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SHORT ABSTRACT & EXTENDED ABSTRACT

**Residential Mobility of Immigrants and Suburbanization in France:
A Matter of Distance**

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Abstract – 250 words

This presentation focuses on the suburban residential mobility of immigrants in the Paris region. 40% of immigrants in France now live in this region, where the suburbanization of the immigrant population has increased sharply since the 2000s. Linking the literature on the residential integration of immigrants - often focused on the centers of large cities - with research on the suburbanization of poverty - often focused on social classes or income levels rather than on the migration trajectory -, the presentation will aim to answer the following questions: how far away from Paris do immigrants settle in the suburbs? Which groups move the farthest, and why? To answer these questions, the analysis draws on the analysis of individual data from the 2013 and 2018 population censuses and on different regression models to analyze the distances of residential mobility of immigrants (gravity model, linear regression and quantile regression). The results show that suburban residential mobility distance is associated with multiple individual sociodemographic factors, as well as country of birth. In particular, immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa are characterized by longer residential mobility distances, even after controlling for different socio-demographic variables. These findings call for a discussion of the role of economic integration and residential preferences of different groups, but also that of ethno-racial inequalities and discrimination in access to the housing market in the Paris region. It also raises the question of inequalities in the social, economic and environmental costs of mobility that result from these moves, particularly for everyday mobility.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Topic

This presentation focuses on contemporary residential mobility dynamics of immigrants, and more precisely on immigrant suburbanization in the French context. The suburbanization of immigrants has been long studied by sociologists, geographers or economists interested in the spatial assimilation of this population. Since the work of Park et al. (1925), many scholars have empirically documented and measured trends in suburbanization and location choice of immigrants, especially in the US (Alba et al., 1999 ; Dawkins, 2009 ; Massey, 2008). More recently, the same dynamics have been observed in several European countries (Simpson and Finney, 2009 ; Teixeira, 2007). In France, some studies have shown a double dynamic of spatial dispersal and social diversification of the immigrant population at the national scale, which partly results from a suburbanization dynamic in the Paris region (Fromentin, 2021). Indeed, about four out of ten immigrants now live in Paris urban area. This proportion attests to the central role of the Paris region in the international migration system. This region also plays a pivotal role in the national migration system, with intense residential mobility flows with other regions (arrival of young people at the beginning of their working lives, departure of families and retirees). These two mobility dynamics have been reinforced and transformed with the metropolization of the region. However, studies on the socio-spatial transformations of immigration in the Paris region have not directly addressed the links between the metropolization of the Paris region and the peri-urbanization of immigrants, nor the differentiated effects of metropolization dynamics within the immigrant population. In this paper, we aim to answer two main questions:

- How far away from Paris do immigrants settle in the suburbs?
- Which groups move the farthest, and why?

Theoretical focus

This presentation draws on two main literatures, which are linked together to provide a better understanding of the dynamics of immigrant suburbanization. First, immigrant suburbanization is often studied in the perspective of spatial assimilation, as suburban residential mobility is frequently associated with homeownership (status attainment) and less ethnic concentration (Dawkins, 2009 ; Waters and Jiménez, 2005) . In the spatial assimilation framework, geographic mobility of immigrants aligns with their social and economic mobility, with the assumption that suburbanization is a sign of spatial assimilation to the mainstream society (Park et al., 1925). The place stratification perspective complicates or even contradicts this logic by highlighting structural barriers to access to certain residential areas - including suburban areas -, such as native attitudes towards immigrants (McAvay, 2018), discrimination in housing and lending or other institutional barriers (Massey and Denton, 1993). Logan and Alba find support for the place stratification theory in their study of racial and ethnic differences in access to suburban places characterized by their income levels (Logan and Alba, 1993). Farrell also shows that high levels of suburbanization are not associated with residential integration for all immigrant groups, “underscoring a persistent and pernicious colour line in the USA that transcends one’s country-of-origin” (Farrell, 2016, p. 73).

The literature on the suburbanization of poverty offers a different narrative. In particular, it points out that suburbanization is not necessarily associated with upward residential mobility (Rutan, Hepburn and Desmond, 2023). The suburbanization of poverty marks a fundamental sociodemographic shift in the US since the 1990s (Lichter, Parisi and Taquino, 2012). Low-income households have moved to suburban communities to escape soaring urban rents, but they did not necessarily find residential

stability. Evictions¹ are one dimension of this suburbanization of poverty process: they have become more common in the suburbs as poverty rates have increased, and have been increasingly concentrated in a subset of suburban neighborhoods (Hepburn, Rutan and Desmond, 2023 ; Rutan, Hepburn and Desmond, 2023). Certain groups, in particular Black and Latino Americans, find themselves segregated into declining neighborhoods in the inner suburban ring of cities, where they face higher rates of eviction. In France, studies on the suburbanization of poverty focus more on the increase in home ownership by the working classes, but similarly point to the potentially destabilizing effects of this residential mobility on access to employment or services, for example (Gobillon, Lambert and Pellet, 2022). Very little research has been carried out on this subject on and among immigrants and natives.

In both literatures, one of the main limitations is the lack of characterization of the suburbanization process in terms of suburban heterogeneity. In most studies, suburban areas are considered as a whole and in comparison with urban areas, even in recent work investigating the extent of heterogeneity of the suburban effect on eviction across metropolitan areas (Hepburn, Rutan and Desmond, 2023). In particular, very little work has been done on the suburban residential mobility *distance* travelled by individuals.

I argue that distance is central to the understanding of the process of immigrant suburbanization, for at least two reasons:

- Distance from the city is a key factor in the distribution of land values and social groups from the city center to suburban areas. While this gradient of distance from the city is one of the most frequent forms of socioeconomic differentiation in suburban areas, it has rarely been used to study the differentiated residential mobility of immigrants by origin group. In the context of the metropolization of the Paris urban area, however, it is likely that the second outer-ring suburbs are currently undergoing the greatest social transformations. A distance-based approach to suburbanization is therefore a way of capturing the internal heterogeneity of suburban areas.
- Residential mobility distance has an impact on individuals' life outcomes. In particular, it has numerous implications for everyday mobility, as it reinforces car and gas-price dependency and can reduce access to public transport services, which may affect employment. This is particularly true in the Paris region, where the process of suburbanization extends far beyond the region's administrative boundaries. Distance can also undermine social and economic mobility if it involves a move away from extra-local networks - family, friends, etc.

The present study seeks to contribute to the literature on immigrant suburbanization in three ways:

- First, it goes beyond the center of large cities in the analysis of the residential incorporation of immigrants, and by doing so expand the geographical scope of social inequality analysis.
- Second, it integrates the geographic origin of individuals into the analysis of the social dynamics of suburbanization in France, which has not been done yet.
- Third, it offers a new perspective on the spatial heterogeneity of immigrant suburbanization dynamics.

Data & Methods

To conduct the analyses, we draw on individual data from the 2013 and 2018 French census (accessible through a secured environment), which captures residential mobility (in the past year) at the municipality level (*commune*). This is the most detailed source of data to analyze geographical and residential patterns

¹ Eviction can be defined as a “form of residential displacement in which a landlord removes a tenant (renter) from their home, often through a legal court process” (Rutan et al., 2023, p.106)

of immigrant settlement, especially outside major urban centers. The spatial perimeter is the one of the functional area² of Paris, which goes beyond the limits of the administrative region and offers an extensive view of suburbanization in the Paris region (Fig 1).

We propose a distance-based approach to residential mobility. To do so, we use several distance measures: distance as the crow flies, but also road distance, time distance, which are closer to the reality of mobility practices of individuals. Road distance and time distance are measured with the R package *osrm*, which enables the computation of routes, trips, isochrones and travel distances matrices through *OpenStreetMap*.

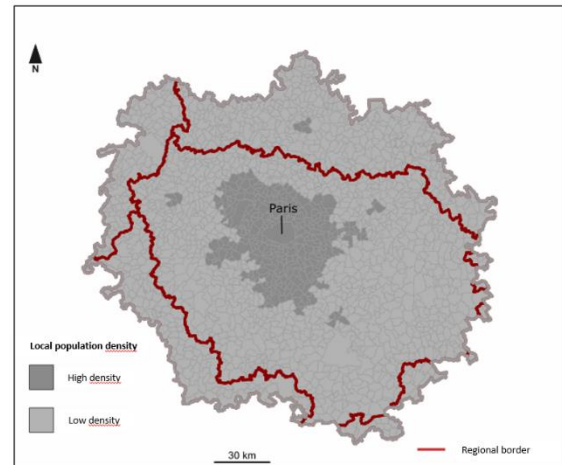
The analytical strategy consists of four steps:

- First, we use multinomial regression models to model the type of residential mobility from Paris or its inner suburbs (to either Paris, its inner suburbs, outer suburbs or other destinations) of immigrants and its individual determinants
- Then, we focus on the residential mobility of immigrants who leave Paris or its inner suburbs to settle in its outer suburbs. We model the residential mobility flows of immigrants taking into account the demographic weight of the places of arrival and the distance travelled, using a gravity model to show the different geographic patterns of suburban mobility across origin groups.
- In a third step, we use linear regression models to model the distance of residential mobility of immigrants (independent variable is $\log(\text{road distance})$). By switching to regression models and the distance variable, we lose the spatialization of the phenomenon, but we gain in the identification of a general spatial trend. Our variable of interest is the country of origin and we test several model specifications, controlling for individual socio-demographic variables (age, sex, education level, professional position, nationality, length of time in France and country), variables linked to household structure (household composition and size, housing tenure), variables of distance to the workplace (in some models, also distance to the spouse's workplace) and suburban area structure variables (local real estate prices, housing stock structure, share of immigrants, etc.).

Some interaction terms are added to the models, especially between the country of origin and housing tenure, in order to assess the link between homeownership and residential mobility distance for some specific groups.

- With linear regression, we focus on the conditional mean of residential mobility distance and its determinants. However, we can imagine that the relationship between mobility distance and country of origin is not the same depending on the distance band considered. In particular, the question is to know up to what distance range this statistical relationship between residential mobility and certain origin groups operates. In a fourth step, we use quantile regression to analyze the impact of the characteristics of the variable of interest on the different quantiles of the conditional distribution of mobility distance.

Figure 1. The functional urban area of Paris



² French definition of a functional area: the extent of a city's influence on the surrounding municipalities. An area is a group of municipalities, in a single block and without enclaves, consisting of a population and employment centre and the surrounding municipalities in which at least 15% of the working population work in the centre. The most populated municipality in the centre is called the central municipality. Municipalities that send at least 15% of their workforce to work in the centre form the commuting zone of the centre's functional area.

(Expected) findings

This presentation is part of a larger project on immigration in rural and suburban areas in France. Most of the analysis has already been conducted. The analyses that remain to be carried out concern the inclusion of the characteristics of suburban areas in the models and they are expected to be completed by the end of March 2024.

1/ Geographic patterns of suburban mobility of immigrants

We find that immigrants are less likely to experience internal residential mobility than natives. However, there are major differences depending on the type of destination area. In suburban areas, recent internal migration is more frequent among immigrants than non-immigrants. In the Paris region, there are major differences between origin groups: immigrants from Southeast Asia, Southern Europe, the Near and Middle East and North Africa are more immobile (over 90% immobile). Among suburban mobility, gravity models show different distance patterns for different groups: European and North African immigrants seem to move short distances, while immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa tend to move further away.

2/ Differentiated residential mobility distances by origin group

The analysis of individual determinants of residential mobility using linear regression models confirms that suburban mobility distance is systematically associated with immigrants' country of birth. While some groups, such as immigrants from South-East Asia or Southern Europe, experience residential mobility over shorter distances than North African immigrants, other groups, such as immigrants from West Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, experience residential mobility over longer distances, demonstrating differentiated distance dynamics between immigrant groups. This statistical association persists as well when controlled for the place of work.

3/ Suburban mobility & housing tenure: the cost of home ownership?

We know that suburban mobility is very closely linked to changes in household residential status, and in particular to home ownership. Adding an interaction term between the country of birth and occupation status, we show that for immigrants from West Africa, access to home ownership is one of the driving forces behind long-distance residential moves. Being from "West Africa" and being a "Homeowner" together have indeed a positive effect on the dependent variable, and this effect is statistically significant. Nearly 30% of immigrants from West Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa who leave Paris and its suburbs for sparsely populated areas own their own home, compared with 20% of all immigrants. For 70% of them, their place of work remains in Paris or its inner suburbs. On the contrary, among homeowners, immigrants from Southeast Asia and Other Asian countries tend to have a lower residential distance compared to North African who live in private rental housing.

4/ Greater disparities over long distances (> 60km) : suburban heterogeneity

Finally, we use quantile regression to analyze the impact of the characteristics of the variable of interest on the different quantiles of the conditional distribution of mobility distance. The main result is that the positive effect of the country of origin on mobility distance for immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa compared to other groups increases with the distance band. In other words, the greater the distances covered, the greater the disparities between origin groups, particularly between immigrants from West and Sub-Saharan Africa and others. Indeed, 27% of West African immigrants and 35% of immigrants from other Sub-Saharan African countries who move and are homeowners do so more than 60 km away from Paris, compared to only 20% of non-immigrants. We also expect that some of these differences can be partly explained by compositional differences between suburban areas (local real estate prices, housing stock structure, proportion of immigrants in the municipality, etc.).

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