Combining Sustainability and Social Justice in the Paris Metropolitan Region

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CHAPTER 10

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ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN THE ILE-DE-FRANCE

By 2050, 70 percent of the world's population will live in cities (UN-HABITAT 2008). These cities will have to provide services and resources to their inhabitants while reducing pollution. Sustainability policies designed by planners and public actors are supposed to meet this challenge, but what will be the interaction between the implementation of these policies and social justice? This chapter focuses on the sharp processes of spatial differentiation and the many-fold conflicts and trade-offs between sustainability – as related in the dominant discourse only to efficiency and resource conservation – and social justice. It considers the Paris metropolitan region (known as Ile-de-France), a major urban area in Europe. The spatial divide in the Ile-de-France has increased significantly during the last twenty years between wealthy and poor people as well as between ethnic groups, though the existence of these divides is not officially recognized in France (Burgel 2009). This spatial separation coincided temporally with the rising of sustainability policies in the Ile-de-France after 2001. As we will later see, differential exposure to environmental nuisances is a key factor in this divide.

In the Paris metropolitan region, as well as in the rest of French cities and urban areas, there was no real environmental concern – whether in the population or the local authorities – before the end of the 1970s (Larrère and Larrère 1997). In Europe, authoritarian planning and massive construction of high-density housing developments marked the aftermath of the Second World War. Besides, in 1965, Ile-de-France's master plan organized the extension of the city of Paris from an

urban-centered perspective. Namely, converting agricultural, natural, and unbuilt areas into by-products of inner Paris interests. That is why the 1976 master plan organized a transition zone between urban and rural areas named Zone Naturelle d'Equilibre, which reflected a new concern for the urban invasion of Ile-de-France into rural areas. Finally, in the master plan of 1994 – after the emergence of the "sustainable development" concept during the Rio 1992 Earth Summit – this intermediate area was mentioned as a *ceinture verte* (green belt) (Vidal and Fleury 2009). Curiously enough, it was designed to fulfill the desire for nature of the population from the urban centers (mainly inner Paris) without any consideration for the needs of the concerned rural inhabitants.

At the same time, in the 1960s and the 1970s, new urban areas were created. They were clean, healthy, and comfortable; yet their public spaces were scarce and poor with no sidewalks along the streets and no stores – completely cut off from the traditional urban fabric. In these places, different social categories mixed as never before, temporarily united by a common housing crisis. There, a growing sense of dehumanization developed, crystallizing in the first demands for a better quality of life that resulted in the first ecological movements (Donzelot 1999). In France, particularly in the Ile-de-France, these ecological movements only emerged haphazardly in the early 1980s (Cherki and Mehl 1979; Amzert 2004).

Actually, it was only after 2001 that an integrated environmental policy became effective in the Paris metropolitan region, after a coalition of socialists and ecologists came to power in elections, both at the Paris City Council and at the Ile-de-France regional council. This new policy was reputed "sustainable." It addressed principally the redevelopment of transport and utilities infrastructures (Bourlon and Villot 2004).[1] This option resulted from a long tradition of designing and developing public spaces initiated by Georges-Eugène Haussmann in the nineteenth century. Besides, this policy fostered different types of urban projects, intended to generalize to the whole urban area: *quartiers verts* (green neighborhoods), where vehicle speed was limited to 30 km/h and car traffic drastically reduced, to the benefit of soft mobility (reorganization of the traffic plan, speed bumps, and raised crosswalks, etc.); and *espaces civilisés* (literally civilized areas) next to heavy traffic roads, where wider sidewalks and reserved bus and bicycles lanes were created, to the detriment of the roadway. Frequently, portions of roadways downtown are temporarily closed to the traffic

[1] Still recently, in 2007, the Grand Paris (Greater Paris) initiative aimed at creating a new comprehensive development project for the Paris metropolitan region, finally reduced to a new transport master plan. See www.bustler.net/index.php/article/ten_scenarios_for_the"Grand_Paris"_Metropolis_now_up_for_public_debate/.

within inner Paris, like in the operation Paris Respire (Paris Breathes). Celebration or festive events take place, like Paris Plages (literally Paris Beaches): the Seine's banks become pedestrian one month every summer, sand is spread on the banks, and palm trees and deck chairs are installed. Ultimately, policy aimed to restore to public places what they had gradually lost at the end of the twentieth century; that is to say, areas where it is possible to wander, stroll, or just stay have been recreated (Korosec-Serfaty 1990). The issue was to minimize as much as possible the nuisances generated by other urban activities. Thus redevelopment of transport infrastructures policy met the social and cultural dimension of urban policy in the Ile-de-France.

The concern for environmental issues in public policies grew significantly in France after the Grenelle de l'Environnement; a round of discussions involving all the members of the society including local and regional authorities, professional organizations, labor unions, NGOs, and experts. It was initiated by the French government and consisted of a series of policy debates between June and November 2007, with a political commitment to endorse the outcomes in making long-term decisions regarding environment and sustainable development (Boy et al. 2012). One of these decisions was dividing by four the amount of GHG produced in 2050 compared to 1990. It also put big stress on planning and on the construction sector, especially in urbanized regions like Ile-de-France. For example, point four of the Grenelle agreement stipulated that by the end of 2012, every type of building had to comply with an energy "low consumption" label, and by 2020 all new construction has to be positive-energy buildings. At the same time, the agreement provided that French regions and all cities over 50,000 inhabitants had to develop Climate Change Action Plans (Plans Climat Locaux) before 2012. In such a context, sustainable housing developed steadily in the Ile-de-France after 2007, but with a conceptualization of sustainability limited to the energy performance of the construction. It became a crucial issue of the Paris metropolitan region: sustainability, together with mobility (see Chapter 2). This trend was amplified after the second Grenelle de l'Environnement round that took place in July 2010.[2] It led to the publication of the *Engagement national pour l'environnement*, a law on national commitment to the environment largely centered on sustainable housing, understood as energy-efficient housing (Némoz 2010).

Thus, with rising concern for climate change, sustainability policies tended to reduce their field of action to their technical dimensions, limited to biophysical, energetic, or ecosystems constraints, without considering the social side effects. "Exemplary" buildings and devices – all technical solutions – were often favored

[2] www.legrenelle-environnement.fr/Le-Grenelle-2-decrypte,1397.html.

to the detriment of more holistic approaches, such as active land management and transformation of the urban fabric (differential densification, restructuring urban cores, etc.). To promote "green" buildings, elected officials agreed to pay extra charges, up to 20 percent of the original costs, to obtain a low-energy label. They were less interested in the urban design, which is more important to create a real sustainable city but, of course, harder to implement and less profitable as an electoral issue, as in the urban project Clichy-Batignolles, inside Paris (Barbry 2011)

Working on planning practice and theory, with regard to sustainability and social justice at Rheims University's IRCS (International Research Center on Sustainability), I realized that technical issues (such as resource conservation or reduction of greenhouse gas emissions) siphoned money and private and public actor attention away from other priorities (Mancebo 2011). Since the early 1990s, the European Union has mainly financed climate and energy initiatives when sustainability is addressed. Prioritizing this climate topic in local and regional public policies – as in Climate Change Actions Plans – induces very localized ecotechnical solutions: energetic autonomy of the agglomeration with the development of local renewable energy sources, insulation of buildings, passive houses, and so on (Droege 2008; Criqui, Russ, and Deybe 2006). Social innovations usually don't qualify for such subsidies. But a zero-energy housing development does not necessarily help in creating a sustainable neighborhood. Technical issues (energy efficiency and resource conservation) aside, a sustainable neighborhood also means strengthening and taking care of the urban fabric and local communities.

HOW SUSTAINABILITY FOSTERS INJUSTICE

As shown by Elizabeth Burton in a large sample of towns in the United Kingdom, technical solutions may join with legal requirements in increasing social injustice (Burton 2001). These were not the original intentions of the *Our Common Future* report (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Sustainable development aims at fostering both spatial and intergenerational solidarity, which is all but evident. Now, in favoring a restrictive approach to ecotechnologies and normative processes, spatial equity is sacrificed to intergenerational equity.

How is it that technical solutions can lead, paradoxically but usually, to reinforce existing environmental injustices (living conditions, exposure to pollution) or to create them in the worst case? As far as sustainable housing is concerned, the reason why sustainable cities and ecological neighborhoods are mostly inhabited by wealthy people is simple (Faburel 2012). In the beginning,

these categories were targeted because they could afford the higher construction costs and because they were decisive in the formation of new trends. Such a choice was supposed to democratize access to this type of living, as larger demand would make possible lower construction costs due to economies of scale. The Swedish cases of Hammarby Sjöstad (Stockholm) or Västra Hamnen (Malmö) illustrate this approach (Olander, Johansson, and Niklasson 2007). However, this democratization did not happen. Construction costs inflated steadily, as developers, constrained by drastic environmental specifications, played the "style and class" card to increase their capital gains. As high as prices can be, there are a limited number of ecological dwellings, and they are viewed as attractive in the market. So, the law of supply and demand increases the rent rate and the sell rate, regardless of construction costs.

The problem in the Paris metropolitan region was that – quite apart from sustainable housing – access to housing for low- and middle-class households is already a problem in Ile-de-France. Inside the city of Paris, the average price for one square meter in 2012 was the equivalent of six months of work for somebody earning the minimum legal wage (the SMIC, which is around €1,000 gross salary): €6,000. It means that this person needs to work full time for thirty years, without eating or dressing, just to buy an apartment of sixty square meters. By contagion, high prices spread gradually to the whole region, including the outskirts (Renard 2005). Thus, new upward pressure on prices brought by sustainable housing proved catastrophic (François et al. 2011). Clearly, the name of "sustainable" neighborhood is inappropriate when a neighborhood becomes socially inaccessible. This leads some authors to denounce the veil thrown over profoundly unfair environmental dynamics that involve the departure of socially vulnerable people out of these places to outlying areas (Smith 2002; see also Chapters 4 and 14).

Moreover, there is an issue here that concerns directly social justice. Wouldn't public money have been more efficient if invested to reduce environmental disparities between existing areas instead of creating new energy-efficient buildings or sustainable neighborhoods in already wealthy places? Doesn't Ile-de-France already have places where the environmental conditions are pretty bad? The French National Observatory of the ZUS (Zones Urbaines Sensibles – poor neighborhoods with a high level of social problems) shows that in France, 45 percent of the ZUS are exposed to cumulative nuisances and degraded environment. This proportion increases to 69 percent in the Ile-de-France (Choffel 2004; ONZUS 2011). Another report shows a strong correspondence between environmental and social characteristics among Ile-de-France's

Figure 10.1: Social and environmental characteristics of Ile-de-France's communes. (Map : F. Mançebo, based on Gueymard.)

communes[3]: 50 percent of the communes with degraded environment (pollution, nuisances) are also socially deprived. Symmetrically, nearly 50 percent of those with good environmental conditions are wealthy areas (Gueymard and Faburel 2008; Bigot 2009). To be more precise, socially deprived communes with poor environment are mainly north of Ile-de-France.

Roughly speaking, the largest area covers Seine-Saint-Denis and Val-d'Oise *départements*[4] and along the Francilienne highway and Roissy airport. There is also

[3] A commune is the smallest local political division of France, governed by a mayor and municipal council.

[4] A département is a geographically defined area which functions as an administrative unit and has its own local government (the Conseil Général). The different

a smaller area south, nearby Orly Airport and along A6 and A10 highways. On the contrary, in the communes west and south of Ile-de-France, wealthy people enjoy very nice environmental conditions combined with the proximity of forest and various PNR (*Parc Naturel Régional* – Regional Parks).

Besides, finally, what is the determinant of such a distribution: The attractiveness of the communes with a nice environment or the avoidance of the nuisances of those with a poor one? In the Paris metropolitan region, pollution, nuisances, and low quality of life are cited as the main reasons for people to move away from the city (35 percent). Of course, those who stay in poor areas are those who have no other choice. But what is interesting here is that the decision to move is motivated more by the desire to avoid a negative environmental factor than by the drawing power of the place where people relocate. The rejection of environmental degradation is stronger than the attractiveness of environmental amenities (nature, silence, air and water quality, etc.) to determine the residential choice, alongside with economic and mobility reasons (Gueymard and Faburel 2008). This avoidance behavior decides the bulk of environmental injustice in Ile-de-France. The case of Seine-Saint-Denis deserves special attention. At the scale of the region, this département has a very negative image for its inhabitants, as well as for the people living anywhere else in the Ile-de-France. It is associated with environmental shortcomings and low quality of life due to its industrial heritage. Indeed an article about the industrial heritage of Seine-Saint-Denis between 1850 and 2000, shows that the prejudice against this département remains very strong, despite deindustrialization forty years ago, many major urban regeneration and reconfiguration programs developed mainly after 2007, and the Grenelle de l'Environnement (Guillerme, Jigaudon, and Lefort 2004), among them ecodistricts, sustainable neighborhoods, and green areas.

Seine-Saint-Denis remains a "bad area" and a stigmatizing place to live in. It is not a coincidence that almost all of the French urban riots of the early twenty-first century have taken place in the large social housing complexes of Seine-Saint-Denis. Thus the matter is this: if the supposed attractiveness due to exemplary occasional green programs is less decisive than the rejection of some areas to explain social and environmental injustice distribution in the Ile-de-France, then urban sustainability policies should focus on an inclusive approach rather than creating "attractive" green housing or equipment haphazardly. More generally, there is a lack of reflection among public actors on the consistency of the whole urban fabric and on the adequate geographical scope for implementing sustainability policies.

département of the Région Ile-de-France, which forms the main part of the Paris metropolitan region, are Paris, Seine-et-Marne, Yvelines, Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne, and Val-d'Oise.

Figure 10.2: The Canal Saint-Denis area before and after regeneration. (Photos: S. Salles & F. Mançebo.)

THE DILEMMA OF IMPORTED SUSTAINABILITY

An effective sustainability policy should take into account all the relations between human beings and the environments where they live, and should conceive of sustainability on larger scales (Elliot 2006). For example, when a

city guarantees its own sustainable development by making other areas pay the cost of it, this city is not really sustainable, transferring pollution (exporting waste) or polluting activities, siphoning their resources, and so on. We can speak, then, of "imported sustainability" (Pearce, Markandya, and Barbier 1989; Daly 1990). This city seems sustainable because its nuisances are exported. It is very tricky to deal with this problem since, if we want to define a study area large enough to include imported sustainability, its limits will differ according to which aspect of sustainability we focus on. The functional area and the employment area of a major industrial center do not coincide, nor do they coincide with the geographical area affected by the pollution (physical, chemical, air, and water) and nuisance due to this industrial center. There is an interesting similarity here with Amartya Sen's finding that in Bengal, famines were not only due to lack of food but also duet to the inequalities caused by the mechanisms of food distribution (Sen 1982). The issue of capability differences systematically raise the question: who benefits from sustainable development?

Imported sustainability is a major bias against the implementation of sustainability policies in the Ile-de-France. The only solution is defining these policies on extensive spatial scales, which include suburban, peri-urban and dependent rural, or natural areas (Donzelot 2004; Wheeler 2004). In the case of the Zones Naturelles d'Equilibre as before mentioned, green areas have become increasingly attractive. Wealthy people seek to move there, fueling the myth of a city in the countryside. Thus, in the Parc Natural Regional du Vexin Français, in the northern part of the Ile-de-France, rural villages have turned into urban communities. There is an acceleration of this urbanization when the initial goal of creating this green area was to avoid it (Desponds 2008). When imported sustainability exists, injustices materialize spatially from one area to another as well as between people and communities living in the same area.

Thus, sustainability policies cannot limit their scope to the environmental realm. They must address the existing social and cultural fabric, legislation and planning traditions, communities, local assets, and resources (Costanza et al. 2001). Indeed, their effectiveness is largely dependent on their acceptability, a highly subjective and rarely disinterested matter (Fischhoff et al. 1981). It is therefore important to determine what is a good environment for the communities involved: one in which the improvement of environmental conditions *stricto sensu* (water quality, air, biodiversity, prudent use of resources, land and energy, etc.) will lead to improved living conditions; one in which technical devices and ecological processes – included in areas large enough to take into account imported sustainability – will be able to lead to new lifestyles.

For example, setting up adequate regional ecosystem services in Ile-de-France proved difficult because nobody asked the local communities, and more generally the inhabitants, for their views: the development of Trames Vertes et Bleues

(Green and Blue Grid/Infrastructure) required by the Grenelle de l'Environment were supposed to bring local authorities at different scales to work together. There were land management tools for the preservation of biodiversity that were crucial in urban and peri-urban areas. These *trames* form a grid that includes big natural units, buffer zones, and corridors linking these units, as well as the rivers, lakes, ponds, and their banks. They have to be represented and delimited in the Schéma Régional des Espaces Ouverts (Regional Scheme for the Open Areas) and the map of the future Schéma Directeur Régional de l'Ile-de-France (Ile-de-France Regional Master plan). But the procedure was too formal and technocratic to succeed in the constitution of a true regional Trame Verte (Blanc 2009), and particularly did not take into account the different scales of action or the opinion of the population (Cormier, De Lajatre, and Carcaud 2010). Local and regional authorities forgot, when fixing the Trames Vertes et Bleues, that French *espaces verts* (green areas) do not necessarily bring people together. They also isolate people because they separate their homes. This aspect is in line with Parisian history: the introduction of greenery by Haussmann was an attempt to control the use of public space by a technical approach based on hygienism (Luginbuhl 1992). Its main function was to bring more sunlight to the city and better the air circulation. The city life was marked by socio-spatial differentiation, virtually segregative, embodied in a type of revegetation reduced to *espaces verts*. The very term *espace vert* reveals its real nature: "by losing its name, the old urban garden or urban park is deprived of its positive attributes excepted the hygienic one . . . the *espace vert* is no longer a place but rather an indistinct area whose boundaries are decided in the abstract world of the master plans" (Le Dantec and Le Dantec 1987). Today, biodiversity and Trames Vertes have replaced hygienism, but the logic remains (Moret 2004): to separate, to distinguish, and to hide. In the Ile-de-France, many actions point to the interest of the regional and local authorities for these new espaces verts: Observatoire Départemental de la Biodiversité (Biodiversity Departmental Monitoring Agency) in the département of Seine-Saint-Denis; Charte Régionale de la Biodiversité et des Milieux Naturels (Biodiversity and Natural Environment Regional Charter) of the Ville de Paris (City of Paris 2004); Agence Régionale Naturparif (2006); and Stratégie Régionale de la Biodiversité (Biodiversity Regional Strategy 2007). The current regional master plan proposes – as an important means to foster sustainability – a quantitative objective of 10 square meters of public green area per inhabitant at the communal level as though it were sufficient to display "green" to become suddenly sustainable. To make the population active in the definition and implementation of sustainability policies, these policies should develop at three complementary scales simultaneously.

First is the scale of the neighborhood. At this level, the physical impact of urban projects, even if they are conceived of at the agglomeration level, is maximal. Second is the scale of agglomeration. This level plays a strategic role in sustainable urbanization and requires coordination between multiple actors to produce policy. Finally, there is the scale of the hinterland, which reflects the agglomeration environmental footprint. It is defined to include most of the fluxes of the urban metabolism (Billen et al. 2011). It gives good insight into policy, on the one side, and of the urban lifestyles, on the other. This level can be called "regional." It is crucial to describe imported sustainability.

Concretely determining these three scales is tricky. Urban areas are covered with overlapping partitions as each administration, economic actor, and local community produces its own zoning. So-called sustainability policies can have terrible effects when they do not take into account scale linkage. For example, besides being very urbanized, Ile-de-France still has large areas dedicated to the production of large-scale cereal crops. This agricultural production dates back to the Middle Ages, that is to say since the forests were cleared to produce wheat for the population of Paris, which kept on growing steadily (Moriceau 1994). Recent attempts to convert this open agricultural landscape into a collection of small farms producing organic food and providing touristic amenities was a big mistake. The farmers did not agree to play by the new rules. They defined themselves as large agricultural producers and did not want to become what they call *jardiniers du paysage* (landscape gardeners), which they see as a degrading status. Besides, the inhabitants were afraid of the nuisances that would come with tourism and small farms (manure, noises, etc.). More importantly, they felt the regional authority had not consulted with them. This program was totally unacceptable to the farmers and to the other inhabitants, resulting in outright opposition. It ended in an economic, ecological, and landscape failure (Vidal and Fleury 2009).

INCOMPATIBILITIES BETWEEN POLICIES FOR INCLUSION AND THE CLIMATE

One of the many challenges of urban sustainability is reestablishing the inclusiveness of the urban and social fabric, which is a complex task, instead of popping-up buildings or housing estates without paying attention to the surroundings, which is an easy task. The quest for sustainability in the Ile-de-France should be attentive to the urban form of the whole agglomeration. The shape and outline of the cities, their *vela*, and their density compose their urban form and determine their identities as well. An agglomeration also needs "intense" areas and "quiet" areas, interacting to structure the space (Da Cunha

and Kaiser 2009). Each one has its specific atmosphere, which results in different urban habits. Together, they embody the region's identity. The assumption is that, to foster a good quality of life, there is need for contrasts, to meet and to adapt to the different individual aspirations among the inhabitants.

In this context, urban reconversion is crucial. It concerns, for example, the industrial wastelands in the inner suburbs of Paris, like in the communes of Ivry and Vitry. There, many warehouses have been transformed into offices or apartments, as part of eco-neighborhoods.

Such sustainable actions are supposed to foster multifunctionality and differential densification, as well as to integrate urban habitus into new projects. But at the same time, these projects center on climate change, which is linked to very different priorities, including improved energy performance, reduction of GHG emissions, transport, new local energy resources, and eco-constructions (Willbanks 2003). They produce technical and sectorial actions that more often than not fail to address the urban fabric at all. Actually, there are radical inconsistencies when trying to combine sustainable urban policies with local climate policies, including both density and land use.

DENSITY

The Grand Paris consultation combined with the Grenelle de l'Environnement to establish density as a major sustainability issue in the Ile-de-France.[5] Even in peripheral Ile-de-France areas, dense individual housing was fostered: for example, terraced houses on long small plots. This is the case with a program in Ormesson-sur-Marne, which plans eighteen housing units per acre near the eastern limits of Ile-de-France. The point is that densely built areas and good quality of life are not mutually exclusive (Moulinié and Naudin-Adam 2005). A report on four Parisian *quartiers* (districts) shows that high density is well accepted by the population when coupled with vibrant neighborhood and mixed-use development (Bordas-Astudillo 2003). Similarly, the case of the Faubourg de l'Arche in Courbevoie (a commune close to the business district of La Défense) demonstrates that good quality of public places is compatible with building densification. The initial urban program had been affected by a

[5] The *Grand Paris* consultation was launched in 2007. It was an international urban and architectural competition for the future development of a Paris metropolis. Ten teams, gathering architects, urban planners, geographers, and landscape architects, were chosen to give a vision for the Paris metropolitan region including sustainability. They developed scenarios to the future development of the region for the next forty years.

crash of the real estate market at the beginning of the 1990s, and the developers rebalanced their financial investments then by increasing the height of the buildings and the number of construction rights in the housing program. This strategy made funds available for high-quality production of Faubourg de l'Arche's public places. It was a success. Every public place was processed specifically. A greenspace network was created to join the core of the different blocks and make pedestrian traffic easier and more enjoyable. Finally, a higher construction density contributed to enliven the area, now very much a fashionable mixed-use and intergenerational area.

On the contrary, policies focused on climate change introduce arguments for low-density urbanization. Green neighborhoods planted with high-water-loss coefficient trees can lower the temperature locally: a 10 percent vegetation increase lowers the temperature as much as 1 degree celsius within a 100 meter radius. In low-density areas, there are more square meters of roof per household than in high-density areas. Thus, generalized photovoltaic roofs can be a significant source of clean energy. Naturally, the low-density option is not so perfect either, since it usually means heavy traffic when the only solution to move from one place to another is driving one's car (Weil 2005). Depending on whether priority is given to climate change alone or to an inclusive vision of sustainability, resulting policies may be totally different.

LAND USE

Sustainable cities could be nicknamed "recyclable cities" in the sense that they have the potential to constantly recycle their urban fabric and their urban functions without going through phases of obsolescence with brownfield land and degraded neighborhoods, and without squandering soils (Swart, Robinson, and Cohen 2003; Whitehead 2003). New "ecological gardens" appeared at the end of the 1990s on the brownlands of former industrial sites of inner Paris, and at the same time, old industrial buildings of these sites were rehabilitated in ecofriendly construction (apartments or offices); for instance, Parc André Citroën (on the site of a former very large car factory) or Parc George Brassens (on the site of a former slaughterhouse) in the 15th arrondissement of Paris. This evolution from industrial areas to natural urban areas plus eco-constructions is typical of sustainable planning.

But mayors, representatives, and more generally, elected officials interested only in climate adaptation are rarely interested in improving what is already there. They prefer showcasing eco-constructions and they love them "brand new." They are so much more visible. In Chapter 4, Miriam Greenberg

denounces, in the case of New York City, what she calls "the rearticulation of a market-oriented urban sustainability."

Too often, developers deliver turnkey new energy-efficient construction and passive buildings in new neighborhoods improperly called "environmentally friendly" (Bierens de Haan and Dawson 2006). In many cases, vegetation, green technologies, and exterior wood facings camouflage classical housing estates. Naturally, the regeneration of the existing urban and social fabric is not addressed here. There is no way to foster communities in such a context. The identity of place is usually extraordinarily weak for the people living there (Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff 1983).

PROMOTING PEOPLE'S APPROPRIATION OF SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES: NECESSITY AND DELUSION

The antagonisms regarding density and land use call for collective decisions. Beyond their procedural and prescriptive appearances, these decisions result from the confrontation – or the synergy – of choices made by myriad actors. To imagine effective sustainability policies, it is necessary first to identify the main obstacles. Actually, there are two. On the one hand, it is difficult to encompass all the actors (regional and local authorities, nonmarket institutions, NGOs, private companies, local store keepers, unions and chambers, landowners, etc.), even more to visualize the whole of their interactions. Moreover, none of the actors has access to all the information; they therefore make their decisions on the basis of available information (spatially and temporally close to them). On the other hand, microdecisions made by individuals and households have an indirect but strong influence on collective decisions. They are shaped by the moment and the economic status of the persons. Ostentatious choices also play a big role, since they determine their position on the "social totem" (Frank 1999). Thus, to which point does having a house of 1,500 square meters give you more happiness than one of 1,000 square meters? Not much more (Krueger and Schkade 2008; Winkelmann 2012), but you need to "keep up with the Joneses" to conform with the social codes (Drakopoulos 2013), and because the demand is there, the size of the houses keeps rising, accelerating urban sprawl while denying more and more people affordable housing.

Since effective sustainability policies depend on their collective appropriation (Theys 2000), it should be interesting to include among local actors, nonmarket institutions, local communities, and individuals able to form self-determined user associations. The idea is to transcribe in urban planning Elinor Ostrom's work, which showed that user communities with neighborhood governance

Figure 10.3: Ecological "community gardens" (*jardins partagés*) in the wealthy area of Trocadero-16 ème arrondissement of Paris. 2012 (Photos: S. Salles & F. Mançebo.)

could manage commons more efficiently than the market or institutional structures (Ostrom 1998). In this vein, the Paris City Council encourages residents, associations, and local storekeepers to get involved as local actors in the governance of their quartier. They organize many so-called "sustainable" events: thematic markets, Repas de Voisins (Neighbors' Meals), carnivals, and so forth.

Their purpose is to make sure that people can linger pleasantly in the public places, so that they frequent them more regularly and in various ways. The objective of the Paris City Council is to foster strong social links among the inhabitants at the quartier scale.

How Parisians decide upon the existence, the boundaries, the spatial distribution, and the characteristics of their many quartiers communicates crucial information about the social fabric of Paris and its different lifestyles (Human-Lamoure 2010). An East–West divide exists within inner Paris that increased significantly these last twenty years. A study considering the quartiers most cited in the *Journal de Paris* (the information paper of the city council) from 1997 to 2004 showed that four out of five western Paris quartiers are no longer mentioned (Champs-Elysées, 16e arrondissement, Monceau, Epinettes exist no more as quartiers), while new quartiers are mentioned in eastern Paris (Faubourg

St Antoine, St Blaise, Bas Belleville, and Paris Rive Gauche).[6] Such "spatial migration" of the quartiers can partly be explained by the emergence in Eastern Paris of attractive areas due to urban renewal programs, which more often than not were combined with sustainable neighborhoods programs (Ménilmontant, St. Martin, and Butte aux Cailles). The collective desire for appropriation of their living place by the new residents results in the formation of these new quartiers (Estèbe 2004). Ironically, these new quartiers are reputed "popular" by the Parisians, but in fact, they are already gentrified. Working class and poor people are not frequent at all there.

At first sight, Parisian quartiers seem an ideal ambit for collective appropriation of sustainability policies. This is probably why the term quartier appears so frequently in French public policy-making. However, the political operability of this complex entity, which partially overlaps that of the neighborhood community in other countries like the United States, is very uncertain. Local authorities are developing a global view, which includes the quartier in actions of larger range. Rather than being only a planning zone, the quartier becomes the place where social policy and local economic action are fostered with the residents. Yet the residents barely take hold of these different initiatives, and local politicians do not easily accept to give up part of their decision-making power. So far, the quartier does not seem ready for helping participatory policies in Paris. It remains a kind of alibi, a mythical area for sociability and local community empowerment.

In remote areas of Ile-de-France Ceinture Verte, local authorities also strive to promote collective appropriation of sustainability policies by urban and rural residents. They set up *programmes agriurbains* (agriurban programs), which are now incorporated in the Ile-de-France master plan.[7] Farmers played a key role in the creation of Parc Naturel Régional du Vexin Français. They were among the first partners beside residents' associations. But this case is unique. In all the other PNRs, it didn't work, and community participation remains a myth, like in the Parisian districts.

In 2005, a report by the DREIF (Direction Régionale de l'Equipement d'Ile-de-France, or Paris Metropolitan Region Department of Public Works) focused on quality-of-life indicators in Ile-de-France, pointed out how important it is to consider the aspirations of the inhabitants and their subjective description of quality of life (DREIF 2005). The case of the quartiers, as well

[6] www.unil.ch/webdav/site/ouvdd/shared/Colloque2005/Communications/BGouvernance/B7/A.-L.Humain-Lamoure.pdf.

[7] www.iledefrance.fr/lactualite/conseil-regional/conseil-regional/le-projet-de-sdrif-en-ligne/.

as of the Trames Vertes et Bleues mentioned earlier in this chapter, show that when sustainability initiatives are implemented from a technocratic perspective, they fail to meet their objectives. They generate negative side effects because the population does not take ownership of these initiatives and doesn't share their objectives.

There is a gap between real environmental nuisance or pollution and the perception of quality of life (Moser and Weiss 2003). A survey of people's sensitivity to jet engine noise in the vicinity of Orly Parisian International Airport, realized by the Centre de Recherche sur l'Espace, les Transports, l'Environnement et les Institutions Locales (Research Center on Space, Transport, Environment, and Local Institutions), shows a huge discrepancy between measured sound intensity and perceived level of noise nuisance as expressed by the inhabitants (Faburel and Maleyre 2007). To determine what a "good" environment is, it is necessary to arbitrate between preserving the environment for future generations (what we can call intergenerational equity) and preserving social justice and quality of life today (what we can call spatial equity). By definition, sustainability policies should meet both (Mancebo 2007). But it is not always possible, as in the cases above mentioned, as policy acceptability by the concerned populations increases when spatial equity is preferred at intergenerational equity. To combine sustainability issues and social justice, it is necessary first to understand what determines these choices and how they articulate. The recurring question of which coordination mechanisms are needed at the local, regional, national, or international scale is central here.

CONCLUSION

Many works exist about environmental justice in planning, but very few consider that sustainable development can, paradoxically, jeopardize it (Faburel 2012; Mancebo 2011). In the Ile-de-France, quiet and nice unpolluted living environments have become *emblèmes* in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu and, as such, highly attractive – and expensive – areas. Thus, sustainability is an inclusive notion, which integrates social, cultural, and economic aspects of the societies concerned. It is impossible to determine whether a place is sustainable or not only by considering the factual date of environmental indicators. To combine social justice with sustainability, I have argued that policies in Ile-de-France should focus more on the social process of decision-making. It means considering combining individual and collective practices, planning options, public policies, and lobbies from two standpoints. First, sustainability cannot be limited to its environmental aspects. When the United Nations assigned the redaction of a report to the World Commission on Environment and Development

(WCED), which is the source of sustainable development, its mission statement mentions explicitly that its objectives are to find out how to reduce inequality and poverty without damaging the environment granted to the future generations (WCED 1987). Besides, *Our Common Future* integrates the notion of ecodevelopment, aimed at reconciling environmental constraints, social justice, and economic efficiency (Sachs 1993). The environment is only one of the three "pillars" – a simplistic image yet to discuss – of sustainable development together with social and economic aspects.

Secondly, the environment, far from being pure transcendence, is embedded in the societies. Human beings build a representation of the ecosystems they live in and call it "environment" out of the usages they make of their resources: takings (usage of air, water, and minerals), inputs (pollution), and alterations (housing, transport) (Mancebo 2010). Depending on the moment in a societies' history, all the "items" present in the ecosystems it occupies are not necessarily converted in resources. The knowledge we have of our environment changes continually: the medieval nature was not the same as ours, if only because they did not know the dynamics of the atmosphere or genetics. Therefore, environmental management cannot be reduced to physicochemical and biological variables embodying a "proper" functional integration of the ecosystems. The environment represents a more or less noisy neighborhood to which we have to adapt. A polluted environment can be a place where life is good. Conversely, an environment with clean air and clean water can be quite intolerable as evidenced by windswept segregated social housing complexes settled in the middle of nowhere, where the quality of life is low. Moreover, in France, instead of being perceived as amenities, green areas are often unappealing when coupled with public housing projects, like in Le Havre: They are considered dangerous areas for the people living outside the housing project, and perceived by the inhabitants of the project as a no man's land, a buffer zone created on purpose to separate them from the other inhabitants (Lenormand 2009).

The most significant challenge in implementing sustainability policies is their acceptability. In the Ile-de-France, sustainability policies developed around 2001. The phenomenon gained momentum after 2007 and the Grenelle de l'Environnement. Very different actors promoted them: Paris City Council, other communes, local authorities, regional council of Ile-de-France, and so forth, though the initiatives that resulted form these policies proved very technocratic, even with the varnish of pseudo-participatory procedures as with the quartiers. They often did not achieve their objectives because, from the beginning, the elaboration of these policies was totally disconnected from the inhabitants' and local communities' needs, desires, and definitions of

what a "good environment" is. It means that the participation of the inhabitants and local communities in the very definition of the actions, right from the beginning, is the condition of collective appropriation of sustainable policies and thus of their success.

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