



What is the evolution of residential segregation in France?

Residential segregation refers to the unequal distribution in urban space of different categories of population. It can result from individual choices, motivated by the search for a sense of belonging, or from phenomena of relegation, linked in particular to the price of housing. How has it evolved over the long term?

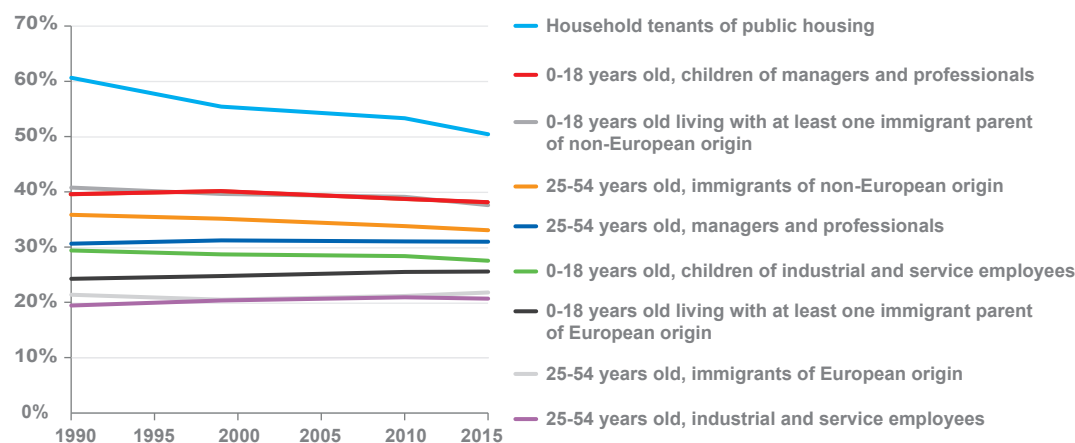
This note examines the fifty-five “urban units” in metropolitan France with more than 100,000 inhabitants between 1990 and 2015 based on census data. A specially designed visualization tool enables these urban units to be compared – among themselves and over time – with all their specific features, and for different categories of population¹.

First, managers and professionals are one and a half times more unevenly distributed than industrial and service employees. In the Paris conurbation, this residential segregation has increased for both groups. Elsewhere, it has decreased on average for managers and professionals, but remained stable for industrial and service employees. Fewer of the latter live in a neighborhood, where they represent the majority of the 25-54-year-olds (one out of two in 1990, one out of three in 2015). By contrast, a growing proportion of managers and professionals live in neighborhoods where they represent the majority of the 25-54-year-olds (0.1 percent in 1990, 14% in 2015). The wealthiest 10% households, moreover, are distributed as unevenly as the poorest 10%, except in Paris, where the richest are particularly segregated.

Immigrants of European origin have a low and stable segregation index over time. Those of non-European origin, and especially their children, are much more segregated, though less so in 2015 than in 1990. Because their numbers have increased, children living with at least one immigrant parent from outside Europe are more likely to live in neighborhoods where they make up the majority of the under-18s (38% in 2015, compared with 17% in 1990). But those living with two non-European immigrant parents – whose share is stable over time – rarely, and less often, live in neighborhoods where they make up the majority of the under-18s (4% in 2015, compared with 10% in 1990).

Finally, public housing appears less unevenly distributed over the territory in 2015 than in 1990, with a segregation index that has dropped by ten percentage points on average. Yet the impact of public housing on residential segregation is uncertain: public housing has become slightly less concentrated in certain neighborhood, while remaining unevenly distributed, and is home for a growing proportion of industrial and service employees and immigrants.

Segregation indexes of different population categories, 1990-2015 (urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants)



Field: urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, metropolitan France.

Reading note: in 2015, on average for all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, 39% of children of managers and professionals parents would have to change neighborhood so that their share among the under-18s would be the same in all neighbourhoods.

Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database.

1. This tool is [available online](#). See also the [working paper](#): Botton H., Cusset P.-Y., Dherbécourt C. and George A. (2020), "L'évolution de la ségrégation résidentielle en France: 1990-2015", *Working Paper*, No. 2020-09, France Stratégie, July.

Hugo Botton,
Pierre-Yves Cusset,
Clément Dherbécourt
& Alban George

Department of Society
and Social Policy

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INTRODUCTION²

In France, the issue of residential segregation – understood as the unequal geographical distribution of populations according to their social category or origin – has been present in the public debate since the end of the 1970s.³ A certain degree of social specialization of neighborhoods, however, seems to have always existed. Current interest in these issues reveals a special sensitivity to the question of inequality, and a growing concern about the desire and ability of different social or ethnic groups to live together. In fact, at least two types of negative consequences can be attributed to segregation: a decline in the prospects of educational and professional success for the inhabitants of neighborhoods where social difficulties are concentrated,⁴ and the emergence of parallel, mutually indifferent societies that no longer share the same cultural codes or aspirations.

The work presented here consists in studying the evolution over a quarter of a century, between 1990 and 2015, of residential segregation in the fifty-five “urban units” with more than 100,000 inhabitants in metropolitan France. The urban units constitute relatively vast groups defined by the continuity of the habitat. The Paris urban unit, quite exceptional in its size, has more than 10 million inhabitants. Within each urban unit, different categories of population are distributed among “districts” called IRIS which have a population of about 2,500 inhabitants (see box 1 on the next page). The term “segregation” will be used, without further precision, to refer to the unequal distribution of populations between IRISs within an urban unit, and “inter-communal segregation” to refer to the unequal distribution of populations between the municipalities of an urban unit.⁵ Several dimensions are analyzed: segregation along socio-professional category, standard of living, migratory status and origin, housing occupancy status.

This note attempts to provide answers to three key questions⁶.

- The hierarchy of professional statuses is traditionally reflected in the residential space. Between 1990 and

2015, the social structure changed, with an increase in the proportion of managers and professionals and a decrease in the proportion of industrial and service employees. In the urban units studied, the share of the former among the 25-54 age group rose from 15% to 22%⁷, while that of the latter decreased from 45% to 39%. Has this change triggered an evolution in the degree of segregation affecting socio-professional groups?

- For all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the proportion of immigrants of non-European origin in the 25-54 age group rose from 9% to 15% between 1990 and 2015. Among those under 18, the share of those living with at least one immigrant parent of non-European origin increased from 16% to 26% over the same period⁸. Have these increases resulted in increased segregation of these populations or, on the contrary, in their spatial diffusion?
- The proportion of households living in public housing remained globally stable between 1990 and 2015 in the urban units studied, at about 21% (15% for the whole of France). These public housing units were historically concentrated in a limited number of neighborhoods. To what extent has this situation changed over the last twenty-five years? Has the change in the location of public housing contributed to a decrease in residential segregation?

MANAGERS AND PROFESSIONALS MORE SEGREGATED THAN INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE EMPLOYEES, BUT AT BROADLY STABLE LEVELS

Relatively stable level of segregation of both managers/professionals and employees

On average for all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, among the 25-54 age group, the segregation index for managers and professionals is one and a half time higher than that for industrial and service employees.

2. The authors would like to thank Sébastien Chéron and Dorian Huc from INSEE for their assistance in the use of SAPHIR data. They also thank Aurélien Dasré (Cresspa) and all the participants in the project launch seminar held at France Stratégie on May 7, 2019. This work has benefited from State aid managed by the French National Research Agency under the Investissements d'avenir program bearing the reference ANR-10-EQPX-17 (Centre d'accès sécurisé aux données - CASD).

3. Oberti M. and Prêteceille E. (2016), *La ségrégation urbaine*, Paris, La Découverte, coll. Repères.

4. For an illustration of the differences in educational attainment and living standards in adulthood among children of modest origin in advantaged and disadvantaged neighborhoods in major French conurbations, see in particular Dherbécourt C. (2020), “*Quelle influence du lieu d'origine sur le standard de vie?*” (2020), “*Quelle influence du lieu d'origine sur le niveau de vie?*”, La Note d'analyse n° 91, France Stratégie, June. The analysis is based on the permanent demographic sample and the data presented in this document.

5. In the latter case, the field is reduced to those urban units in which the most populated commune represents less than 50% of the total population.

6. For more analysis and details on the methodology, [see the working paper](#).

7. There has also been a slight increase in the over-representation of managers and business leaders in Paris (+80% in 1990, +83% in 2015), compared with a decline in other urban units (from +30% to +15%).

8. At the national level, the share of immigrants of non-European origin among 25-54-year-olds increased from 5% to 9% ; that of 0-18-year-olds living with at least one immigrant parent of non-European origin from 10% to 16%.



The segregation index for managers and professionals remained stable at about 31% from 1990 to 2015. In other words, on average, 31% of them would have to change neighborhood for their share among the 25-54 age group to be the same from one neighborhood to another within an urban unit. This stability masks a divergence between Paris, where the segregation index for managers/professionals rose from 32% to 36%, and other urban units, where it fell from an average of 29% to 26%.

The segregation index for industrial and service employees increased very slightly, from 20% to 21% between 1990 and 2015. It increased significantly in the Paris urban unit (from 23% to 27%) and remained stable on average in the other urban units.

For managers/professionals as well as for industrial and service employees, changes in the segregation indices

between municipalities and between neighborhoods are parallel. This suggests that when segregation has increased, it has essentially increased between municipalities of the same urban unit and not between neighborhoods of the same commune. The same reasoning applies when segregation has decreased.

The urban unit of Paris, where more than 10 million people live, is also characterized by a significant under-representation of industrial and service employees in the central city of the urban unit. It is the urban unit where this under-representation was already the highest in 1990 and the phenomenon has become more pronounced since then. In 1990, the share of industrial and service employees among the 25-54 age group in the city of Paris was 26% lower than in the rest of the Paris urban unit. By 2015, this figure had risen to 42%, compared with an average under-representation of 5% for the central cities of the other urban units.

Box 1 – Concepts and methodology

This work is based on the use of the INSEE SAPHIR database, which brings together harmonized data from the population census from 1968 to 1999 and the annual census surveys (EAR) since 2004. For the years after 2006, the SAPHIR databases for a year N accumulate data from the EAR from N-2 to N+2.

The choice was made to retain, as far as possible, the distribution of individuals or households between the neighborhoods of an urban unit, the scales that seem the most appropriate for studying the phenomena of residential segregation.

Urban unit means a municipality or a group of municipalities with a continuous built-up area with at least 2,000 inhabitants. The analysis here only covers metropolitan France and is limited to the fifty-five urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants in 2015, which account for 47% of the population. The urban unit of Paris, by far the most populated, had 10.7 million inhabitants in 2015.

The “neighborhoods” here correspond to the INSEE IRIS, which has been the basic building block for the dissemination of infra-municipal data since 1999. An IRIS is a grid of territory with an average of about 2,500 inhabitants. All municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants and a high proportion of municipalities with 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants are divided into IRIS. For the most part, INSEE

assimilates to an IRIS the municipalities not divided into IRIS. France thus has about 50,000 IRIS (including 34,000 municipalities). The limits of IRIS can vary over time. The choice was made to study segregation according to a breakdown that remains stable. This made it necessary to harmonize the IRIS between 1999 and 2015.

To measure the reality of segregation phenomena, two main indicators are used. The first one, known as the segregation index⁹, measures the extent to which the spatial distribution of a group is homogeneous. This index measures the percentage (between 0% and 100%) of the group that would have to move from one neighborhood to another in order for the weight of this group to be the same in all neighborhoods.

The second indicator, called the concentration index,¹⁰ measures the extent to which members of a social group tend to live in neighborhoods where they are numerous. The concentration index indicates, on average, for a member of a given social group, the proportion (between 0% and 100%) of the residents in his or her neighborhood who belong to the same social group as him or her. Its level, for a given group, depends both on the numerical importance of that group within the urban unit and on its level of segregation, as defined above.

Note that these two indices may move in opposite directions. For example, a category whose share increases strongly will mechanically see its concentration index increase even if its segregation index remains stable.

9. Also called dissimilarity index or Duncan and Duncan index.

10. Also known as the isolation index.

On average, the level of segregation of industrial and service employees increases with the size of the urban unit. This is also the case for managers and professionals, though the relationship is less clear-cut.

For illustration purposes, the two maps below show the proportion of industrial and service employees in the 25-54 age group, in 1990 and 2015 respectively, in the various TRIRISs (groupings of three IRISs) of the Toulouse urban unit. The proportion of industrial and service employees is fairly homogeneous from one TRIRIS to the next, with an overall stability of their segregation index at around 18%.

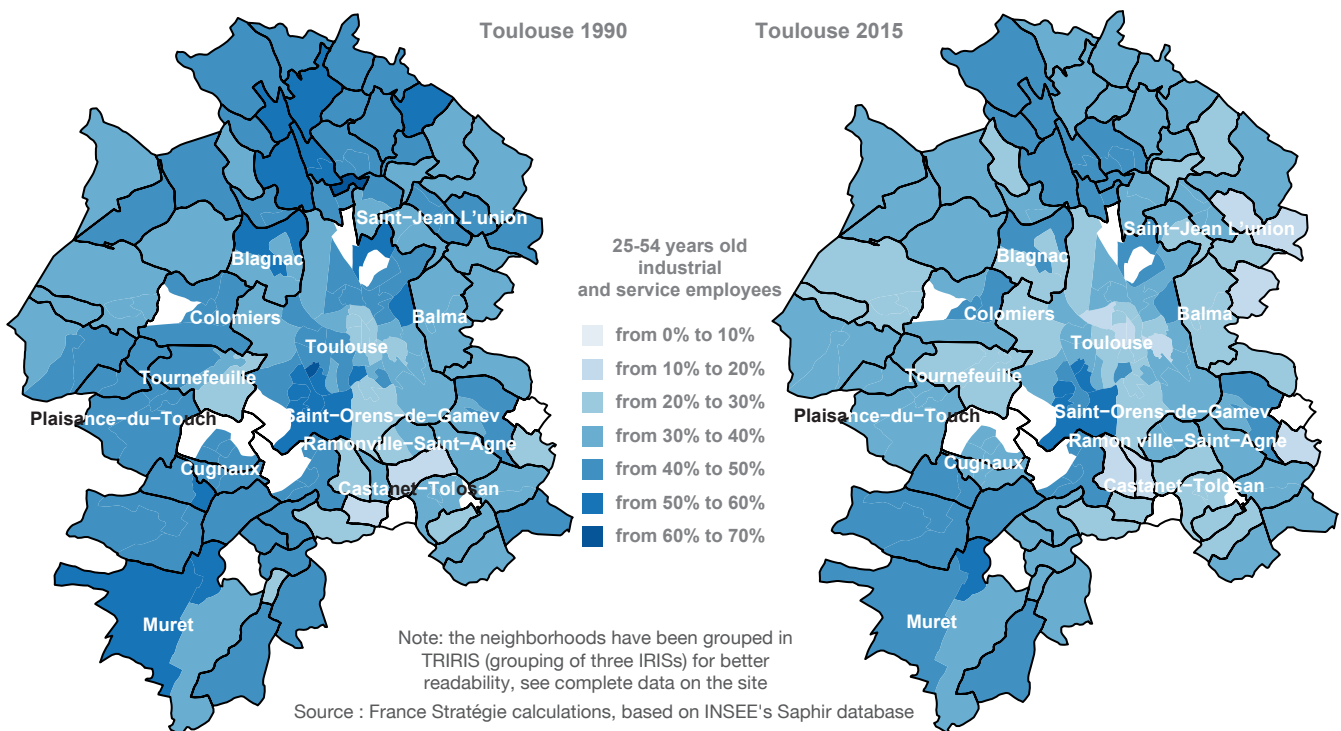
The segregation index for children of industrial and service employees under 18 is highly correlated with the segregation index for industrial and service employees aged 25-54, but is quite significantly higher. The same phenomenon can be observed for the children of managers and professionals¹¹. On average, for all urban units under study, the segregation index for children of industrial and service employees decreased from about 30% to 28% between 1990 and 2015, and that of children of managers and professionals decreased from 40% to 38%.

What about other socio-professional categories¹²? The segregation index for "intermediate occupations" (technicians and associated professional employees) is very low

(around 12-13%), very stable over time, and does not depend on the size of the urban unit. The same stability in time and space can be observed for the unemployed, even though the average level of their segregation index is higher, at around 20% (which is still low). On the other hand, the segregation index for the inactive has risen significantly, from 12% to 22% on average. This increase can be explained by a fairly profound change in the sociology of this population group – more often male, more often immigrants, especially from outside Europe.

As far as socio-professional categories are concerned, managers/professionals and their children are the most heterogeneously distributed group. Between 1990 and 2015, the social structure has changed: in urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the share of managers and professionals among the 25-54 age group rose from 15% to 22%, and the share of industrial and service employees in the same age group decreased from 45% to 39%. This shift has not triggered any significant change in the level of segregation of these two categories. But it has changed their concentration index (see box 1). Industrial and service employees are less likely to live in neighborhoods where they represent the majority of inhabitants, because their share in the general population has declined; (see box 2 on page 6). Managers and professionals live a little more often in neighborhoods where they represent a large share of

Map 1 – Share of industrial and service employees among 25-54-year-olds in the neighborhoods of the Toulouse urban unit



11. In particular, there are stronger location constraints for households with children. For a more in-depth discussion of these differences in the level of segregation between adults and children, see the working paper, Annex 5.

12. Always thinking in terms of the 25-54 age group and for all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants.



inhabitants. On average, in 1990, a member of this group lived in a neighborhood where 23% of the 25-54-year-olds belonged to his group. By 2015, this proportion had risen to 31%. In 1990, managers and professionals were never in the majority among the 25-54-year-olds of their neighbourhood. By 2015, 14% of them were in this situation, mainly in neighborhood in the urban unit of Paris. The opposite trend is observed for industrial and service employees: on average, in 1990, they lived in neighborhoods where 49% of the 25-54-year-olds were also industrial and service employees, a proportion that will decrease to 43% in 2015. The neighborhoods predominantly inhabited by industrial/service employees have also seen their numbers decline: 49% of industrial and service employees lived in a neighborhood where they represented the majority among 25-54-year-olds in 1990. By 2015, this figure dropped to 35%.

Different trends from one urban unit to another

It is in the urban unit of Paris that the segregation index for industrial and service employees is the highest (28% in 2015). Conversely, urban units in northern France, notably Béthune, Douai-Lens, Valenciennes, Calais, Maubeuge

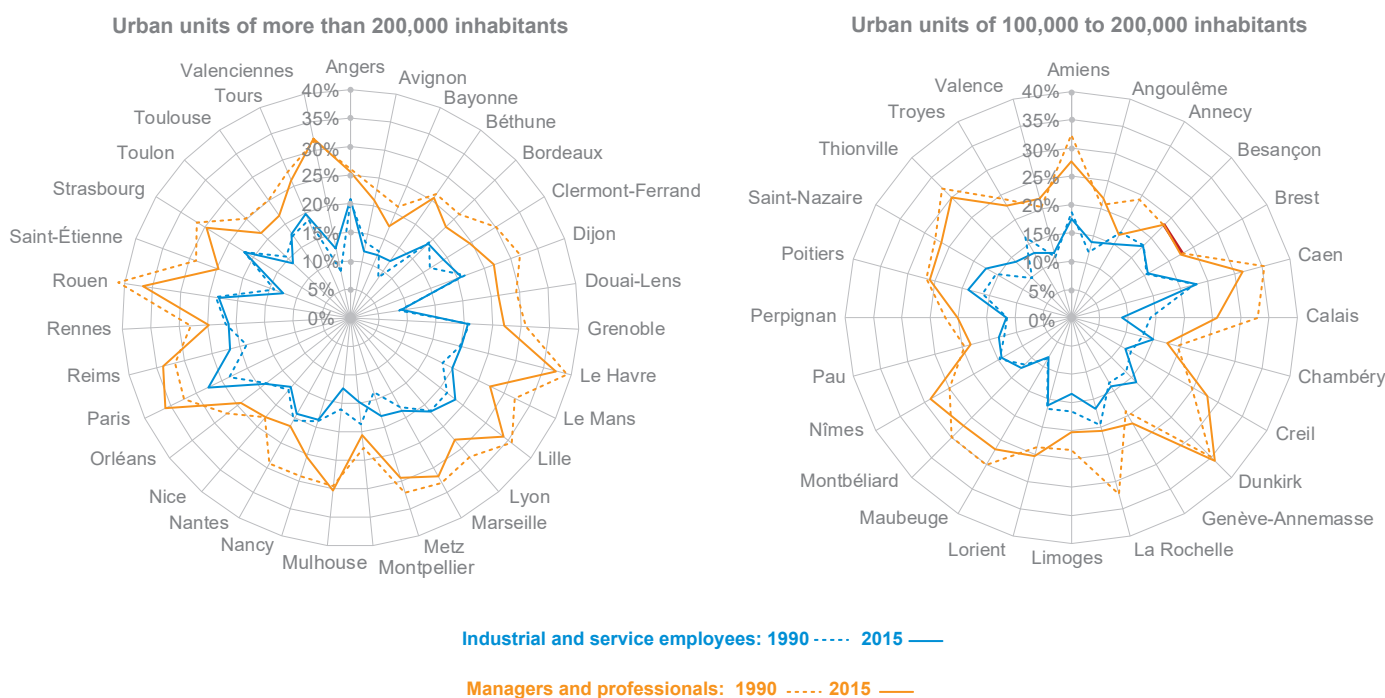
stand out for their extremely low segregation indices of industrial and service employees (10-12%), even if other urban units are also in this case, such as Avignon or Saint-Etienne (see graph 1).

Indices of segregation for managers and professional also vary quite widely from one urban unit to another. The urban units of Paris, Le Havre, Rouen and Dunkirk have the highest segregation indices in 2015, around 36-37%.

The richest are as segregated as the poorest, except in the Paris urban unit where they are more segregated

The segregation of individuals according to their standard of living could only be measured for the year 2017 (see box 2 on the next page). 20 categories of standard of living were created, each gathering 5% of the individuals in each urban unit. The segregation of these groups follows a U-shaped curve: people with extreme standards of living have a segregation index three times higher than people with median standards of living. The poorest five percent

Graph 1 – Segregation indices for 25-54-year-olds industrial/service employees and managers/professionals in 1990 and 2015



Reading: in the urban unit of Paris, the segregation index for industrial and service employees (25-54 age group) was 28% in 2015, compared with 24% in 1990 (in blue). In other words, 28% of industrial and service employees aged between 25 and 54 would have to change neighborhood for their share among the 25-54 age group to be the same in all neighborhoods.

Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database.

have a segregation index of about 27% on average, slightly lower than the wealthiest five percent, who have a segregation index of more than 30%. The wealthiest five percent are particularly segregated in the Paris urban unit, with a segregation index of 55%.

For the urban units under study, the level of segregation of the wealthiest five percent is strongly correlated with the level of segregation of managers and professionals (correlation coefficient of 0.8 in 2015). The segregation index for low standard of living is weakly correlated with that of the industrial and service employees (0.3) or that of unskilled workers and employees (0.4), but is more

closely correlated with that of the inactive (0.6) and that of the unemployed (0.7).

IMMIGRANTS OF NON-EUROPEAN ORIGIN AND THEIR CHILDREN ARE RATHER LESS SEGREGATED IN 2015 THAN IN 1990

Residential segregation by migratory origins is based on census categories that identify immigrants according to their country of origin, as well as their children when they live with their parent(s). Immigrants of European origin¹³ are not very segregated, with concentration and segregation indices rather stable between 1990 and 2015¹⁴. What about people of non-European origin?

Box 2 – Segregation by standard of living

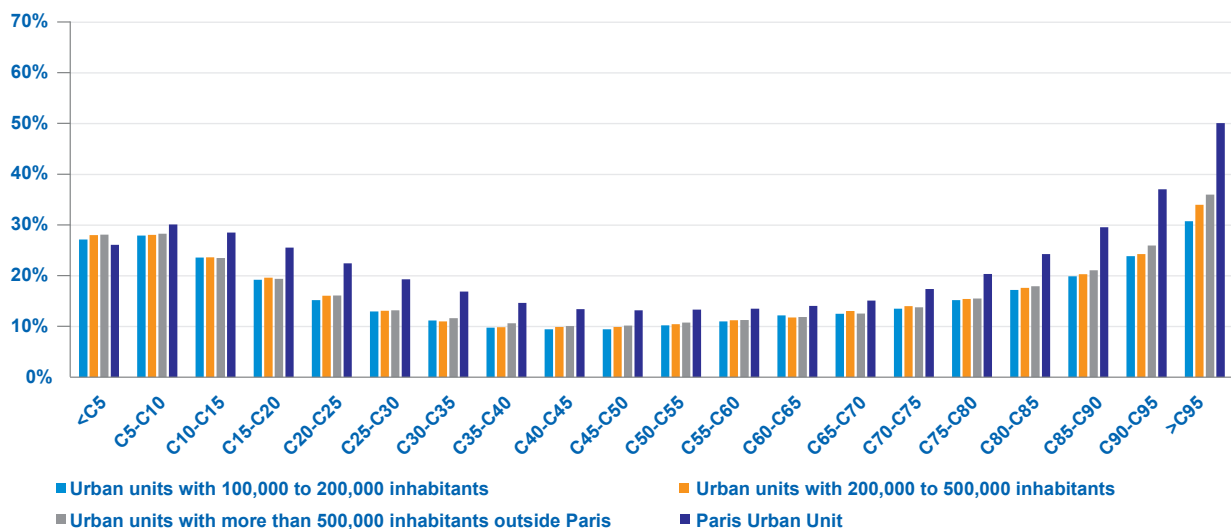
To measure segregation along standards of living¹⁵, we distinguish 20 groups of 25-54-year-old individuals in each urban unit, from the poorest five percent to the better-off five percent. Graph 2 presents the average segregation index for each of the twenty groups according to the size of the urban unit.

The segregation of these twenty groups follows a U-shaped curve: individuals with living standards close to the median are about three times less segregated than those at the extremes. With the exception of Paris, the level of segregation of standard of living groups varies very little

(around 1 point) with the size of the urban unit. The Paris urban unit is characterized by a higher level of segregation of each standard of living group compared with the level observed, on average, in smaller urban units, except for the poorest five percent.

Within the fifty-five urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, segregation of the top five percent of the wealthiest 25-54-year-olds is highest in Paris (segregation index of 55%). Next in descending order are Rouen, Le Havre, Lille and Dunkirk, with a segregation index of between 40% and 45%. The urban units where the segregation of the poorest five percent is highest are Mulhouse, Le Mans, Creil, Tours and Le Havre, with a segregation index of about 35%.

Graph 2 – Segregation Indices of Standard of Living Groups in 2017



Note: In 2017, the segregation index for the wealthiest 5% in the Paris urban unit is 50%. Note: Living standard groups are defined urban unit by urban unit and not at the national level.

Field: Individuals aged 25 to 54 years old.

Source: Calculations by France Stratégie based on Fidéli (2017).

13. Immigrants from Western and Eastern Europe or the former USSR are considered European.

14. See the discussion paper for a detailed analysis of this category.

15. The standard of living corresponds to the income after taxes and benefits received by the individual's household in relation to the number of consumption units (CU) in the household: 1 CU for a single person, 0.5 CU for a spouse and a child over 14 years old, 0.3 CU for a child under 14 years old.



Decreasing segregation indices but concentration indices are on the rise

For all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, an immigrant of non-European origin aged 25-54 lived on average in 1990 in a neighborhood where 17% of individuals in this age group were also of non-European origin. This proportion rose to 26% in 2015. The concentration index is, therefore, rising significantly.

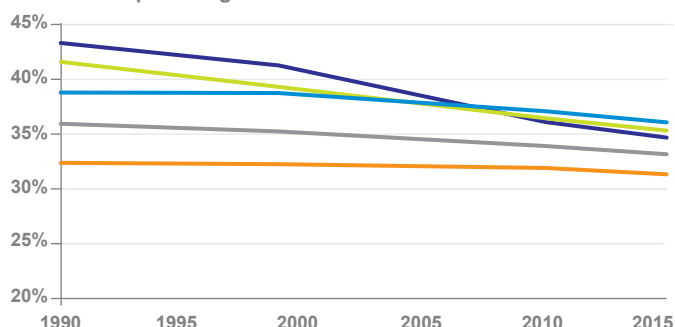
For those aged 0-18 living with at least one immigrant parent from outside Europe¹⁶, the concentration index increased from 31% to 42% over the same period. In the fifty-five urban units under study, the proportion of 0-18 with at least one non-European immigrant parent who live in neighborhoods where they are the majority in the 0-18 age group rose from 17% to 38% between 1990 and 2015 (from 17% to 55% in the Paris urban unit). This is due in particular to the sharp increase – from 8% to 20% – in the concentration index 0-18 living with one non-European immigrant parent (whether a single parent or a non-European immigrant parent who lives as a couple with a non-immigrant or a European immigrant). On the contrary, 0-18 people living with two immigrant parents from outside Europe have seen their concentration index fall - from 27% to 24% – and they rarely and less often live in a neighborhood where they represent the majority of 0-18 year-olds (4% in 2015, compared with 10% in 1990).

Is the increase in the concentration of extra-European immigrants and their children the result of a greater segregation of these categories of the population? The answer is no. The segregation index of 25-54-year-old immigrants of non-European origin has decreased from 36% to 33% on average. There has also been a 3-point drop in the segregation index of under-18s living with at least one immigrant parent from outside Europe (from 41% to 38%). The decline in the segregation index is stronger for those under 18 living with two immigrant parents of non-European origin (-8 points, from 45% to 37%). Levels of segregation fell further in smaller urban units, where levels were highest in 1990 (see figure 3).

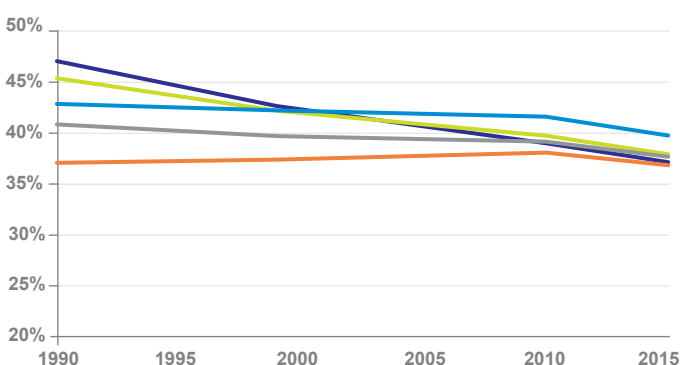
A comparison of the inter-neighborhood and inter-municipal segregation indices of immigrants of extra-European origin shows that this “desegregation” has taken place between neighborhoods and within municipalities and not between municipalities and within urban units. In fact, over the period 1990-2015, while the inter-neighborhood segregation index decreased (outside the Paris urban unit), the inter-communal segregation index remained stable.

Graph 3 – Segregation indices of immigrants of non-European origin and their children

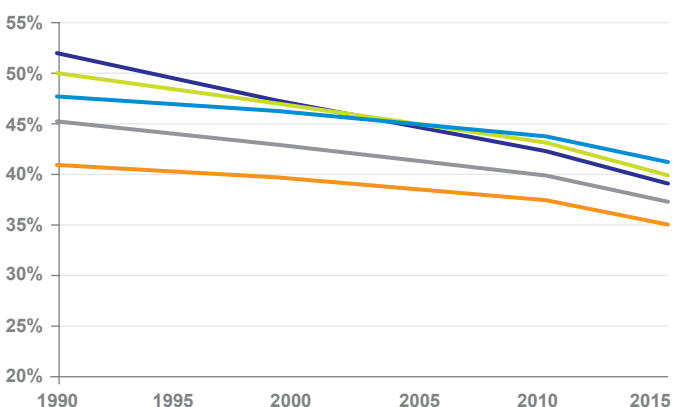
3a – Segregation index of 25-54-year-olds immigrants of non-European origin



3b – Segregation index for 0-18-year-olds living with an immigrant parent of non-European origin



3c – Segregation index of 0-18-year-olds living with two parents immigrants of non-European origin



- Urban units of 100,000 to 200,000 inhabitants
- Urban units from 200,000 to 500,000 inhabitants
- Urban units with more than 500,000 inhabitants outside Paris
- Urban unit of Paris
- Average of urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants

Field: urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, metropolitan France.

Reading: in 2015 in the urban unit of Paris, at least 31% of immigrants of non-European origin aged 25-54 would have to change neighborhood for their share among 25-54 year-olds to be the same in all neighborhoods.

Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database.

16. Whether they are immigrants themselves or not.

Regarding their children, we can observe a slight rise of the inter-neighborhood segregation, except in the less of 200 000 inhabitants urban units.¹⁷

The distribution of immigrants of non-European origin and their children is, therefore, rather more homogeneous in 2015 than it was in 1990, even if they remain quite strongly segregated. Thus, the segregation index of 0-18-year-olds with at least one non-European immigrant parent is today on par with that of 0-18-year-olds who are children of managers and professionals.

The increase in the concentration index of non-European immigrants and of their children mainly mirrors their rising share in the population

If the levels of concentration of extra-European immigrants and of their children have increased whereas their levels of segregation have (slightly) decreased, it is simply because their share in the population has increased. In urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, the share of immigrants of non-European origin among the 25-54 age group rose from 9% to 15% between 1990 and 2015. Among the under-18s, the share of children living with at least one non-European immigrant parent increased from 16% to 26% (from 22% to 38% in the Paris urban unit).

This increase is mainly due to the increase in the share of children under 18 who live with one non-European immigrant parent (in a single parent family or in a two-parent family

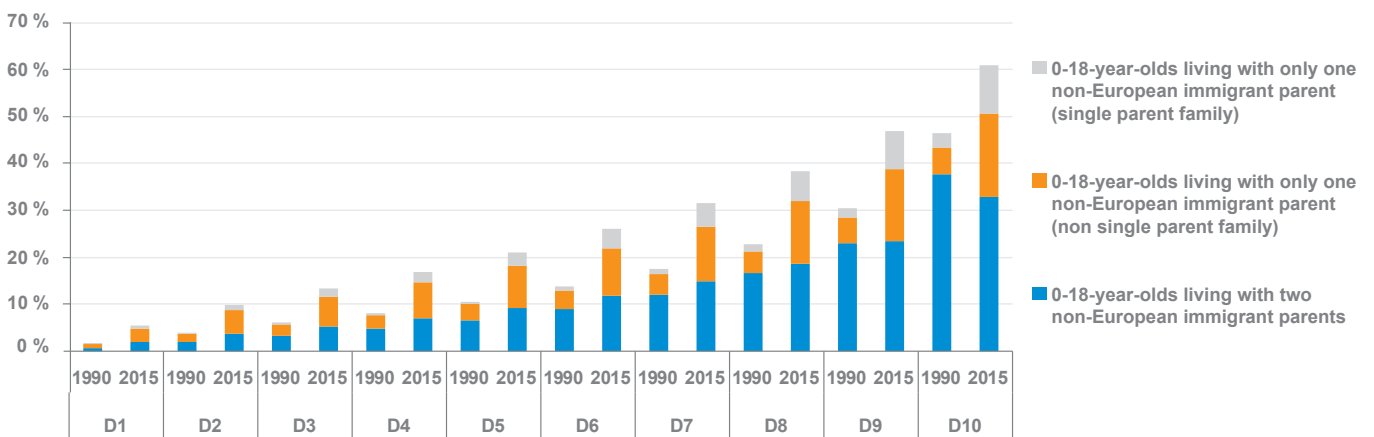
where the other parent is not non-european immigrant). The proportion of 0-18s who live with two parents who are non-European immigrants increased more slowly, from 8% to 10% on average (from 12% to 16% in the Paris urban unit). It should be noted that couples that are mixed from a migration point of view (one immigrant with one non immigrant) are not necessarily mixed from an origin point of view, especially if the parents of the non-immigrant spouse are themselves immigrants¹⁸.

Neighborhoods within each urban unit can be sorted into ten groups by ascending proportion of 0-18-year-olds living with at least one non-European immigrant parent. We then observe that this proportion increased in all ten groups between 1990 and 2015 (graph 4), which is consistent with an increasing concentration and a slightly decreasing segregation. Within each group of neighborhoods, the share of young people living with two non-European immigrant parents is rather stable. In contrast, the proportion of young people living with one non-European immigrant is rising sharply in all groups of neighborhoods.

The segregation of immigrants of non-European origin decreases more rapidly in the urban units where it was initially high

The segregation indices of non-European immigrants and of their children decrease in practically all urban units – with the exception of Avignon, Marseille, Maubeuge, Nice and Paris (graph 5). The decline, moreover, tends to be all

Graph 4 – Share of 0-18-year-olds living with at least one non-European immigrant parent, by neighborhood decile, 1990 and 2015 (average of urban units over 100,000)



Reading: on average, in the decile of neighborhoods where the share of 0-18-year-olds living with at least one non-European immigrant parent among 0-18-year-olds is the highest, this share was 61% in 2015; in this group of neighborhoods, the share of 0-18-year-olds living with two non-European immigrant parents was 33%. Each decile of neighborhoods comprises about 10% of the population of the urban unit.

Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database.

17. See the discussion paper.

18. Collet B. and Santelli E. (2012), "Les descendants d'immigrés en couple mixte au prisme de l'enquête "Trajectoires et Origines" " Enfances, Familles, Générations, n° 17, p. 75-97.

the greater the higher the initial level, which often corresponded to urban units where non-European immigrants were rather rare (Angoulême, Amiens, Béthune, Le Mans, Limoges, Metz, Pau, Tours, Valence)¹⁹. In 2015, the segregation indices of non-European immigrants or of their children is high, but rarely exceeds 40%, whereas it was as high as 60% in 1990.

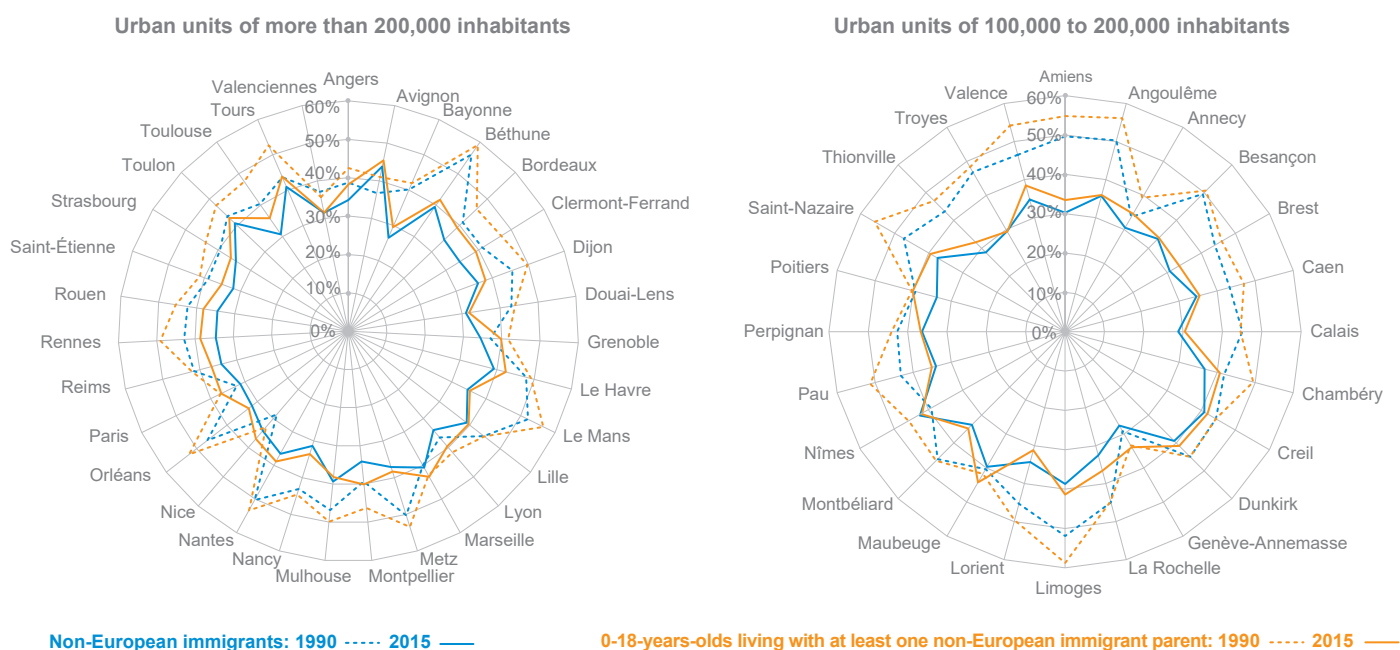
PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS ARE BETTER DISTRIBUTED IN 2015 THAN IN 1990

Historically, public housing was very unevenly distributed over the territory, especially after the construction phase of the “large housing projects” built on the outskirts of large conurbations. In 1990, the segregation index of households living in public housing was very high, around 61% on average for all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants.²⁰ However, this index fell by more than 10 points between 1990 and 2015, since it now stands at 50%. This change occurred while the share of households living in public housing was almost unchanged in the urban units under study.

Graph 6, which shows the average distribution of households living in public housing in 1990 and 2015 in twenty neighborhood classes, each representing about five per cent of households of an urban unit, gives an idea of the situation. It shows that in most of the neighborhoods with the lowest share of households living in public housing (neighborhood groups 3 to 13), this share increased between 1990 and 2015. Conversely, in the neighbourhoods with the highest share of households living in public housing (neighborhoods groups 15 to 20), this share decreased between 1990 and 2015. Thus the distribution of public housing is more homogeneous in 2015 than it was in 1990.

The decline in the public housing segregation index was sharper between 1990 and 1999 than it was in the decade 2000. Therefore it does not seem to be attributable to the SRU Act,²¹ which was passed in 2000. This law only plays at first glance on the segregation of public housing between the municipalities and not within them. But the decline in the inter-neighborhood segregation index of public housing households was faster over the period studied than the

Graph 5 – Evolution of the segregation index of immigrants of non-European origin aged 25-54 years and of 0-18 years living with at least one immigrant parent of non-European origin



Reading: in Béthune, the segregation index of immigrants of non-European origin aged 25 to 54 decreased from 56% in 1990 to 39% in 2015 (in blue), while that of their children aged 0 to 18 decreased from 59% to 42% (in orange).

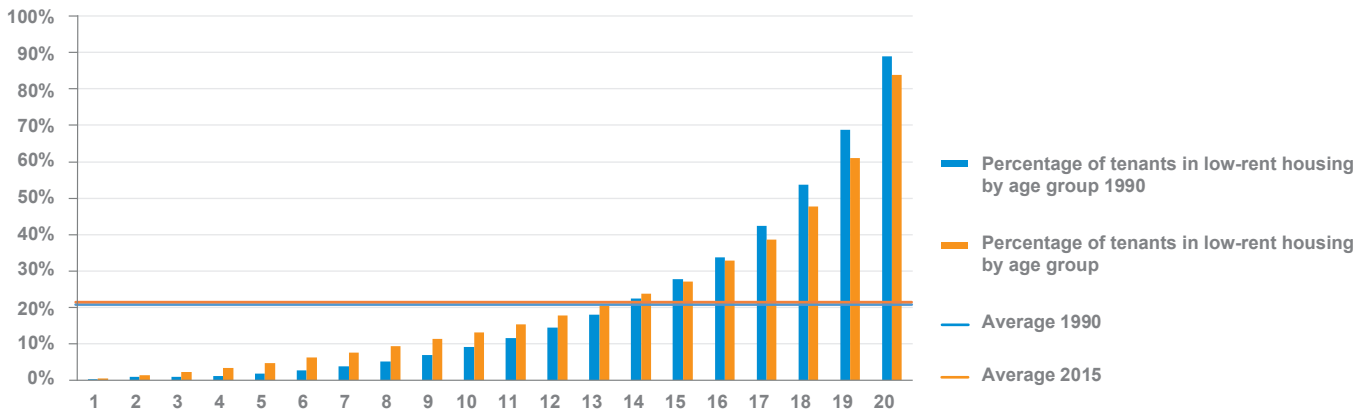
Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database

19. It was verified that this decrease was not an artifact related to the low numbers of non-European immigrants and their children at the beginning of the period. The same graphs, “corrected for random segregation”, which can be important when the category studied represents a very small share of the population, are available from the authors: these corrected radar graphs are very similar to the uncorrected graphs.

20. However, this high level is partly due to the very way IRISs are divided up, which must be “homogeneous from a housing point of view”, according to INSEE. As a result, the segregation of households in low-rent housing may seem more important than that of certain social groups, since it is a criterion that explicitly serves as a basis for defining neighborhoods.

21. Law of 13 December 2000 on solidarity and urban renewal, article 55 of which requires certain municipalities to have a minimum share of public housing.

Graph 6 – Proportion of households living in public housing in 20 neighborhoods groups gathering each around 5% of households (average distribution for all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants)



Reading: on average, in the neighborhoods group with the highest share of households living in public housing, this share was 89% in 1990 and 84% in 2015. Each neighborhood group gather around 5% of the households in the urban unit.

Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database

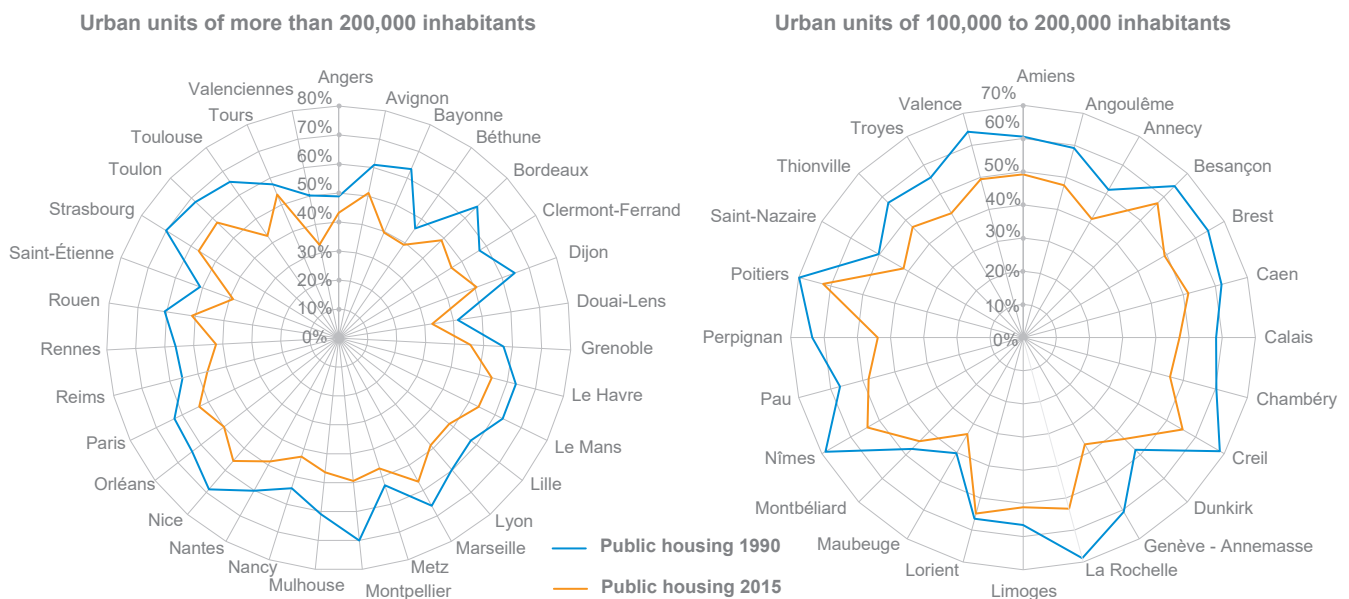
decline in the inter-municipal index 21.²² This suggests that the diffusion of public housing took place both between and within the municipalities of the urban units.

characterized in 2015 by very high levels of public housing segregation: Besançon, Creil, Marseille, Nice, Poitiers, Strasbourg and Toulon.

Graph 7 shows that the decline in the segregation of public housing can be seen in the following graphs in all urban units without exception, though the extent of this decrease may vary from one urban unit to another. In Toulouse, Montpellier, Bayonne, Valenciennes, Annemasse, Perpignan or La Rochelle the decline in the level of segregation was particularly steep. But certain urban units are still

These graphs also shed light on the specificity of the urban units of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region (Béthune, Douai-Lens, Valenciennes, Maubeuge) which are characterized by a very low level of segregation of industrial and service employees. The low level of segregation of public housing, particularly low also, probably explains, at least in part, this situation.

Graph 7 – Evolution of the segregation index of public housing households



Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database

22. In the scope of urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants for which the most populated municipality represents less than 50% of the inhabitants of the entire urban unit.

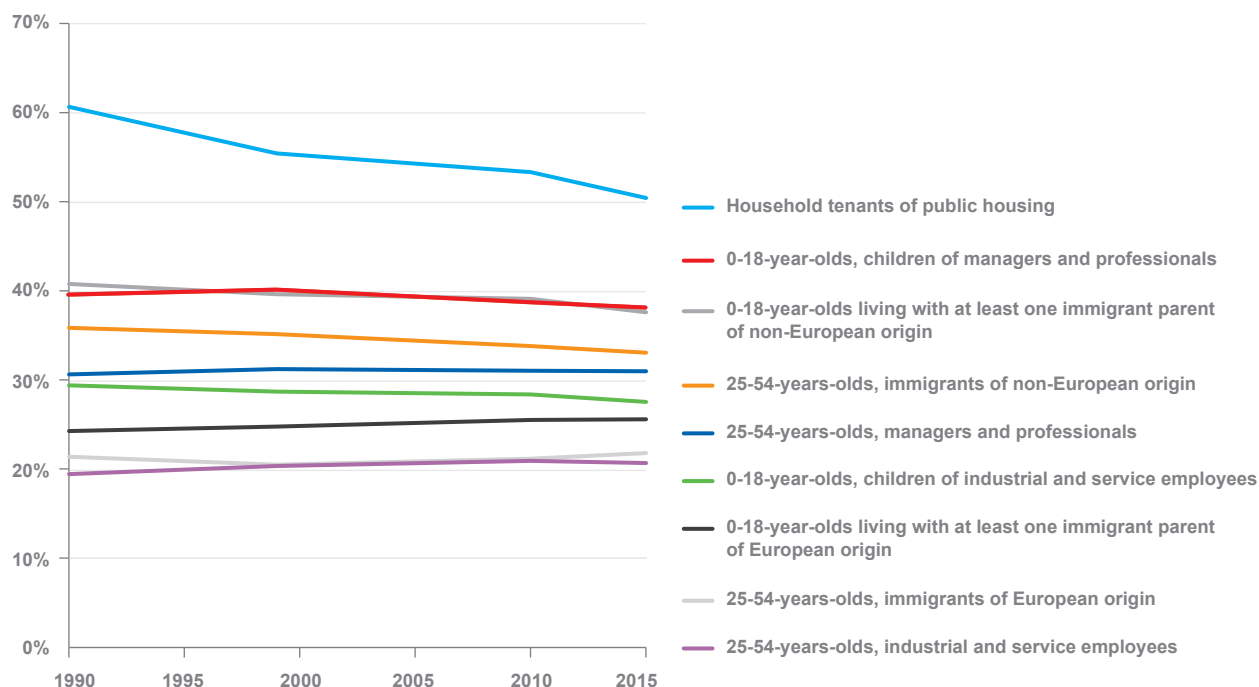


In sharp contrast, the segregation index of public housing was very high in 1990 – about 70% – in the urban units of Creil, La Rochelle, Montpellier, Nice, Nîmes, Poitiers, Strasbourg, Toulon and Toulouse. There is a statistical relationship between the level of segregation of the industrial and service employees and that of public housing in the 55 urban units of our sample (correlation coefficient of 0.45 in 2015). Yet, this relationship is loose if we exclude the four urban units in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region mentioned above (0.25). Moreover, there is no significant correlation between the segregation of public housing and the segregation of immigrants.

Although the segregation of public housing households remains very high, the evolution observed in just twenty-five years is remarkable. Public housing units are by definition not mobile. Their tenants rarely buy them to own their homes contrary to what is observed in Great Britain with the “Right to buy”. The decline in segregation of public housing is therefore the result of public housing constructions in neighborhoods where it was scarce, private housing constructions in neighbourhoods where it was predominant and sometimes also, demolitions.

Has public housing contributed to social diversity? More specifically, has it helped contain or even reduce the segregation of industrial and service employees on the one hand, and of immigrants on the other? The answer is ambiguous, because two phenomena work in opposite directions. Public housing units are less segregated in 2015 than in 1990: all other things being equal, those who live in public housing units are less segregated in 2015 than in 1990. However, public housing units still are more segregated (segregation index of 50% in 2015) than private rental housing (segregation index of 34%) and owner-occupied housing (segregation index of 33%). It is home to a growing proportion industrial and service employees and of immigrants from outside Europe. Between 1990 and 2015, in the urban units under study, the proportion of industrial and service employees aged 25-54 who live in public housing rose from 29% to 33%, and that of immigrants from outside Europe rose from 38% to 43%. These populations are increasingly living in housing units that are certainly less segregated over time, but which remain more segregated than private rental housing units or owner-occupied housing.

Graph 8 – Segregation index of different population categories, 1990-2015
(urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants)



Field: urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, metropolitan France.

Reading note: in 2015, on average for all urban units with more than 100,000 inhabitants, 39% of children of managers and professionals parents would have to change neighborhood so that their share among the under-18s would be the same in all neighborhood.

Source: France Stratégie calculations, based on INSEE's Saphir database.

CONCLUSION

The different facets of social identity are not equally decisive in social processes that lead to non-homogeneous spatial distribution of individuals: age plays a marginal role²³, social category is more important than age, and migratory origin is more important than social category (see Figure 8).

The levels of segregation observed in France are, on average, stable as far as social categories are concerned and decreasing as far as migratory origins are concerned. However, this stability or reduction in segregation levels is compatible with an increase in concentration levels for certain categories of population: managers and professionals and their children, immigrants of non-European origin and their children tend to live in neighborhoods where they represent a growing share of the population, because their share in the general population is also growing.

These results reflect an overall trend that is mostly true for the majority of France's large urban units. However, the Paris urban unit differs quite widely from the others:²⁴ the segregation of social classes is higher there than elsewhere and has increased between 1990 and 2015; immigrants are more homogeneously distributed spatially but tend to live in neighborhoods where they represent a share of the inhabitants that is, on average, higher than in the other urban units, reflecting their larger share in Paris urban unit population as a whole.

Key words: residential segregation, segregation index, concentration index, non-European immigrants, urban units

23. See the discussion paper.

24. See the working document and the dataviz tool available at this address.

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Press contact: Matthias Le Fur, Head of Department Edition-Communications-Events, 01 42 75 61 37, matthias.lefur@strategie.gouv.fr

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