large social housing estates to the ecological fabric of cities appears to be a promising prospect. Indeed, the erosion of biodiversity, i.e. "the increase in the extinction rate of species, through the decline in the populations of certain species and the degradation of natural habitats"[13], is a major challenge of the transition and is all the more important in urban environments: mass urbanisation, domestic and industrial pollution, and the over-frequentation of spaces by humans are aggravating factors in the situation. Soil artificialisation, synonymous with the loss of natural soil functions, also accelerates biodiversity loss. Yet biodiversity is essential to all living beings' survival and helps ensure our health, food resources and social environment.

Cities will certainly become more welcoming spaces for biodiversity, for strictly ecological reasons but also to improve the quality of life of urban dwellers. Given the vastness of their open spaces, large social housing estates could become essential links in the city's ecological network and, in so doing, become "resource spaces."

The March 21, 1973, circular, known as the Guichard Circular, marked the end of the policy of building larges social housing estates, which were criticised for their urban form and the social problems that were gradually associated with them. Since then, **public authorities have focused on large social housing estates,** first as part of urban policy in the 1980s, and since 2003 as part of the *Programme National de Renouvellement Urbain"*or PNRU (National urban renewal program). The first phase of this program focused on demolition-reconstruction operations. In the current second phase, and within the framework of the Climate Laws, practices are focusing more generally on the **conservation and renovation of this built heritage,** as well as on improving the quality of life by **enhancing the ecosystem services provided by green spaces.**

[13] See the French government's portal on environmental and sustainable development challenges: https://www.notre-environnement.gouv.fr/

AN ABUNDANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES CONDUCIVE TO TRANSITIONS

Toulouse, Mirail area. Léa Fernandes, Anna Chiambaretta, Paul Walther et Virgile Delesalle.

Moreover, at the frontier between social issues, popular struggles and adaptation to climate change, **public spaces** are at the heart of the ecological transition in QPVs. They are at the center of social and ecological inequalities in QPVs, both **as a factor of inequality and as an asset for the transition.** Public spaces can be defined as "common goods" or "public assets", underlining their essential character as resources shared by all citizens, regardless of their social status. This assertion highlights the importance of inclusivity and accessibility of public spaces in guaranteeing the social cohesion. Public spaces are therefore physical places, freely accessible to all, with a central role in the democratic and social life of a neighbourhood. As a place for expression, debate and coexistence, they are proving to be a **lever for the improvement of living conditions, inclusion and civic participation.** Their vastness within large social housing estates, despite a reduction in recent years as a result of "résidentialisation"[14] policies, constitutes a spatial resource that can be mobilized in favor of transition.

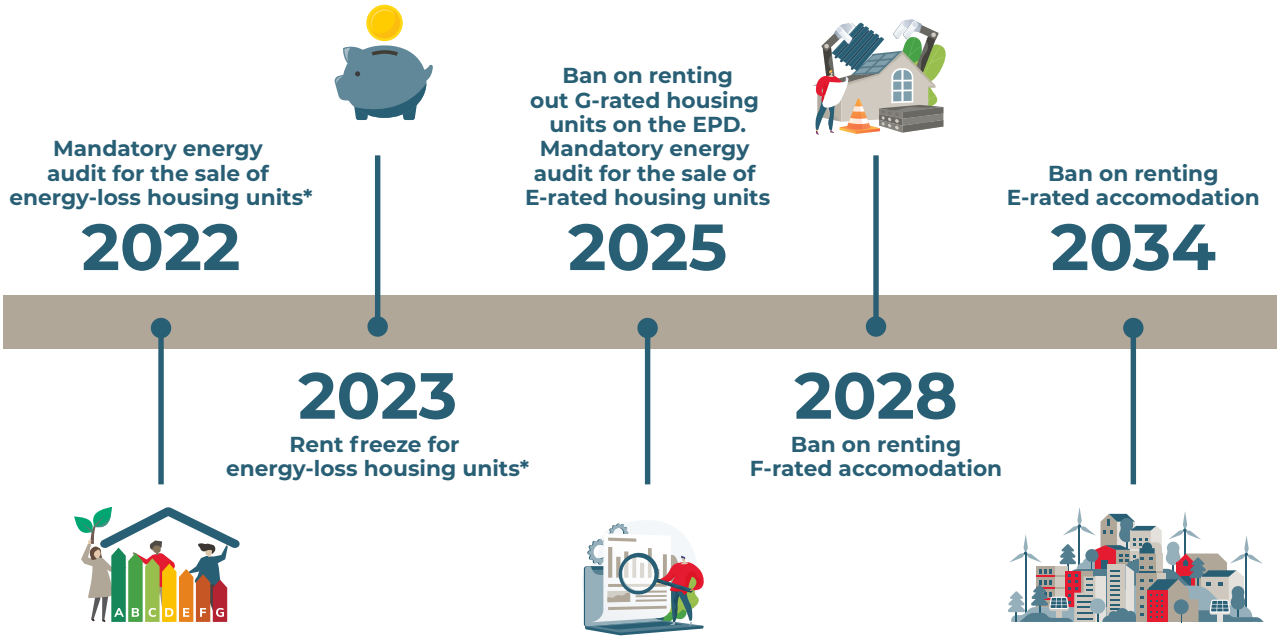
A FAVORABLE YET RESTRICTIVE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Lastly, **French and European legislative contexts are increasingly encouraging the ecological transition of existing buildings.** In **France**, laws are requiring the actors of the housing sector to take climate change into account and adopt an eco-friendly approach, which entails significant implementation constraints. For example, social housing associations have to comply with **new regulations**, such as the ALUR law, which prohibits them from selling or renting properties with an F or G rating on the Energy Performance Diagnosis (in French “Diagnostic de Performance Énergétique” or DPE) scale. General awareness of environmental issues has been heightened by the Climate and Resilience Law adopted on July 20, 2021 introducing the notion of Zero Net Artificialization (in French, “Zéro Artificialisation Nette” or **ZAN**), which aims to combat urban sprawl through the densification of already artificialized spaces and the renaturation of abandoned artificialized spaces. Furthermore, the evolution of urban policies in France reflects an adaptation to socio-economic challenges that are progressively integrating environmental issues. Numerous public policies have been developed to support and encourage local players, such as the ANRU's *Nouveau Programme National de Renouvellement Urbain* or **NPNRU** (New National Urban Renewal Program), which aims to promote energy efficiency and contribute to the ecological transition of working-class neighbourhoods, particularly by supporting the rehabilitation of existing housing. **Financial aid** has also been set up to support the energy renovation of buildings (MaPrimeRénov', a social housing eco-loan), and other initiatives are being taken, such as labels.

As for **Europe**, it offers a platform for cross-border cooperation. Efforts to harmonize standards and regulations relating to the ecological transition of social housing are taking place. In addition, the "Effort Sharing Regulation" ensures that all member states make a fair and equitable contribution to the EU's climate action. Finally, specific funds and programs are available to housing associations. The EU is particularly involved in the energy renovation of buildings. ■

[14] In urban planning, the term "résidentialisation" refers to a process of developing a neighbourhood to move towards the appropriation of the place by the inhabitants and reduce their feeling of insecurity or abandonment (construction of gates, gardens etc.). (Source: *Geoconfluences*)

CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE ACT: KEY DATES FOR ENERGY RENOVATION



*Energy-loss housing units, or «energy sieves», are housing units with poor insulation, leading to energy losses.

The link between environmental challenges and inequalities is especially showcased in working-class neighbourhoods. While they contribute the least to climate change, the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods are more vulnerable, particularly in terms of health and food, but also of stigmatization and unemployment. However, working-class districts represent a real potential for the social and ecological transition. Social housing companies have undertaken exemplary initiatives to adapt their housing stock to climate change. Furthermore, the vastness of public spaces in "grands ensembles" areas constitutes a spatial resource that can be mobilized to support the transition and the improvement of living conditions, inclusion and citizen participation. Lastly, despite the constraints that they impose, the French and European legislative contexts are more and more conducive to an ecological transition of the existing buildings.

Les étudiants de l'École urbaine lors de la journée du Lab 2023, Didier Pazery.

Part 2

TEACHINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this context, the four group projects provide some answers to the following question: what actions are conceivable in working-class neighbourhoods to tackle environmental inequalities and move towards more climate justice?

ACTING ON SPACE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT TO FACILITATE THE INVOLVEMENT OF WORKING-CLASS DISTRICTS IN THE TRANSITION

Public spaces are currently the focus of policies designed to help cities adapt to climate change. A striking example of this is the greening and "de-concretization" policies, such as the Oasis courtyards (planted schoolyards) appearing in Paris, Montreuil, and Marseille. In addition, water management has become a central issue in current urban planning, and the development of lanes and paths dedicated to soft mobility is on the increase.

Alongside these policies which have a noticeable impact on public spaces, **citizen initiatives** are multiplying with the aim of reclaiming these places, in some cases compensating for the inertia of public authorities. The public space is also a place where residents can express themselves, learn and take action (shared gardens, clean-up days, occupying land, raising awareness of biodiversity, etc.). This is also where struggles, demonstrations and even acts of civil disobedience occur, such as removing concrete from the foot of trees in Marseille. By challenging public authorities and publicizing the social problems experienced in these neighbourhoods, citizens' initiatives turn the public space into a **vehicle for political emancipation,** transforming residents into "active citizens". Similarly, the various urban wastelands that are made available to develop agriculture or even renewable energies play a role in the transition of the production model.

RENATURATING SPACES AND WELCOMING BIODIVERSITY

A key environmental lever to get working-class neighbourhoods involved in the transition is the renaturation of spaces, i.e. the process of allowing nature to "recolonise" artificial spaces. Soil renaturation is all the more critical in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as some areas, such as large social housing estates, are more subject to the urban heat island phenomenon. In many low-income neighbourhoods, particularly “raised platforms”[15] (*urbanisme de dalle*) or areas where parking takes up a large proportion of public space, these spaces are predominantly more mineral. Yet the presence of plants helps to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and produce oxygen. Vegetation also creates islands of coolness through evapotranspiration. It contributes to thermal and acoustic insulation in buildings. It also helps mitigate the effects of precipitation and reduce the risk of flooding. In Vienna, the "Biotope City" district incorporates a variety of vegetation, including endemic species, climbing plants and habitats for several animal species (e.g., bat nesting boxes).

Barcelona, Léa Fernandes, Anna Chiambaretta, Paul Walther and Virgile Delesalle

[15] “ As analyzed by Virginie Lefebvre, this concept— which Raymond Lopez called “vertical zoning” was a direct expression of the urban hygienicism that reigned in interwar CIAM functionalism, and was further developed during the postwar period with a specific focus on traffic engineering. See Virginie Lefebvre, “Les origines de l’architecture sur dalle,” in Les Années ZUP: Architectures de la croissance 1960–1973, eds. Gérard Monnier and Richard Klein (Paris: Picard, 2002).

One way to reduce environmental inequalities is to encourage **technical innovation in favour of green spaces and biodiversity.** Vegetation is especially important in cities, as it offers numerous ecosystem services, such as improving human well-being, enhancing the area's attractiveness, and creating social links. In terms of mobility, the integration of nature helps to limit urban divides, promote continuity, and thus **better articulate and open up territories** while developing soft mobility and ecological continuity.

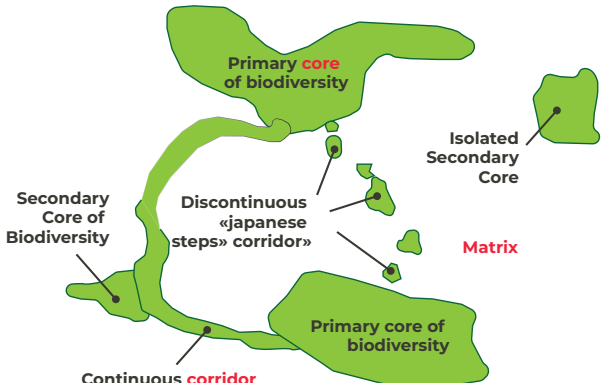
In addition, the challenge of renaturating waterproofed areas, mainly parking lots, is linked to the challenge of integrating soft and collective mobility into urban renewal projects. Thinking about the connections between living and working spaces and **giving priority to soft mobility** are essential levers for reducing carbon footprints.

The students developed several ideas to assess the potential for integrating biodiversity into large social housing estates. The criteria adopted form a grid for interpreting the space in terms of its capacity to host biodiversity and thus contribute to the ecological fabric of cities. They are not intended to be transposable to all contexts.

The first criterion is the district's **integration into a global continuum**. Ecological continuity is essential to preserving ecosystems that are functional for biodiversity. These connections between habitats or biodiversity reservoirs provide plant and animal species with dispersal ability. Fragmentation of spaces, which is very common in urban areas, destroys this ability to communicate and exchange between different ecosystems, thus impoverishing biodiversity. The Grenelle Law of 2007 introduced the *Trame Verte et Bleue* [16] (Green and Blue Infrastructure) tool to address this situation. Natural urban spaces, such as parks, wastelands, public and private gardens and roadsides, can contribute to ecological continuities and constitute a network that fosters the passage of flora and fauna. The proximity of a biodiversity reservoir and the continuity of green spaces between the district and the biodiversity reservoirs could encourage the contribution of a district of large social housing estates to the ecological network of cities. Due to the history of their construction on the edge of urbanization, social housing estates are often located close to biodiversity reservoirs and within a suburban fabric where ecological continuity is ensured by private gardens.

The second criterion is **internal continuity within the neighbourhood**. The urban environment is characterized by a fragmentation of habitats. The city's alternating composition between built areas, transport infrastructure and open spaces hinders internal

SCHEME OF A GREEN NETWORK WITH PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CORES AND ITS CORRIDORS (CLERGEAU ET AL., 2016)



connectivity between natural areas. The potential of different urban forms to host biodiversity varies according to their characteristics, in particular their surface area and their connection to other ecosystems. Spaces that are more extensive and more connected with other ecosystems have a greater capacity to host biodiversity. The contribution of social housing estates to the city's ecological network is therefore enhanced by the presence of large, unbroken, non-built areas and a high level of vegetation.

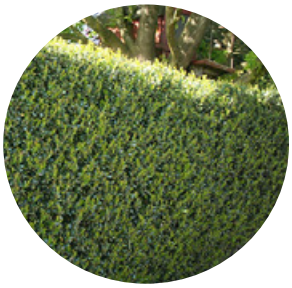
The third criterion studied is the **diversity of habitats** within the district, which meets the different species' needs and promotes wealthy flora and fauna. The presence of a varied plant palette, with different plant strata, creates a mosaic of habitats. Ecological niches for feeding, sheltering and reproduction are increased tenfold, leading to a greater abundance of wildlife. Plant strata vary according to their composition. As part of the collective project with PUCA, the strata were classified into 3 different categories: the herbaceous stratum (between 0 and 0.5 m), the shrub stratum (between 0.5 m and 1.5 m and/or plants with hidden trunks), and the arborescent stratum (plants with visible trunks). The presence of diverse strata in the vegetated areas of a housing estate district could foster its contribution to the city's ecological network.

[16] The "Trame verte et bleue" is a network of terrestrial and aquatic ecological continuities identified by regional ecological coherence schemes, as well as by the planning documents of the State, local authorities and their groupings (source : Centre de ressources pour la mise en œuvre de la Trame verte et bleue).

Meadow

Lawn

Open hedge



Single-species hedge

Undergrowth

Treeline

The final criterion is the **quality of habitats** within the neighbourhood, beyond their diversity. Indeed, the division into three strata, as previously stated, is insufficient to determine the potential of a space to host biodiversity. Two areas categorized by the same stratum may have specific intrinsic characteristics. Habitats are directly impacted by soil conditions, determined by the quality of sediments present, the depth of the open ground and the trampling of areas. The diversity of species present can also contribute to the development of biodiversity: the presence of varied endogenous plant species not only strengthens ecosystems but also makes them more resistant to hazards. Furthermore, the upkeep of these areas is crucial to their quality. Differentiated management can create a diversity of ecosystems (lawns, meadows, urban parks, undergrowth, etc.). Transversally to these three indicators (soil quality, species diversity, management), a space's use and level of frequentation determine its capacity to host biodiversity. The high density of housing in large social housing estates suggests that the use of vegetated areas in these neighbourhoods is generally relatively high.

Thinking of **large social housing estates as a resource** for achieving the ecological transition, in a reversal of perspectives, is a new but essential idea.

ACTIVATING ENVIRONMENTAL LEVERS FOR THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION OF SOCIAL HOUSING

Social housing organizations can deploy **technical innovations that promote energy efficiency**[17]. The group project with the *Fédération des ESH* has identified four main areas for action: thermal insulation of housing, the use of alternative heating systems, the creation and distribution of green energy, and the use of digital and home automation tools to manage the energy efficiency of housing.

The second lever identified is the **mobilisation of technical innovations in rainwater management**. Rainwater harvesting can be used for non-drinking purposes, such as irrigating gardens or filling toilets. It can help mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing water stress in drought-stricken regions. A particularly interesting example is that of smart roofs networks, developed through the Resilio project in Amsterdam. The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has enabled the large-scale financing of "green and blue" roofs, which, on the one hand, reduce runoff after rainy episodes by storing water and, on the other hand, release it in the event of drought. This limits flooding, improves building insulation and regulates the local microclimate. They also help reduce heat stress by promoting evapotranspiration and increasing the albedo effect (reflection of the sunlight).

Finally, it is now widely accepted that **housing should be designed to adapt to climate change.** To cope with more intense and frequent heatwaves, stronger rainfall and potential flooding, drought and tropical cyclones, as well as rising sea levels, housing must be designed and rehabilitated to be resilient. A good example is the SHLMR housing organisation on Reunion Island. The summer climatology incorporates various types of solar protection for walls and windows, such as overhangs, sunshades, cladding and over-roofs. Moreover, most homes have are double-sided to promote ventilation. Ceiling fans are installed to minimize the use of energy-hungry air conditioning. Finally, the color of buildings is regulated to ensure better thermal insulation. ■

Social housing.
SHLMR

[17] Buildings' energy efficiency is the relationship between the useful energy produced by a system and the total energy consumed in its operation. The concept can be interpreted in a broader sense to refer to all technologies and practices that make it possible to reduce energy consumption, while maintaining an equivalent level of performance.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LEVERS FOR THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS

RETERRITORIALIZING OUR WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION AND ENHANCING EXISTING FORMS OF COMMITMENT

One of the main challenges in moving towards greater climate justice is to inscribe the environmental issue in a **realistic, concrete vision** which is respectful of individuals' resources. The words of young people from working-class neighbourhoods show that, while the notion of ecology seems abstract and far removed from their concerns, much **more concrete issues emerge when they describe their environments**, such as the question of inequalities and the habitability of their living environment. It is this process of describing and identifying inequalities that Bruno Latour advocates as an essential step towards making demands and getting involved.

Indeed, to understand the issues facing the citizens of working-class neighbourhoods, we need to "territorialise our ways of thinking" and apprehend the notion of the environment in terms of what surrounds us. Bruno Latour conceived the *nouveaux cahiers de doléances (*"new registers of grievances") approach, postulating that it is not a lack of knowledge of the ecological question that is problematic nowadays, but rather "*[a] lack of shared description, after fifty years of depoliticisation and individualisation that has made us incapable of defining the soil on which we reside, and thus of detecting the friends with whom we are prepared to cohabit as well as the enemies we need to fight*"[18]. From then on, through the practice of “the cahiers de doléances”, he proposed starting from a description of the conditions of attachment and subsistence of citizens, to formulate demands.

In this way, ecology is approached **through the prism of everyday life:** citizens feel more concerned by ecological issues if they directly affect their lives or those of their loved ones. In this respect, sport provides a way of approaching environmental problems through the prism of health. The health theme can then be linked to food and agriculture, fundamental levers in the ecological transition. Initiatives such as "*Le Relais Jeunes*" enable young people to reappropriate their environment and put into practice a daily ecological commitment through a bicycle trip on a theme linked to the challenges of the ecological, social and democratic transition.

While the middle and working classes consider certain ecological policies detrimental to their freedom and lifestyle (more meat-based consumption, use of older, more polluting vehicles, etc.), policies and initiatives favouring the ecological transition can appear out of touch, punitive or even discriminatory. What's more, political discourses tend to assign young people from working-class neighbourhoods to a passive position, reducing them to subjects subject to mechanisms. However, there are alternative forms of commitment among the inhabitants of working-class neighbourhoods that **differ significantly from the dominant ecological narratives,** often associated with more affluent populations. The socio-ecological transition in the QPVs is manifested in particular through saving practices (consuming less, spending less) in response to precarious social and territorial contexts. For example, recycling (sewing workshops, recycling centres) and the reuse of objects, resource sharing (shared gardens), barter and solidarity grocery stores, and adopting frugal consumption patterns are commonplace. While these approaches may carry a degree of voluntary sobriety, they do not receive the same recognition as the ecological initiatives of wealthier populations.

[18] Latour, Bruno. « À quoi tenons-nous ? », R*evue Projet*, vol. 373, no. 6, 2019, pp. 22-23.

Therefore, there is a need to **promote and legitimize the commitment that exists** in working-class neighbourhoods and to look outside the framework of the so-called mainstream culture to broaden the discourse on ecology and turn it into a lever for emancipation.

In addition, the work with Impulsion75[19] , "Jeunes des quartiers populaires et la Transition écologique", warns against "talking about" people who often have less access to speech than the more privileged. To address this, the students produced a **podcast**, "Jeunesses Béton"[20], to understand and give voice to the specific ways these issues are conceived by the young people concerned, particularly those in the association. There is a wide variety of ways of looking at ecological issues, depending on their profile, age or social background. The conclusion is that "the commitment and relationship of young people from these neighbourhoods to the environment cannot be reduced to the observation of a distance from institutional or militant ecology, nor the celebration of an unintentional 'popular ecology'"[21].

Source : A shared garden on the raised platform of La Noue in Bagnolet (Seine-Saint-Denis), January 5, 2023. Camille Gharbi, Le *Monde*.

IMPLEMENTING A GOVERNANCE ADAPTED TO A CHALLENGE OF CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY

In its study "*Réussir une transition écologique juste"* (“Achieve a fair ecological transition”), the think tank Le labo de l'Économie sociale et solidaire defines a **"fair ecological transition"** as "*a radical and democratic transformation of our society aimed at ensuring both its ecological sustainability and a dignified and sufficient response to the needs and the emancipation of each individual*"[22].

For a truly inclusive and effective ecological transition, it is necessary to encourage a **participative and collaborative approach** in which residents of the QPV are actively involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of urban policies and projects. The transition must be accessible to all, partly for reasons of equality but also if it is to succeed. **The "ecological crisis" and the "social crisis" must be considered together**: resolving one can and must be a lever for the other, and vice versa, with equally virtuous effects on mitigating the "democratic crisis".

The socio-ecological transition must be accompanied by a shift to a more democratic mode of governance.

However, there are **obstacles to citizen initiatives**. In the QPVs, urban policy does not seem to be fully successful in integrating residents' wishes for their living environment. Despite the gradual opening up of planning to participation, residents still have little say in preparing urban planning documents and choosing development projects. Critics blame a **vertical, bureaucratic way of operating**[23], accentuating the need to truly consider residents' voices. These grievances are all the more pressing in areas that feel rejected and relegated. Inhabitant initiatives in QPVs are characterised by an over-representation of the least disadvantaged classes, a chronic lack of funding, and political and administrative mistrust.

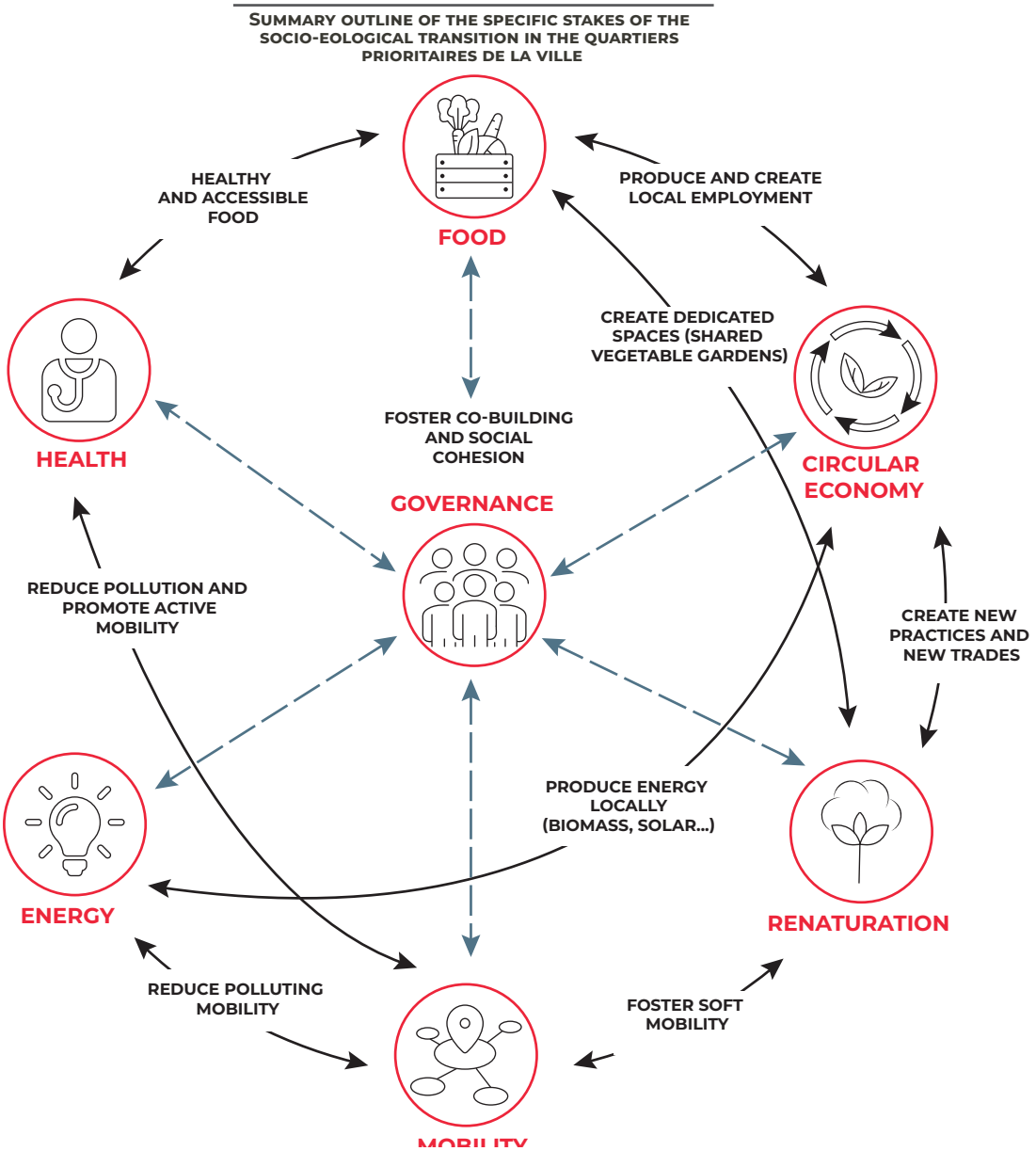
[19] Association committed to helping young people from working-class neighbourhoods in the Île-de-France region through socio-professional integration.
[20] Link in the last section of this issue, "Find out more".
[21] Comby, J.-B., & Malier, H. (2021). Les classes populaires et l’enjeu écologique. Un rapport réaliste travaillé par des dynamiques statutaires diverses. Sociétés contemporaines, 124(4), Art. 4.
[22] « Réussir une transition écologique juste » - Study report. (n.d.). Le Labo De L’économie Sociale Et Solidaire.
[23] Bresson, S., (dir.), Les ambivalences de la participation citoyenne : acteurs, expertises, pouvoirs et légitimités, PU François Rabelais.

The power of residents' initiatives is also limited by the fact that many are based on one person's motivation or a small group. The **transmission and sustainability of these projects can, therefore, be fragile**, as demonstrated by the pandemic, which led to the closure of many associations. Large associations, structured into networks, help overcome this difficulty by basing themselves on a shared vision rather than one person.

The groups consulted at public meetings **often do not represent the population** (young residents and the working population are poorly represented). As a result, the same individuals who are already aware of ecological issues often attend the meetings.

However, **other forms of discussion or consultation** among residents are emerging that could provide new channels of communication with public authorities and reduce the feeling of exclusion and abandonment: neighbourhood correspondents in La Roche-sur-Yon, municipal youth council in Anzin, citizen laboratories in Marseille, etc.

Therefore, **the ecological transition of social housing also requires a renewal of governance**, i.e., all the decisions, rules, and practices designed to ensure an organization's optimal functioning, as well as the structural bodies responsible for formulating, implementing, and monitoring them.



ENCOURAGING THE COOPERATION BETWEEN PLAYERS

Communication and cooperation between social housing actors at the French and European levels (municipalities, regions, contractors, companies) are essential to exchange best practices and feedback. Encouraging the creation of such networks allows the sharing of knowledge, the analysis of successes as part of a process of continuous evaluation and improvement, and the mainstreaming of promising innovations. In France, the social housing companies CDC Habitat, Maisons & Cités, Vilogia and Vilogia Logifim launched "Septalia" in 2019, the most extensive grouping of social housing organisations in the Hauts-de-France region. It brings together and coordinates its founders' human, technical and financial resources to accelerate housing construction and rehabilitation programs. As a single point of contact for local authorities, it provides comprehensive, rapid responses to their urban development and renovation needs.

Community garden in the Éco-Village des Noés. Marie Jamart, Manon Lainé, Valentine Machut and Solène Martin.

Cooperation between public and private players also seems to be a key to the success of the ecological transition, which should not be the responsibility of social housing organisations alone. Indeed, the current economic climate is a source of concern for social housing organisations, as they face rising interest rates. These short-term difficulties are compounded by the potential investments that the ecological transition may require due to the installation of more advanced technologies, which nonetheless enable savings to be made in the long term.

On a national scale, **cooperation with public authorities** is essential to implement larger-scale projects requiring external financial support. Public-sector support for residents' ecological transition initiatives in QPVs is mainly economic. However, collaboration between public authorities and residents is not always optimal. Despite substantial financial resources, more must be done to support citizens' initiatives effectively and promote an inclusive, sustainable ecological transition.

The Éco-Village des Noés is a perfect example of a collaborative project involving many local players. Alongside ESH SILOGE, it has mobilised a wide range of complementary social housing and environmental protection partners: the town of Val-de-Reuil, the Communauté d'Agglomération Seine- Eure, the Département de l'Eure, the Conseil Régional, ADEME, the State, Europe, the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, LogiLiance, associative partners and innovative local businesses.

On a European scale, **integration and participation in governance networks** should be a priority to encourage the sharing of expertise and the mass deployment of innovations. The CUT (Connected Urban Twins) project, for example, involves the cities of Munich and Lyon in 70 innovation programs, with the ultimate aim of setting up a shared data platform and digitising the results of consultations with citizens, enabling joint work on citizen participation. One of the projects supported by CUT is the "Positive Energy District" in Munich, which aims to create a positive energy district using geothermal and photovoltaic energy. The project is based on citizen participation and incorporates numerous methods and digital tools to involve citizens in the life of their neighbourhoods and the running of their homes.

Concertation in the framework of the programme CUT - Munich. ©Angela Pfeiffer.

RAISING AWARENESS AND SUPPORTING RESIDENTS' INITIATIVES

Raising awareness and including residents from working-class neighbourhoods is fundamental to reducing environmental inequalities. The work of the Impulsion 75 association and the aforementioned experience with the *Relais Jeune* association, which brings young people together on a bike trip to discuss themes linked to the ecological, social and democratic transition, have shown that **sport** can be a fertile lever of engagement to address ecological and social issues. Whether in the form of dedicated premises (media library, cultural centre) or urban facilities (agora for dance or music, outdoor amphitheatre, outdoor exhibition), culture is also a lever for emancipation and a vehicle for raising awareness and passing on knowledge.

In the **case of social housing organisations**, the inclusion of tenants is essential. Firstly, the participation of tenants, and more broadly of residents, in projects helps to socially enrich the future infrastructure and promote its sustainability. One example is the social housing organisation Maisons & Cités, which has put in place several tools to integrate tenants during the renovation of their homes through a technical diagnosis of the property, accompanied by a customer survey designed to identify their needs, constraints and wishes regarding housing. This is followed by a consultation process, during which tenants participate in participatory workshops to discuss proposed changes to their homes and neighbourhoods. A majority of tenants must agree before a renovation program is launched. Each of these stages is monitored and planned by a social pilot who is responsible for the coordination between the tenants and the social housing association.

Supporting tenants is also essential to optimise their use of the new infrastructures and technologies. Indeed, energy performance alone is not enough for the ecological transition; raising tenants' awareness of the best way to use their homes is essential. In France, in the Noés eco-village, residents are made aware of this right from the moment they arrive, notably via an information leaflet and a charter of good conduct and good practices, including a section on energy efficiency. Workshops to raise awareness of biodiversity and eco-citizenship are also organised with a variety of players: WWF, the YSOS association of reintegration through vegetable farming, Groupe SOS, Chemin du Halage, Ligue de Protection des Oiseaux de Normandie, BIOT beekeeper, etc.

Secondly, it is necessary to **simplify and support citizen initiatives.**
Indeed, the support provided by public authorities sometimes seems out of touch with the initiatives and is based on a selection process: calls for tender are not necessarily known to the residents involved, and obtaining aid depends on meeting specifications that require a mastery and legal knowledge that some initiatives may lack. The logic of administrative selection favours initiatives by individuals with significant socio-cultural capital. It, therefore, seems necessary to **simplify administrative procedures.** At present, to receive funding, initiators must be structured as associations, which requires time and specific knowledge of administrative and legal procedures. Similarly, winning a call for projects largely depends on the form of the offer, not just the project's substance, which requires a certain amount of engineering.

The "pouplier" garden in Montreuil, association "Le sens de l'humus".

In addition, the multiplicity of calls for projects, partly linked to the silo structure of administrative departments, adds a degree of complexity to the process. **Pooling funds** - for example, those dedicated to the ecological transition and those committed to social cohesion - would make it possible to save on management costs, communicate more effectively and reach projects that straddle several issues.

Moreover, if public authorities really want to transform low-income neighbourhoods in collaboration with local residents, their **support cannot be limited to funding**. It is necessary to communicate about the existence of calls for tender and to identify in advance the virtuous initiatives and their transformative potential. This means adopting a more observant, identifying, and accompanying role rather than favouring top-down management.

More sustained support, including business plan structuring, cash flow management and networking, could accelerate the transformative impact of specific initiatives. In addition, the neighbourhood governance model could directly involve residents in financing decisions, as in Rotterdam's BoTu neighbourhood. However, this requires considerable human and financial resources, which are not always available to the departments of the *Établissements publics de coopération intercommunale* (EPCI) (Public intermunicipal cooperation institutes) or municipalities. It is, therefore, essential to find the right intermediary capable of bridging the gap between the field and the public authorities.

There are many forms of intermediaries (neighbourhood correspondents, citizen laboratories, etc.), whether initiated by residents or public authorities. **"Régies de quartier"**[24] are interesting potential intermediaries, being close to the ground while having a global vision of neighbourhood issues. It is essential for the structure to be on a human scale, so as to represent a place of trust and cohesion for residents, while at the same time being large enough to be heard by public players.

The **associative world** is also a privileged sector. Some associations can reach young people and appear within working-class neighbourhoods as effective levers for grouping and bringing out new spokespersons, notably by forming new "working-class neighbourhoods' unions"[25]. There are also several players working on both working-class and ecological issues. For example, in partnership with Ghett'up, the organisation Make Sense has developed a training-action program for 200 young people from six popular education associations named "For a just transition, by and for all young people". Meanwhile, activist Féris Barkat, founder of the Banlieue Climat association in 2021, uses the media, social networks and training to support ecology from working-class neighbourhoods.

Solidifying relations with associations that aim to promote the ecological transition is crucial. Indeed, structured networks such as Alternatiba and Emmaüs are increasingly able to exert pressure on local authorities. Their experience and size make them solid, independent and durable players for much longer than the duration of a political mandate. As such, joining forces and co-constructing socio-ecological transition projects with these entities could serve the general interest. Their independent nature enables them to keep a critical mind and, if necessary, to be in a position of struggle and opposition, which is also a force for change. ■

[24] Régies de quartiers can be roughly translated into "agencies for neighbourhood governance". This concept emerged in 1980 Roubaix, in the metropolitan area of Lille. By placing the inhabitants at the centre, régies de quartiers give priority to meeting social demands from civil society. The function of the Régie de quartier is reaffirmed as a meeting point for institutional actors, and as a relevant body in local economic intervention (Assemblée générale du Comité national de liaison des Régies de Quartier, 1993).

[25] Bacqué, M.-H., & Mechmache, M. (2013). *Pour une réforme radicale de la politique de la ville (p. 97)*. Ministère de l'Egalité des Territoires et du Logement.

ECONOMIC LEVERS

THE ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL TRANSITION AS A LEVER TO IMPROVE THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND CREATE JOBS

While **public policies often focus on the environment, residents' initiatives place greater emphasis on the social aspect**. Indeed, in terms of public policy, discourses on QPV development focus on greening to combat heat islands and encourage the growth of biodiversity, the development of soft mobility, and water management. Whereas local associations and initiatives give priority to access to healthcare, employment, education, and healthy food.

Among resident-led initiatives, we can observe a **hybridisation** between those with a social impact and those with an ecological aim. Although not defined as part of the ecological transition, many initiatives with a social vocation contribute to it: urban agriculture, cleanup day, learning to ride a bike, biodiversity education, sports day, community grocery stores, bartering, etc. The ecological transition appears to be a **preferred model, often unconsciously, for taking action on social issues.**

To take this a step further, the Banlieue Climat association promotes the empowerment of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods by raising their awareness of environmental issues. Through training and actions dedicated to ecology, the association aims to help empower residents.

The ecological transition could become an opportunity to reduce social, territorial and environmental inequalities, the idea being that it should not just be a vehicle for correcting environmental inequalities but should establish ecology as a **lever for creating jobs and activities** accessible to the most disadvantaged populations, such as those of the QPV. In this way, the ecological transition fosters the emergence of a new economic model, which, in the QPV more than elsewhere, appears to be a response to a significant challenge: unemployment. Many associations for integration through economic activity rely on ecological transition initiatives to transform their management and production models. Training courses in ecological transition professions are offered directly in low-income neighbourhoods, such as installing solar panels and thermal renovation in Bospolder-Tussendijken in Rotterdam.

Source : « Une ferme dans la ville », Béatrice Prève, website of the collective DR,
March 10, 2021 Lyon, Auvergne Rhone Alpes, France.

Urban agriculture and the establishment of urban farms are emerging as preferred solutions. Urban farms can meet a wide range of needs, from food security and job placement to the ecological rehabilitation of wasteland. What's more, these spaces encourage social interaction. For example, each garden of the association Les Jardins de Cocagne in the Aveyron region of France combines two functions: a farm (producing organic fruit and vegetables) and an integration centre (Atelier Chantier d'Insertion, aimed at helping people return to work). However, the cost of soil decontamination can be a significant obstacle to their development, and there are economic and social challenges to be met, such as site management and acceptance by local populations. On the model of the *fonds friches* (wasteland funds), intended for artificialised soils, the State could allocate subsidies to clean up non-artificialized soils.

The Cycle Terre factory, created as a cooperative by several companies and territorial authorities, transforms the raw earth of rubble from building sites in Ile-de-France into construction material.
Source: « Sevran : la Fabrique Cycle Terre recycle les terres excavées du Grand Paris », Leo Da Veiga, Les Echos, January 4, 2022.

ECONOMIC LEVERS TO FACILITATE THE INTEGRATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS INTO THE ECOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL TRANSITION

The question of financing remains key in a sector facing economic difficulties. What's more, the urgency of the climate crisis means that it's not just the responsibility of housing associations to invest their own funds. Therefore, it is necessary to facilitate access to existing subsidies to enable organisations to financially green their stock. Three levers have been identified for this economic aspect.

The first aims to mobilise innovative administrative and financial resources to **redirect funds towards the ecological transition**. The social housing organisation Domofrance has joined forces with another housing association, Aquitanis, to build and manage a biomass heating plant. This Economic Interest Grouping was created to implement energy-saving and cost-containment solutions for the tenants of both housing associations, reduce greenhouse gases, and structure the local wood industry in the Bordeaux region.

Biomass heating plant Aubiers - Domofrance.

The second lever encourages the **dedication and training of human capital to mobilise external funds and enable innovation.** Innovation in the tools used to implement urban policies and urban renewal projects is crucial, as is increasing the ecological skills of urban planning professionals and integrating ecologists into project management teams. The challenge for housing associations is not only to have a person or a team dedicated to the issues of ecological transition and the identification of additional funds to implement it but also to recruit trained and competent staff. This is the case at the social housing group Vilogia, where two people are in charge of identifying potential funding sources and new European projects on a full-time basis.

Finally, the last lever of this economic section is the **integration of local industries** into ecological transition projects. This integration can positively impact the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions linked to long-distance freight transport and dependence on imports. It also promotes local resources and encourages sustainable practices for their preservation while creating jobs and stimulating local economic activity. The example of Maisons & Cités in Pecquencourt, with its structuring of the hemp industry - as part of the "Pecquenchanvre" project - is particularly interesting in this respect.

Hemp concrete block - Maisons & Cités.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY-BASED CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The development of the circular economy **improves the environmental impact by limiting the use of raw resources.** One example is the social housing organisation Domofrance, a pioneer in this field. It carried out its first deconstruction experiment with a positive reuse balance. The organisation subcontracted the service provider Upcyclea to conduct an exhaustive diagnosis of the buildings and to put a list of reusable elements online on a shared platform. Thanks to this platform, contractors will be able to purchase these elements directly for reuse on other construction sites.

Thinking about and developing new uses of the public space to support a social and solidarity-based circular economy is a **fundamental economic and social opportunity** for these neighbourhoods. QPV have already largely developed the social and solidarity economy. However, as the *Agence nationale de la cohésion des territoires* (ANCT) points out, *"ensuring that green jobs are opportunities for QPV residents raises a number of issues: financial and physical accessibility to dedicated training courses; promoting these jobs among residents; making available financial tools for entrepreneurship in these fields."* In addition, the maintenance and use of public spaces can be expensive and complicated. Thus, models of co-management between association and municipality or landlord, depending on the owner of the space, can be considered to provide a framework for vegetable gardens or urban farms. ■

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This first issue of the *Enseignements du Lab* collection provides a transversal reading of the results of four collective projects linked to the ecological transition in working-class neighbourhoods. It focuses on the sociological dimension of the climate crisis and, more specifically, on environmental inequalities. The link between environmental issues and inequalities is not new, but it is increasingly being studied, mainly through the prism of working-class neighbourhoods. Indeed, residents of low-income urban areas are more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. And this, even though they contribute to it the least, through their consumption. After presenting the specific context and potential of working-class neighbourhoods to contribute to the social and ecological transition, this publication answers the following question: ***what actions are possible in working-class neighbourhoods to address environmental inequalities and move towards greater environmental justice?***

The collective projects suggest various levers. Firstly environmental ones, through the renaturation of spaces, the welcoming of biodiversity in large social housing estates or the ecological transition of social housing real estate. Secondly, changes in outlook, as well as social and political responses, are put forward, from the "reterritorialisation of our ways of thinking" the ecological transition to the establishment of appropriate governance, the raising of public awareness and the support of local initiatives. Finally, an economic reading of the topic highlights the ecological and social transition as a lever for improving the living environment and as a source of employment. It also shows the importance of the economic approach in facilitating the involvement of social housing agencies in the transition while promoting the development of a solidarity-based circular economy. ■

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THE ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION IN WORKING-CLASS NEIGHBOURHOODS AND TERRITORIES

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COLLECTION «TRANSFORMING THE TERRITORIES. LESSONS FROM THE LAB»

Publication manager : Tommaso Vitale
LAB manager : Bertrand Vallet
Graphic design : Studio Kali
Editing and layout: Clairelou Lécureur
Translation from French : Antoine Tisserant, Saskia Wallig, Tommaso Vitale and Clairelou Lécureur
DOI : 10.31235/osf.io/4jqy7

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