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How people deal with their neighborhood in Paris working class and immigrant suburbs?

In France, because of the impact of the “French Republican Model of Integration”, both social and ethnic segregation are commonly associated with exclusion. It refers not only to social disorder, but also to the idea that people living in poor segregated neighborhoods do not like their location, and are characterized by weak social relations and local civic participation. For these reasons, social mix is often presented as a key reference in many French public policies, even though we don’t really know if it makes a clear difference.

In this paper, I will discuss these issues using a survey conducted in Paris working class and immigrant suburbs. How do social and ethnic background, residential status, and location have an impact on these four dimensions (well-being in the neighborhood, perception of segregation, social relations and local civic participation)?

The main results do not confirm the general idea about the “banlieue populaire”. First, the majority of people like their place of residence, and the social and ethnic background is less significant than the residential status in explaining the feeling of well-being. On the contrary, the perception of segregation depends more on the ethnic background and it deals with other negative opinions on the place. Finally, we have a more complex picture for social relations and local civic participation. These suburbs cannot be reduced to only anomic places; they are more like a mosaic.