

# Social mix policies in the French Eco-districts: Discourses, Policies and Social impacts

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6 th Jeffrey Cook Workshop in Desert Architecture ZeroPlus Energy Settlements

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# Social mix and affordable housing policy

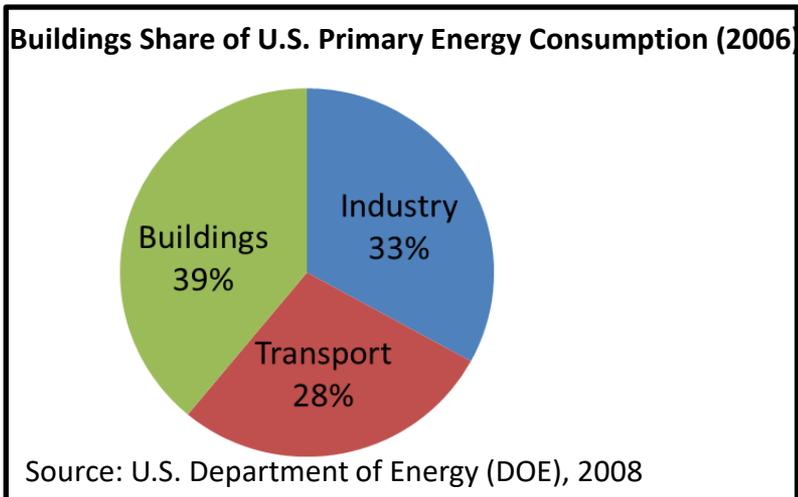


Riots in a social housing neighborhood in Lyon in 1981

Vast programs of public housing built in the 60's and 70's  
(3 million dwellings)

- Since the 1980's, social mix came to be viewed as a means to regenerate social housing estates in Western Europe (Atkinson, 2008)
- In France, the national urban renewal program (Programme National de Renovation Urbaine) launched in 2003, stated the aim of "encouraging social mix and sustainable development.
- 2000: National funding system for subsidizing public housing construction (SRU Law)

# “Green” building\* development



- 2002: EU Energy Performance of Building Directive
- 2005: BBC ‘green’ building certification
- 2007: The “20-20-20” targets to cut GHG emissions by 2020

\*“Green” or sustainable building is meant to reduce the ecological footprint of buildings on the environment and make them healthier for occupants

# ‘Green’ Building development in France

- Eco-district plan called “Eco-quartier” (2007)

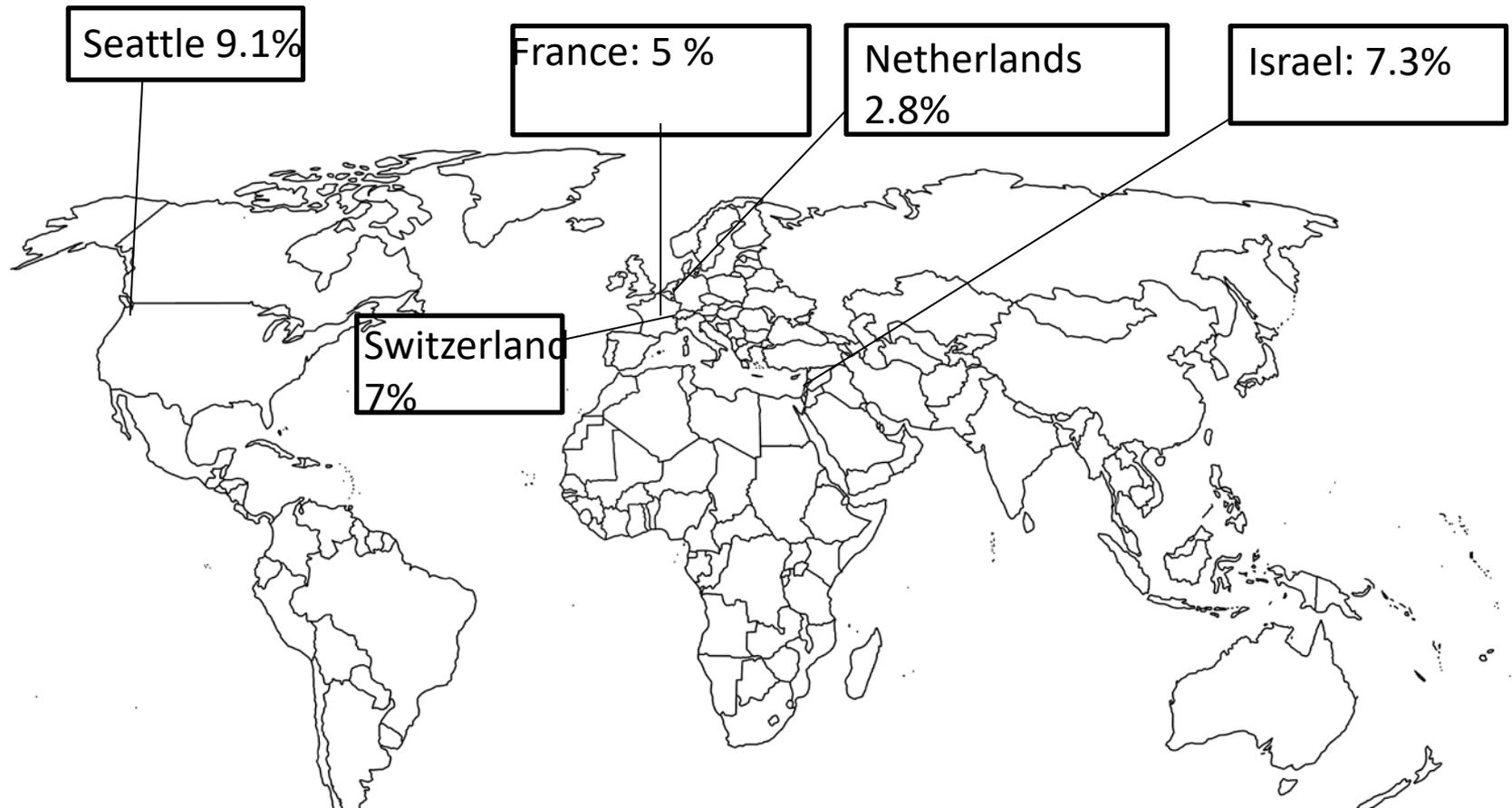


First French Eco-quartier, Grenoble

- 186 labeled eco-quartiers
  - 250 in labeling process
  - More than 2000 applications
  - A total of 55000 housing units – and half are public social housing
- National funding system for subsidizing public housing construction (the SRU law-2000)
  - France benefits from European funds earmarked for the improvement of the energy performance of public social housing, as part of the European Energy Performance of Buildings Directive-EPBD (2002; 2010)

# “Green”=Unaffordable?

- Added construction costs are typically small (2% on average, Berry 2007) ‘green’ building often has a higher sale price.



# 'Green' value and gentrification

➡ “Gentrification” (Banzhaf and McCormick, 2007; Checker, 2011)

Process whereby well to do families or individuals invest in the construction or renovation of properties in a particular area, thus raising property values but often displacing local low-income residents and small businesses (Clark, 2005).

For example, the first European eco-neighborhoods were mainly directed to the middle classes.

➡ Serve the municipalities wish for 'gentrification (to collect more taxes and reduce social expenses) but often also pursue wider construction activities and population growth

# Research goal

- Our research aims to understand whether French policy tools do actually promote social diversity and affordability in eco-districts

# Methodology

We selected three (though not geographically) representative case studies according to the municipality's socio-economics data



THE THREE CASE STUDIES FOR FIELDWORK IN FRANCE.

Map: Machline, 2017

- A database of 17 eco-quartier
- From this database we selected three representative case studies
- Field work in France in 2015 and 2016
- Data collection and document analysis
- Semi-structured interviews
- Post occupancy surveys

# Eco-district guidelines

- Eco-quartier framework guidelines (French Ministry of Housing and Sustainable Development, 2009) :

-1st dimension: Process

-2nd dimension: Living environment and use

“Implement the conditions for social and generational diversity and solidarity”

“Ensure that housing location and prices are appropriate to household income”

-3rd dimension: Territorial dynamics

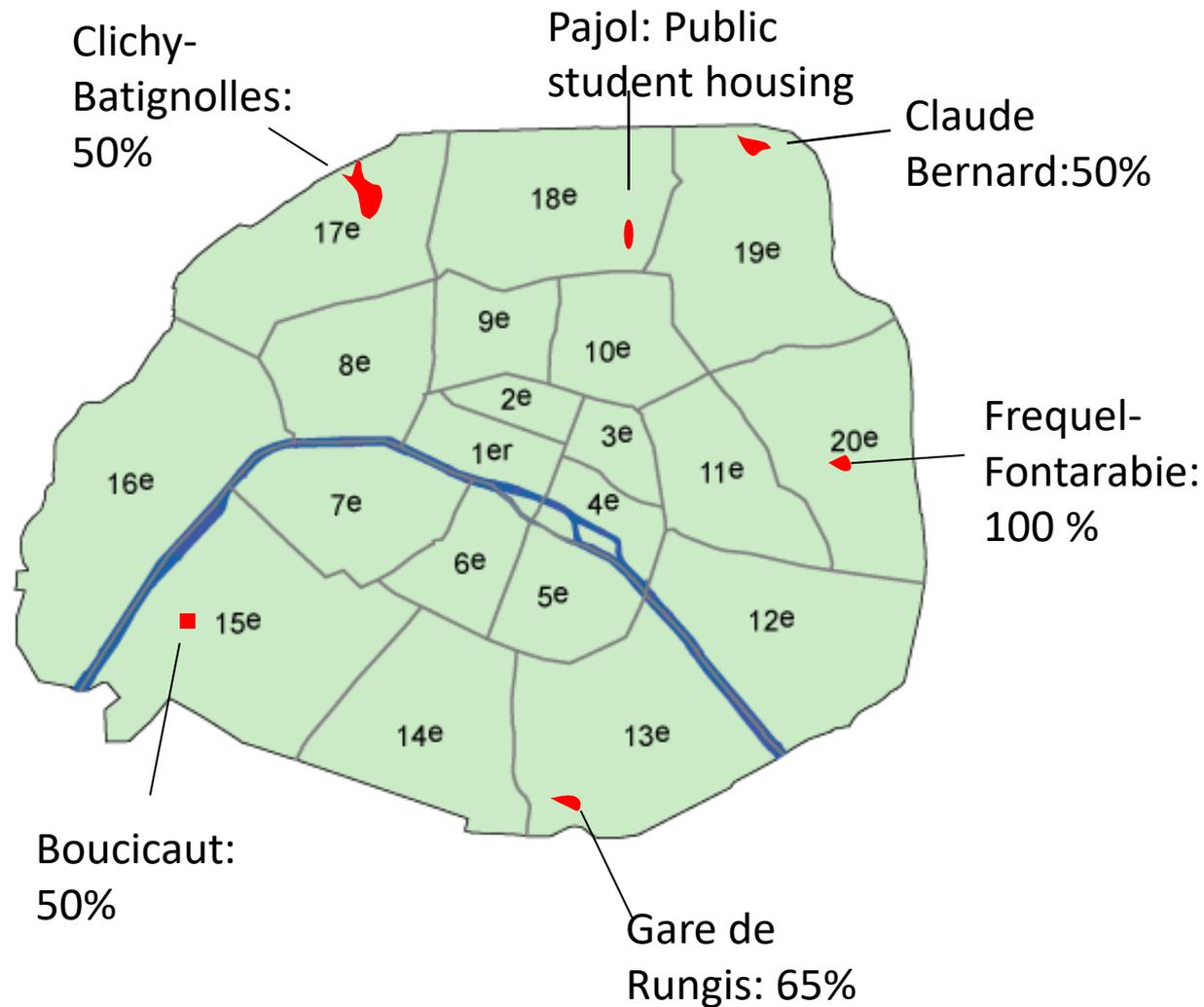
-4th dimension: Fight against climate change

- Head of sustainable planning unit- Ministry of Housing and Sustainable Development:

“We want to promote the idea of social mix and avoid speculation so the aim is not to sell the apartments at higher prices. We want to give an opportunity to all to live in an Eco-quartier”

“If there is a lack of public social housing in the locality, the municipality should plan an important share of affordable housing in the eco-quartier ”  
(Urban Solidarity Act, 2000)

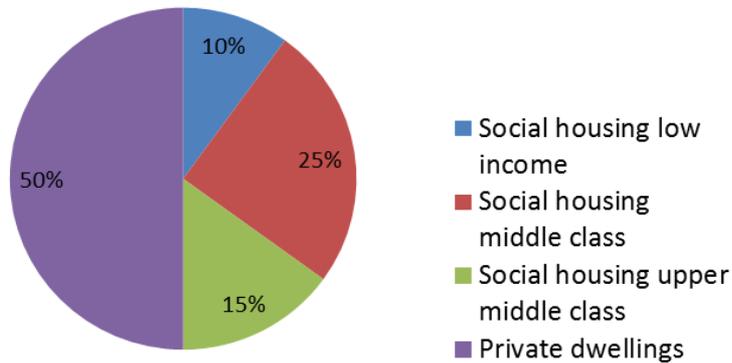
# The major city: Paris



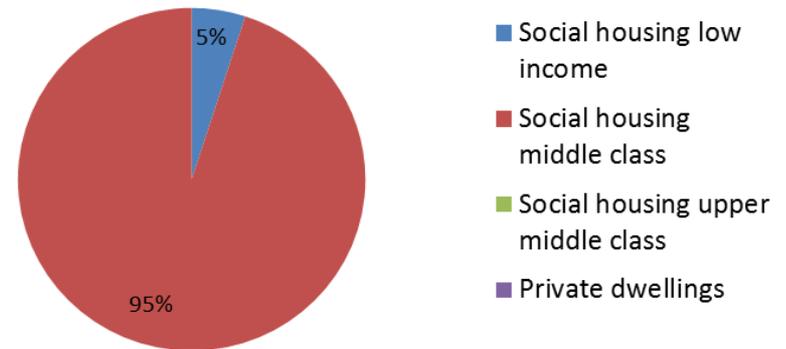
Share of social housing in Paris eco-quartiers

# Share of social housing by categories in the Parisian eco-districts

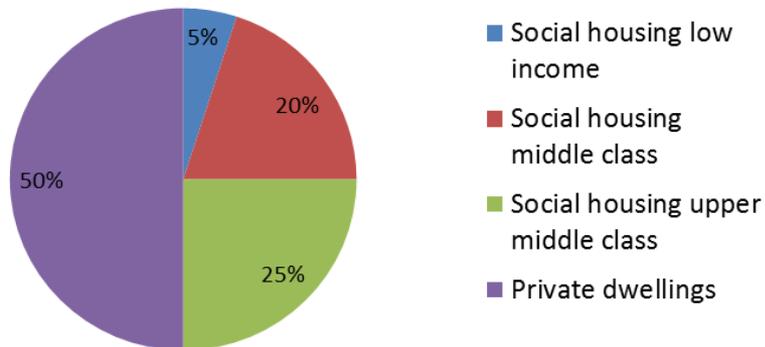
## Clichy-Batignolles



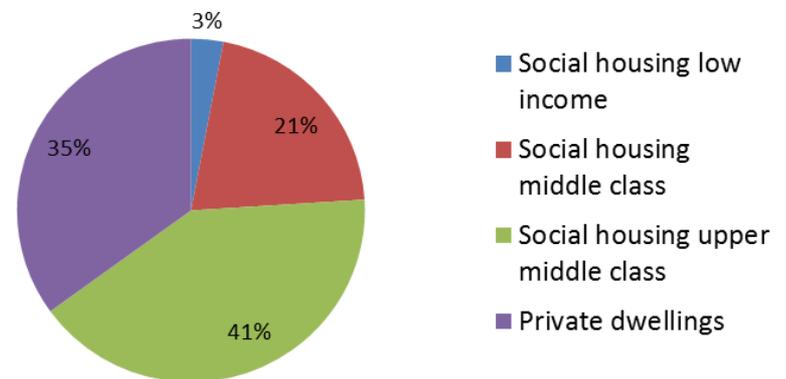
## Frequel Fontarabie



## Claude Bernard



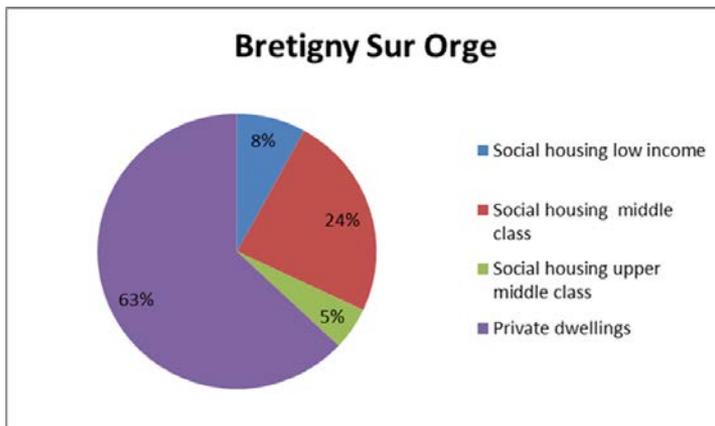
## Gare de Rungis



# A medium-income city: Bretigny sur Orge



The Clause Bois Badeau eco-quartier  
Source: Machline, 2016



Housing distribution in the Clause Bois Badeau ecoquartier  
Source: Municipality of Bretigny Sur Orge, 2016

- 21,837 inhabitants
- Plan: 2400 housing units, 30% social housing
- By 2016: 700 housing were built, 46% social housing
- According to the development company's project manager, the reason for building 46% social housing – rather than 30% as originally planned – was the 2008 real estate crisis. Some promoters had to cancel their participation, and thus, to implement the project, the socialist-led municipality decided to plan more social dwellings, as social housing companies are funded by the State.

# Reims: Eco-quartiers for the poor?

- Eco-quartier located in a vast social housing neighborhood (with a population of 20,000)



Pays de France neighborhood-Reims, 2008

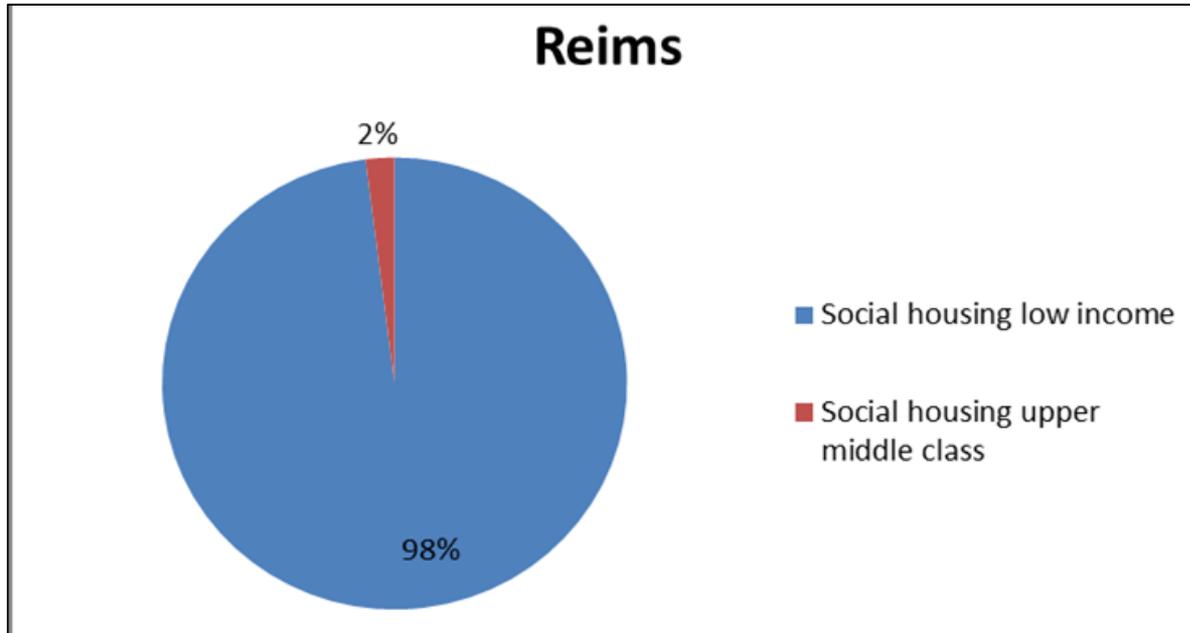
- About 4,000 residents
- Funded by the E.U.



THE PAYS DE FRANCE ECO-QUARTIER  
Photo: Machline, 2016

# Eco-quartiers for the poor?

- In Reims, the eco-quartiers will improve living conditions but remain irrelevant to social diversity.



SOCIAL HOUSING DISTRIBUTION IN THE PAYS DE FRANCE NEIGHBORHOOD IN REIMS

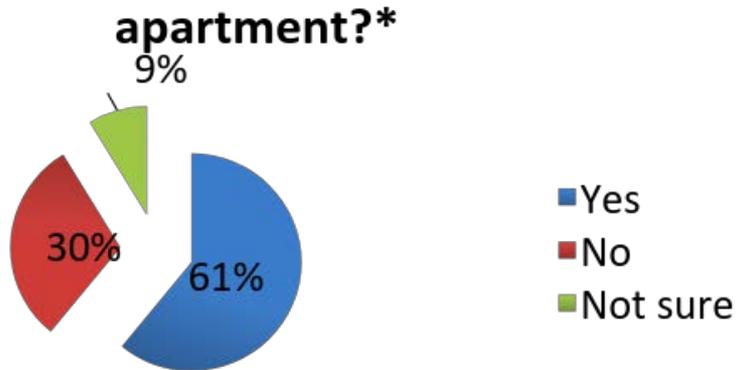
Source: Municipality of Reims, 2016

- Only 17 social housing units for upper middle class were built and remained empty, as their rent is even higher than in the private sector. Furthermore, the image of the neighborhood reduced the apartments' attractiveness.

# Low energy housing?

## *A significant energy efficiency improvement*

**Do you have the feeling that your energy consumption has decreased since you live in your new apartment?\***



- But not lower bills, due to higher maintenance costs
- Actual energy efficiency targets not reached:
- In Frequel-Fontarabie, social housing companies declared a consumption that was twice as high as the standard maximum of 50 KWhep/m<sup>2</sup> and in Boucicaut it was similar.

- Nonetheless, BBC buildings represent a long-term reduction of 80% in energy consumption compared to social dwelling units built in the 1960s-70s.

# Conclusions

- The specificity of the French eco-districts remains the social mix requirement, countering socio-spatial segregation
- The eco-quartiers are usually located in substandard districts of large cities or average income municipalities, and their role is to attract middle class people, seen as guarantors of social cohesion
- More generally, in affluent cities, where property prices are high (like in Paris, its well-to-do suburbs and some large cities), municipalities build eco-quartiers in substandard neighborhoods, to attract middle class families.
- In average cities, like Bretigny sur Orge, municipalities may implement more social housing than planned, especially if they are socialist municipalities and thus less reluctant to host low-income populations in eco-quartiers.
- In the poorest French towns, like Reims, the eco-quartiers will improve living conditions, but remain irrelevant to the social mix. In other words, poor and middle-income municipalities build a large share of social housing in their eco-quartiers, due to a lack of private investors willing and able to invest their own capital in such municipalities.
- Attracting well-to-do residents is only possible in Paris, its closer suburbs and other affluent cities, where the share of low-income populations in eco-quartiers is minimal.

Thank you!

# Appendices

# Public social housing

## Eligibility and rents in public social housing

Target	Monthly net income limit for family of 3		Subsidized monthly Rent ceiling
	Paris	Elsewhere in France	
Low income	€2 500	€1 800	€4.22 to €5.8/m <sup>2</sup>
Middle-class	€4 100	€2 900	€4.73 to 6.9/m <sup>2</sup>
Upper-middle class	€5 400	€3 800	€7.11 to €12.8/m <sup>2</sup>

Sources: L'Union Nationale pour l'Habitat, 2011



# “Green” premia in the Eco-quartier

Eligibility and rents in public social housing (managed by public or semi-public companies)

Target	Monthly net income limit for family of 3		Subsidized monthly Rent ceiling	Rents in Claude Bernard “green” affordable housing (Private sector: €17/m <sup>2</sup> )	
	Paris	Elsewhere in France			
Low income	€2 500	€1 800	€4.22 to €5.8/m <sup>2</sup>		€6.7/m <sup>2</sup>
Middle-class	€4 100	€2 900	€4.73 to 6.9/m <sup>2</sup>		€7.8/m <sup>2</sup>
Upper-middle class	€5 400	€3 800	€7.11 to €12.8/m <sup>2</sup>	€14/m <sup>2</sup>	

Sources: L'Union Nationale pour l'Habitat, 2011; Own data

-Private dwellings in the eco-quartiers: Prices are 20% higher than the district average