Cités de transit: the urban treatment of poverty during decolonisation

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At a time of profound housing crisis in the 1950s, cités de transit *were adopted as a means of rehousing Algerian families from cleared* bidonvilles. *The background of this measure – at the crossroads between colonial legacy, a long history of education through housing, and the Algerian War – explains the enduring stigma associated with it.*

"Social rehabilitation projects", "short-term housing", "rehousing estates", "virtual prisons", "assistance measures", "sink estates", "family promotion estates"... All these terms have been used to designate *cités de transit* (literally "transition estates"). These contradictory epithets reveal the ambiguity of the objectives of this measure. The idea of socio-educational action (or, at the very least, housing that prepares and instructs its occupants), the temporary nature of such action and the reduced standards of the resulting buildings mean that the term *cités de transit* has a limited coherence. This is further underlined by the lack of architectural unity of these estates: three- or four-storey "permanent" tenement blocks, "mobile estates" comprising individual dwellings, or "Pailleron"-style[1] "interim estates" made from prefabricated materials. It was in the early 1970s, when the implementation of this measure was at its peak, that the administration defined *cités de transit* as "housing complexes dedicated to providing temporary accommodation for families in unstable situations, whose access to permanent housing cannot be considered without socio-educational action aimed at encouraging their social integration and promotion".[2]

A decade earlier, the Algerian War had precipitated the development of *cités de transit* as a tool to respond to the urgent situation created by the clearance of Algerian *bidonvilles* (shanty towns) in mainland France: they are the counterpart, for families, of the workers' hostels built to rehouse "isolated" men. This aspect of the development of *cités de transit* has only recently been reassessed with the uncovering of the trajectory, still remembered by some of the few remaining families who came to France via colonial immigration, that took them from "the shanty town to social housing".[3] Sociologists who were interested in the issue during the 1960s and 1970s (Pétonnet 1968; Liscia 1977; Tricart 1977; Pialoux and Théret 1979–1980) had, above all, considered *cités de transit* as places symptomatic of the production a new proletariat, or of experimentation with new modes of social domination. Accordingly, the context of decolonisation was left in the shadows, despite its considerable impact on the subsequent history of the *cités de transit*, in particular by revealing their contradictory characteristics: midway between an emergency measure and a long-term temporary

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[1] Translator's note: "Pailleron"-style buildings were prefabricated modular constructions with metal frameworks, concrete facade panels and wooden roof panels and partition walls. They take their name from a school in Rue Édouard Pailleron in Paris that was built using this method and subsequently burnt down following an arson attack.

[2] Circulars of 27 August 1971, adopted for the implementation of the French law of 10 July 1970 to facilitate the eradication of unsanitary housing, and of 19 April 1972, relating to *cités de transit*. This second text designates their target as "only those families who are facing social integration difficulties and who, as such, may risk being "rejected" by the populations that typically reside in social housing".

[3] Lallaoui, Medhi. 1993. *Du bidonville aux HLM*, Paris: Syros. Choukri Hmed's thesis also refers to the *cités de transit* as a countermeasure to hostels in the management of colonial immigration (Hmed 2006).

solution; between social action and police control; between spatial segregation and intentions of assimilation.

The background: social reform, colonial urban planning and urban renewal

We can trace the genesis of the *cités de transit* (Tricart 1977) back to projects for social transformation through architecture developed from the 19th century onwards, various forms of specialised housing produced to combat slums (Laé and Murard 1988) and experiments conducted in colonial territories in the second half of the 20th century.

The history of the *cités de transit* proper goes back initially to a number of successive emergencies. Through their temporary nature, they bear a resemblance to the huts built for the victims of World War II and the emergency housing built following Abbé Pierre's[4] appeal of February 1954. They are also part of the more mundane history of social housing built to reduced standards (Lopofa, Logécos, PSR, etc.[5]), intended to combat the housing crisis that severely affected mainland France after 1945.

The dispersed genealogy of *cités de transit* also takes us to the colonial territories, where various experiments with reduced-standards housing reserved for "native" populations were conducted. In Algeria in particular, from the mid-1950s, large numbers of what were known as "resettlement" estates were built to house inhabitants of the shanty towns that grew up – in Algiers especially – in the interwar period, such as the Mahieddine *bidonville*. The 300 homes, without water or sanitation, that compose the Djenan-el-Hassan estate[6] were built by the Algiers architect Roland Simounet in 1956 to rehouse inhabitants while they awaited access to modern housing.[7] It is not known, however, whether those relocated benefited from any real social action. With the need to organise urban growth intensified by the War of Independence, the construction of "Muslim estates" began, with homes built to lower standards than those of social housing destined for Europeans.[8] The Constantine Plan (1959–1962) governed the growth of these estates, implemented as one of the means mobilised in the battle to keep Algeria as a French colony.

Finally, the emergence of *cités de transit* can be traced back to a desire to effect social change through housing. The reform movement, which had promoted garden-city-style estates in the former Seine *département*[9] in the interwar years, had pushed for a strong link between housing and social, health and educational intervention – a link that can also be found, at a different scale, in the *cités de transit* (Burlen 1987). However, the garden-city estates were aimed at a broad urban workforce, and not its most marginal fringes.[10] Thus, it was only after the war that the need for socio-

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[4]   See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abb%C3%A9_Pierre.

[5]   Lopofa: *logements populaires familiaux* ("working-class family homes"); Logécos: *logements économiques et familiaux* ("economical family homes"); PSR: *programmes sociaux de relogement* ("social rehousing programmes").

[6]   De Maisonseul, Jean. 1980. "Djenan El Hassan. Relations espace/temps : ou redécouverte de l'échelle humaine chez Roland Simounet", *Technique & Architecture*, no. 329, p. 65; Soda, Kumiko. 2005. "La réalisation de la nouvelle agglomération de Timgad pendant la guerre d'Algérie : Roland Simounet et sa 'mission impossible' (1958–1960)", *Livraisons d'histoire de l'architecture*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 149–159.

[7]   Descloîtres, Robert et Reverdy, Jean-Claude. 1961. *L'Algérie des bidonvilles, le tiers-monde dans la cité*, La Haye: Mouton, p. 17; Reverdy, Jean-Claude. 1963. *Habitations nouvelles et urbanisation rapide. Conditions écologiques de l'adaptation au logement en Algérie*, Aix-en-Provence: Centre africain des sciences humaines appliquées (CASHA), p. 34.

[8]   Deluz-Labruyère, Joëlle. 2004. "Les grands ensembles ou l'impuissance de l'utopie. L'exemple d'Alger", in Frédéric Dufaux and Annie Fourcaut (dir.), *Le monde des grands ensembles*, Grâne: Creaphis.

[9]   Translator's note: The former Seine *département* (administrative division roughly equivalent to a county) covered Paris and the inner suburbs.

[10] In 1929, a medical officer close to Henri Sellier noted that: "the feeble-minded will unfortunately be left to their sad fate, as we do not yet have any family guidance centres" (Hazemann, R. H. 1929. *Le Service social municipal*, Paris: Éditions du Mouvement sanitaire, cited by J. Verdès-Leroux: "Pouvoir et assistance : cinquante ans de service

educational action was gradually integrated as a matter of course into the combat against slums. From the early 1950s, the construction of a few transition housing complexes was based on investigations into the psychology and sociability of the people, using the method proposed by urban planner Robert Auzelle.[11] The Château France camp created by Abbé Pierre in Noisy-le-Grand (in the eastern suburbs of Paris) in the winter of 1954 and entrusted to Father Joseph Wresinski, founder of ATD (now the International Movement ATD Fourth World), is another point of origin of the *cités de transit*. The original camp was provided with the first socio-educational equipment, an experiment that served as the basis for the "family promotion estate" project developed from 1959 onwards as "an instrument for recycling" populations with social handicaps.[12] The PACT (Propagande et Action Contre les Taudis – "Propaganda and Action Against Slums") associations were another key body involved in these experiments – notably in Oullins, near Lyon, where in 1957 they created a *cité de transit* comprising 300 dwellings.[13] From the 1960s, these experiments became more consistent, with the launch of more systematic urban renewal operations. Paris City Council and the prefecture of the Seine *département*, for instance, built 25 "ISTs" (*immeubles sociaux de transition* – "social transition estates"), such as the Cité des Marguerites in Nanterre (to the west of Paris), which contained 260 housing units with spartan comfort (only one water supply point and no central heating). The socio-educational action and stewardship of these buildings, located in the suburbs to rehouse the poorest residents of renovated Parisian districts, were supported by the prefecture, in conjunction with conventional supervision by the social services (Pétonnet 1968; Liscia 1977).

With the development of significant Algerian migration, some of these estates started to house a new population.[14] Moreover, the War of Independence led to the growth of slums in mainland France, resulting in an initial crystallization of the model for *cités de transit* combining several aspects of experiments under way.

social", *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, June 1976, nos. 2–3, p. 164).

[11] Auzelle, Robert. 1949. *Recherche d'une méthode d'enquête sur l'habitat défectueux*, Paris: Vincent, Fréal et Cie.

[12] Liscia, Claude. 1977. *L'enfermement des cités de transit*, CIMADE, pp. 3–10, for a critical reading of ATD's experiences.

[13] "La cité de transit d'Oullins", *Bulletin GIP* (bulletin of the Permanent Interministerial Group ["GIP" in French] for the eradication of unsanitary housing), no 1, pp. 19–20.

[14] The initial population of the PACT estate in Oullins was composed primarily of French families that had moved there from unsanitary housing. In 1971, however, 61% of its residents were foreigners, "particularly North Africans" ("La cité de transit d'Oullins", *art. cit.*). Colette Pétonnet describes the ethnically diverse nature of the IST in the Paris suburbs that she studied. Built in 1962, it housed French families alongside foreigners, "Muslims", "Jews" and "*pieds-noirs*" (Europeans who settled in North Africa) from Algeria (Pétonnet 1968).

Cité 51 (built by Cetrafa, 1966), along the main road serving the Port of Gennevilliers © M. Hervo

Slum clearance, Act I: decolonisation and crystallisation of the *cités de transit* model

The supervision of Algerian families who settled in France in the early 1950s had been entrusted mainly to Christian-inspired associations, subsidised by the French interior ministry, with the goal of making families interested in the continued existence of French Algeria. In the mid-1950s, the action favoured by the members of the Études Sociales Nord-Africaines ("North African Social Studies") group, headed by Father Ghys, was the dispersal of families combined with with home economics classes held by local associations – a classic form of education provided to working families by charitable institutions since the 19th century. Accordingly, Mrs Belpeer, the wife of the chairman of the ATOM[15] association and herself a "Muslim", considered that "many women in France are so expert in household matters that they could teach basic culinary skills, personal hygiene and sewing to these women who lack knowledge and are helpless when faced with the problems of modern life".[16] Between 1954 and 1958, several experiments that prefigured the *cités de transit* were conducted in provincial France, on a smaller sample of carefully selected "North African" families who benefited from strong social support.[17]

The Algerian War and developments associated with the intensification of migration to mainland France gave a new twist to these early attempts. From 1959, slum clearance became of the utmost urgency from a political and security-related standpoint. The specialised associations mentioned above saw their skills mobilised in projects involving more rehousing operations, and accepted a temporary amendment to the principle of the dispersal of families. In Lyon, the Maison de l'Afrique du Nord ("North African Institute"), whose activities began in the early 1950s with the creation of a health centre, an advice and information service and accommodation centres, was now working in

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[15] ATOM: Aide aux Travailleurs d'Outre-Mer ("Aid for Overseas Workers"). This association, founded in 1950, was the main assistance organisation for "French Muslims from Algeria" (FMAs) in Marseille.

[16] *Cahiers nord-africains,* nos. 35–36, December 1953–January 1954, p. 47.

[17] Archives nationales, F1a 4813. "Situation des FMA, Comité d'action interministériel pour les affaires sociales musulmanes en métropole, le 4 décembre 1956". In Lyon in 1956, "houses intended as transition dwellings for 12 Muslim families" were built "on land rented from the Compagnie Nationale du Rhône. These families, who were already living in the region, were carefully selected as being particularly likely to integrate into the housing context of mainland France".

conjunction with the Sonacotral[18] and built several *cités de transit* in Vaulx-en-Velin (in the eastern suburbs of Lyon).[19] In the Paris region, where Algerian slum clearance became a government priority in the fight against the FLN, the changes were even more marked. The action implemented was claimed to show families from the shanty towns that they were part of French society while at the same time putting them out of reach of nationalist militants, for whom the mazes of shacks of the *bidonvilles* constituted a shelter that impeded the action of the prefecture of police (the authority responsible for policing in the Seine *département* at the time). The *cités de transit* concept was chosen to accelerate the clearance of the shanty towns in Nanterre and Gennevilliers (to the north-west of Paris), populated mostly by Algerians, as well as some Moroccans. A number of estates comprising light, single-storey prefabricated houses were built by the prefecture of the Seine *département* in Nanterre between 1959 and 1961 and managed by Sonacotral.[20]

In keeping with the action already taken in the shanty towns, the principle of socio-educational action (literacy, childcare, etc.) was continued. However, the social support provided seems relatively limited in practice. In certain cases, the local social workers would intervene; in others, this role was played by volunteer associations. For example, in the Cité des Grands Prés, it was the Géanarp[21] association – founded by young residents of Courbevoie (to the west of Paris) who were already working in the shanty towns – who insisted on the creation of a welfare centre and furthermore led this project for a number of years. The person most present in the day-to-day lives of residents of the *cités de transit* remained, however, the estate manager, whose role it was to collect rents, ensure the maintenance of communal areas and prevent conflict between neighbours. These managers would keep an eye on comings and goings on the estate, threaten those who paid their rent late with eviction, and closely monitor residents. As with workers' hostels, the managers recruited were former officers of the Department for Algerian Affairs, and this remained the case up to the 1980s (Hmed 2006).

In the wake of Algerian independence, the western Paris suburbs were the setting for a shift in policy that once again affected the treatment of Algerian families housed in *cités de transit*. The management of some of these estates was transferred to Cetrafa (Centres de Transit Familiaux – "Family Transition Centres"), an association formed a year earlier in Gennevilliers by the prefect of the Seine *département*. Its board of directors included former prefects and employers' representatives, as well as – right up to the early 1980s – Marc Roberrini, a key figure of the Parisian slum clearance operations and a recognised expert on colonial population management owing to experience gained in Morocco. A social worker who had worked in Algeria was recruited in March 1964 to organise socio-educational action (Liscia 1977). From the mid-1960s, Cetrafa officials were in favour of ending Algerian immigration. Their *cités de transit* were from this point presented as housing many unassimilable families who, it was felt, should be sent back to their country of origin. The socio-educational action seemed to have been abandoned at this time in favour of an increased involvement of estate managers, and rehousing no longer appeared to be a priority, despite the fact that, at the very same moment, the revival of slum clearance operations, in a new context, was leading to the proliferation of *cités de transit* and the spread of the transition model forged during the Algerian War.

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[18] Sonacotral: Société Nationale de Construction pour les Travailleurs Algériens ("National Construction Company for Algerian Workers"), created in 1956.

[19] *Bulletin GIP*, no. 8, April 1973, pp. 6–9. The association subsequently became La Maison du Travailleur Étranger ("The Foreign Workers' Institute") and manages the Arc-en-Ciel and Mhraba estates.

[20] The estates in question are the following: Les Grands Prés (101 dwellings), André Doucet (90), Les Pâquerettes (30). Only Les Potagers (66) contained permanent dwellings.

[21] Géanarp: Groupe d'Études et d'Action pour les Nord-Africains de la Région Parisienne ("Research and Action Group for North Africans in the Paris Region").

Cité du Pont-de-Bezons (built by Sonacotra, 1972) in Nanterre © M. Hervo

Slum clearance, Act II: the formalisation of *cités de transit*

From the end of the 1960s, the problem of shanty towns took on a new dimension with the arrival of many families, from Portugal in particular, and clearance operations now no longer only concerned populations of colonial origin. The law known as "Loi Vivien", of 10 July 1970, established reinforced procedures for eradicating unsanitary housing and aimed to clear the largest shanty towns within two years.[22] It relied, in particular, on the *cités de transit* as a tool for rehousing those displaced by slum clearance, as it was the only solution that could provide effective action. The Sonacotral, later Sonacotra,[23] remained the principal operator and extended a specific form of the *cités de transit* to all foreigners,[24] namely *cités provisoires* ("provisional estates"), intended to be demolished after 10 years, which were adapted to an immigrant presence that was imagined to be only temporary.

From 1966, a working group led by André Trintignac brought together different bodies with experience in the field. This group's report, based partly on the "scientific" approach of ATD, produced a categorisation of families according to their possibilities of "integration", partly linked to ethnic considerations[25] (Blanc-Chaléard 2008). However, the involvement in this rationalisation exercise of organisations previously specialised in social work to assist North Africans had a clear influence on the development of this classification. Although the report stressed the need to rehouse the most "suitable" families directly in conventional social housing, the symbolic issue of the

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[22] French law no. 70-612 of 10 July 1970, known as the "Loi Vivien", to facilitate the eradication of unsanitary housing.

[23] The decree of 27 July 1963 renamed Sonacotral (Société Nationale de Construction pour les Travailleurs Algériens) as Sonacotra (Société Nationale de Construction pour les Travailleurs).

[24] This change in social welfare institutions, namely from dealing only with "French Muslims from Algeria" to dealing with all foreign immigrants, was observed for both workers' hostels and the public administration (Viet, Vincent. 1998. *La France immigrée : construction d'une politique, 1914-1997*, Paris: Fayard).

[25] Centre des Archives Contemporaines (CAC) 780 447-3, Ministère de l'Équipement et du Logement, Direction de la Construction; Ministère des Affaires Sociales, Direction de la Population et des Migrations, *Pour une politique concertée du relogement et de l'action socio-éducative appliquée à la résorption des bidonvilles*, typed document, May 1967. (Blanc-Chaléard 2008, p. 195).

eradication of the Nanterre shanty towns, home to more than 500 families, led to the hurried rehousing of these families in *cités de transit*, whatever their supposed level of adaptation. Between 15 June and 10 July 1971, over 350 families were systematically rehoused in estates specially built for this purpose.

In response to the extensive use of the measure, the French government eventually issued a circular (dated 19 April 1972) specifying a "coherent policy" that sought to "restore the notion of transition", for which the ideal model would be a permanent construction, allocated for a limited period of time for the purpose of transition only and managed by the regular social housing agencies.[26] While the Gutenberg and Pont-de-Bezons estates in Nanterre each comprised 200 dwellings, the recommended maximum size of new transition estates was 80 homes. The circular also emphasised the need to build estates close to town and city centres. Once again, the exceptions to the rule were to be found in Nanterre and nearby Gennevilliers, where, as the words of one young man of Algerian origin from the Gutenberg estate attest, isolation is pushed to the limit:
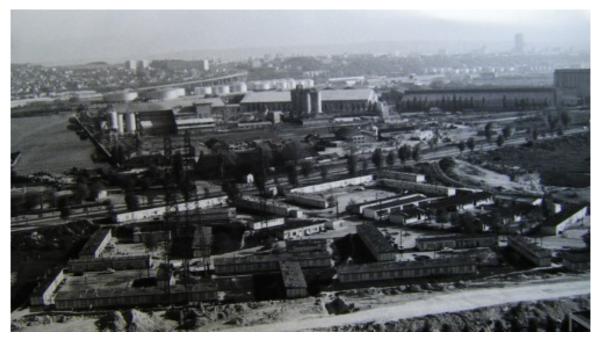
> "We soon realised we were put there to separate us from the French. On one side was wasteland; on the other, a paper mill; behind, the Seine; and in front, a riot-police barracks. The French daren't come near us – they're scared and call our estate 'Algiers the White.'"[27]

In Gennevilliers, the *cité de transit* located in the Port district was so isolated and remote that a school was built within the estate. Finally, the need for socio-educational activities was reaffirmed as a key element guaranteeing the effectiveness of these measures, by seeking to refocus the actions of social workers on teaching the standards of behaviour expected of a tenant who wishes to be relocated quickly in social housing.[28] The text of the circular, however, remained vague enough to leave room for various theories that were fashionable at the time, such as adapting to French life, preserving cultures of origin, or activities inspired by community development methods. In 1967, Sonacotra launched the creation of the association LPS (Logement et Promotion Sociale – "Housing and Social Promotion") to boost activities on some of its estates. LPS innovated by hiring young people who grew up on these estates as coordinators, but these new recruits soon found themselves in conflict with their employer. In the Hauts-de-Seine *département* (immediately to the west of Paris), it was observed that this line of action, now described as "socio-cultural", was gradually being abandoned.

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[26] Circular of 19 April 1972, *op. cit.*

[27] François Lefort. 1980. *Du bidonville à l'expulsion. Itinéraire d'un jeune Algérien de Nanterre*, Paris: CIEMM, p. 101.

[28] "Du bon usage des cités de transit", *Bulletin GIP*, no. 4, pp. 4–5.

Bird's-eye view of Cité 51, along the main road through the Port of Gennevilliers © M. Hervo

As *cités de transit* were being used as a tool for the clearance not only of shanty towns, but also of unsanitary housing in general, transition accommodation began to spring up all over France during the 1970s. The total number of such housing units was estimated at 15,000 in 1977, spread between 200 estates, two thirds of which were built after 1970, and which were home to around 120,000 people (Tricart 1977). In 1971, before this geographical spread across France took place, the Hauts-de-Seine *département* contained half of all such estates built in the Paris region, and over a quarter of the national total. The origins of the residents of these estates reflected the populations of the former slums and shanty towns. In the Paris region, residents were overwhelmingly Algerian and Moroccan in Hauts-de-Seine, while those housed in the *département* of Seine-Saint-Denis (north-east of Paris) were mainly Portuguese, with significant numbers of Spaniards and Yugoslavs. In the rest of France, a higher proportion of French families were to be found, as was the case in Rouen (Laé and Murard 1985) and Le Mans, where most of those rehoused were farm workers with serious social difficulties.[29]

An interminable transition: the roots of contemporary urban stigma?

By the end of the slum clearance operations in the mid-1970s, most remaining residents stayed in their accommodation longer than the two years initially scheduled as the standard transition period. The fact of the matter was that those with greater economic and social resources left their estates, while the rest stayed. As most assessments confirm, this was first and foremost because there were not enough rehousing offers,[30] but it was also due to residents' attachment to the social relations that had developed since their time in the shanty towns, or alternatively to save money, in accordance with the initial migration plan. In this way, a kind of sorting process operated, which transformed initial fears concerning the unsuitability of former slum residents into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The buildings were poorly maintained and rapidly deteriorated.[31] There were concerns about rising numbers of conflicts between neighbours, unemployment, and a shift towards dependence on welfare assistance. The case of the Hauts-de-Seine *département* illustrates an exaggerated version

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[29] "Il y avait quatre cités de transit au Mans", *Ouest-France, édition Pays de la Loire*, Tuesday 28 November 2006.

[30] "Les cités de transit et leur avenir en région parisienne", *Bulletin GIP*, no. 18, October–December 1975, pp. 14–19.

[31] When two fires broke out in a *cité de transit* in Saint-Denis in April 1978, the French daily newspaper *L'Humanité* criticised the "Sonacotra matchboxes" (28 April 1978).

of the typical drift towards a sustainable spatial segregation. From the mid-1970s onwards, Cetrafa would abandon the administrative management of its housing stock. Residents went on strikes against rent increases and the unsanitary nature of dwellings. Invariably, these estates were described as "ghettos" that were victims of various social ills – unemployment, crime, drugs and AIDS – that were rampant among young men. As early as the mid-1960s, the anthropologist Colette Pétonnet noted in her investigation into an IST in the southern Paris suburbs, the habitual use of stigmatising names to describe the place and its inhabitants: "mafia", "Chicago", "*La Zone*"[32], "underworld", "savages" (Pétonnet 1968, p. 12). This stigma, the product of a specific type of housing measure combined with the social illegitimacy of the populations it accommodated, was fuelled by the action taken to eradicate the *bidonvilles*.

The *cités de transit* resulting from these slum clearance operations were only wound up in the mid-1980s. The murder of a young resident of the Gutenberg transition estate in Nanterre, Abdennbi Guemiah, attracted public attention to the situation in late 1982.[33] The prefect and secretary of state for immigrants went to the estate and made the winding-up of the *cités de transit* a new aspect of the Mitterrand-era policy concerning immigrants. The clearance operations would take another three years, because of a reluctance to accommodate these stigmatised families in regular social housing, against a backdrop of growing xenophobia with regard to North Africans. The youth of these estates sought to speed up the rehousing process by taking matters into their own hands and creating a residents' committee, at the time when the Marche pour l'Égalité ("March for Equality") movement emerged.

From the 1970s onwards, the stigma that these activists were fighting against spread beyond the *cités de transit* to the large social housing estates that are now in crisis. The Habitat et Vie Sociale ("Housing and Social Life") programme, a precursor to current urban policy that was developed during the 1970s, was probably an important step in combating the stigma: a greater emphasis was placed on developing activities on these large estates, echoing the attempts to revive socio-educational action in the *cités de transit*. Accounts of volunteer social workers' experiences (from the association LPS) bear a close resemblance to the views expressed concerning the "problem of the suburbs"[34] several decades later.

The *cités de transit* formed part of the measures devised for "French Muslims from Algeria"[35] that were subsequently extended to other groups of foreigners, and which, through their formalisation, concerned other populations deemed to be "unsuitable". Among the many and varied experiences of transition, the "colonial legacy" aspect appears nowhere so clearly, however, as in the Hauts-de-Seine area: here, the intensity of tensions during the Algerian War, the supervision of populations by personnel trained in colonial contexts, and the undermining of families following decolonisation have profoundly marked the working-class towns of this *département*. Elsewhere, the "family promotion estates" built for *harkis*[36] also persisted until the 1990s, despite the winding-up of many of these estates as a result of revolts in 1975. Some transition estates have evolved less dramatically and are being gradually converted in order to diversify their populations.[37] Often, recent urban renewal operations have completed this normalisation process. But the most lasting

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[32] Translator's note: the expression "*La Zone*" referred to the area around Paris' former city fortifications, now occupied by the Périphérique ring road, where construction was not allowed. Despite this restriction, makeshift housing and slums grew up in this no-man's-land between Paris and its suburbs.

[33] URL: http://www.ina.fr/economie-et-societe/vie-sociale/video/CAB8202254101/cite-transit.fr.html.

[34] "Chelles : la cité de transit et les grands ensembles face à la délinquance", *Bulletin GIP*, no. 21, July–September 1976, pp. 16–19.

[35] This legal and administrative category was used to designate the "native" population of the Algerian *départements*, preserving their personal status while formally conferring upon them equal rights (Order of 7 March 1944 concerning the status of French Muslims from Algeria).

[36] Translator's note: Muslims from Algeria who fought for the French armed forces in the Algerian War of Independence.

[37] "Il y avait quatre cités de transit au Mans", *art. cit.*

consequence of the *cités de transit* experiment[38] appears to lie in the transfer of attention from transition estates to large, run-down social housing estates, which are viewed with an eye that is simultaneously concerned and stigmatising, not just by a few specialists, but also by "neighbourhood reformers"[39] whose numbers and influence are set only to increase.

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[38] See: Olivier Legros, "'Roma villages' or the reinvention of *cités de transit*", *Metropolitics*, 3 January 2011. URL: http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Les-villages-roms-ou-la.html.

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Further reading:

Jean-François Laé and Numa Murard. 2012. *Deux générations dans la débine. Enquête dans la pauvreté ouvrière*, Paris: Bayard.

> Thirty years after their preliminary investigation of the estates built in haste to accommodate those evicted from cleared shanty towns and slums, the authors return to Elbeuf, near Rouen in Normandy, to meet with former residents of the *cité de transit*. They observed the changing patterns of family life, the perpetuation of poverty and adaptation to economic hardship.

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