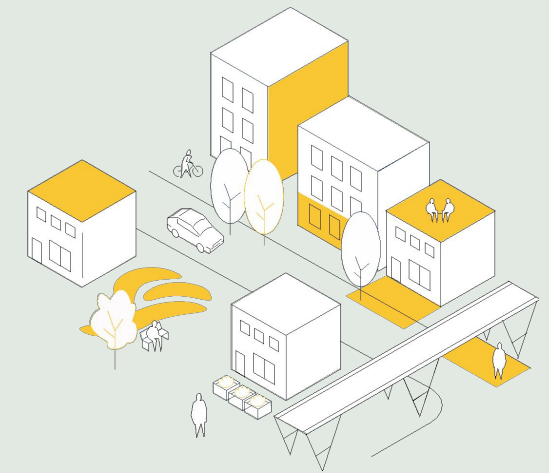


Qualitative Interview findings: Paris and London

03 June 2022

9:00-12:00



Interview Sample and method - London

- Semi-structured interviewing using the StadtTeilen interview question frameworks
- 3 Exploratory interviews (with local residents and users of R-Urban Hub)
- 3 Expert interviews (experts of sharing, running sharing initiatives and one co-organizer of R-Urban lab)
- 1 group interview with 4 policy experts/planning officers working for housing association (Poplar HARCA)

Interview Sample and method - Paris

- Semi-structured interviewing using the StadtTeilen interview question frameworks
- 4 Exploratory interviews (with local residents and users involved in associations)
- 3 Expert interviews (project owners and planners)
- 2 Political interviews (local elected officials)
- 2 User interviews (non-affiliated users of the R-Urban hub)

Analysis Method

- Inductive and deductive thematic coding analysis using the StadtTielen codebook (Translated via google translate)
- Nvivo data management, analysing full transcripts (Paris) or detailed interview notes (London)
- Written up as analytical report for each city
- Exploration of similarities and differences with Paris interviews, comparing the neighbourhoods and R-Urban hubs

Results – Neighbourhood Overview

PARIS

- Bagneux: 40,000 inhabitants, located in the suburbs to the south of Paris.
- Historically (and still largely) a working-class and immigrant neighbourhood (38% employees and factory workers, 45% from an immigrant background).
- Town is composed of 65% social housing (more than neighboring towns).
- Urban landscape is a mix of large social housing blocks and more well-off individual household homes, representative of the social discrepancies in Bagneux.
- Notable presence of green spaces (some well managed, some left to nature), especially in the Agrocité area.
- Bagneux is undergoing large urban redevelopment projects (particularly the *O'Mathurins* eco-district, with 2,500 new units), in addition to new subway infrastructure completed in January 2022.

LONDON

- Poplar (Lansbury Ward): 15,000 inhabitants, within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in East London
- Historically working-class, housing for London dock workers (19th C)
- Large Bengali diaspora (39% of social mix, 2011 census)
- High percentage of social housing 57.5% for social rent, majority managed by Poplar HARCA
- Urban landscape is a mix of large social housing blocks redeveloped post-ww2, mainly 1950-80s.
- Neighbourhood is undergoing extensive change and regeneration, multiple large housing regeneration schemes being brought forward (Aberfeldy, Teviot, Brownfield)

Results – (Perceived) Neighbourhood characteristics

PARIS

- Perception of Bagneux as very diverse and attractive for newcomers. Respondents celebrated the “great diversity of origin” in Bagneux.
- Coexisting representation of “enclaves of marginalised people.”
- Some areas of Bagneux are left behind and segregated by public administrations, which was described as “a process of ghettoisation.”
- Expected impact of gentrification is a concern mentioned by many respondents, “it will make the territory denser,” “There is more and more pressure on people who cannot pay [rent]”
- Interviewed residents of social housing blocks are happy with the better housing quality, but also highlighted the inconvenience caused by constructions. “The works lead to a degradation of the environment and these transitions are not managed”.

LONDON

- Local perception of regeneration is mixed, on the one hand aspirational (improved housing stock, better quality) on the other concerns about impact of gentrification, new residents not integrating with existing tenants “us and them”
- Socially and ethnically diverse neighbourhood, with strong sense of community and solidarity “It represents the best of London”
- Historic civil society challenges of racism directed towards Bengali population “it was a no go area for Asians in the 90s”, perception that this has improved in recent years

Results – Forms of sharing

PARIS

- Sharing is perceived as occurring predominantly within organised structures.
- Most associations collaborate and work with other associations, for example, to run workshops.
- Sharing mentioned mostly involves human contact, although not always. One association publishes documentation to share information about some of the technical points of their project.

LONDON

- Multiple references of informal sharing networks between residents which often take place in the immediate vicinity of the home (stairwells, door steps, communal areas)
- Shared experiences often begin informally e.g. knowledge sharing between social groups and develop into more formalised workshops run or initiated by local organisations
- Institutional focus on sharing of things e.g. bike sharing schemes. Versus informal sharing of things between neighbours or local groups.

Results – Sharing of things, spaces, experiences

PARIS

- Many shared spaces offered by associations (gardens, cultural centers), but no discussion of random/spontaneous shared spaces.
- Shared experiences mentioned were mostly workshops, organised by associations. However, users of Agrocité noted everyday shared experiences (sharing of time, good moods, teaching/learning from each other).
- Little mention of shared things; one association offers a shared DIY tools shed. Another created *partageries* (a library of donated objects) as part of the participatory budget. These were criticised for not working and being sites of illegal dumping.

LONDON

- Sharing of things focussed mainly around informal gifting, sharing of unwanted goods within communities, organising informal swap shops.
- All interviewees highlighted the importance of sharing hubs e.g. community centres, R-Urban hub or community gardens as local places for sharing activities and workshops. One example is the local community centre run by local organisation and hosts multiple other groups often for free
- Shared experiences were mostly workshops, but often started more informally such as knowledge sharing between gardeners (everyday shared experiences)

Results – Actors involved

PARIS

- Municipality of Bagneux (communist-led since WWII)
- Local associations (well developed network of civil society actors) -> specific to Bagneux
 - Culture (PPCM, Sourous)
 - Environment (Bagneux Environnement)
 - Education (Apprentissages)
 - Social economy (Hébergerie)
- R-Urban network
- Users of the Agrocité
- Local residents of Bagneux and surrounding towns

LONDON

- Poplar HARCA - Housing association and regeneration charity, Specifically the 'Accents team' * specialise in socio-economic regeneration
- Local associations (community groups, charities, non-profit organisations) -> specific focus working in Poplar:
 - Youth and community - LiC
 - R-Urban - Ecological
 - Community - Teviot Bengali Sisters
- R-Urban network
- Users of Poplar Eco-Civic Hub
- Local residents of Teviot Estate, Poplar

Results – Motivations for sharing

PARIS

- For one founder of an association, their motivation for sharing was to “keep the village spirit alive” by setting up shared spaces dedicated to local activities (which were lacking at the time).
- Specifically for the Agrocité, users’ motivations derive from a desire to share access to nature and to meet new people.
- Policy makers’ motivations to be involved in local politics (not necessarily to share) stem from personal conviction, and wanting to act towards the environmental cause.
- [Other motivations for being involved in associations, not necessarily to share] Out of conviction, militancy, community-building, being social, transforming society, learning from each other.

LONDON

- Sharing as an activity practiced by community, strong community spirit, pandemic response to help with those in need was mentioned by 3 of 6 respondents
- Housing association motivations are driven by responding to needs in community but also a strong ecological imperative, reducing consumption, sustainable living
- Local associations are generally trying to respond to local needs, but also bring own agendas and focus e.g. LiC (Youth), R-Urban (Ecological)

Results – Role of the neighbourhood in sharing

PARIS

- Bagneux is considered to have “a heart of active and living citizens”, this idea is also fostered by the town hall. Dwellers are perceived as “a young and diverse” population.
- Bagneux is considered to have a “small town” feel, owing to its little commerce.
- Régie de Quartier: a specific organization dedicated to social inclusion at the scale of the neighborhood.
- Bagneux’s festivals (grape harvest festival, Les Préambulations, the Agrocité festival) “[bring] together all the people of Bagneux” and is important to the identity of many inhabitants. They are celebrated by many people outside Bagneux as well.

LONDON

- Multiple local organisations who have a specific focus on working with Poplar as neighbourhood engaged in sharing activities
- Unique relationship of neighbourhood to Poplar HARCA (housing association), unusual to be so focussed on small geographic area 1 sq/mile. Noted by both experts and local residents/users
- Poplar is perceived to have strong community spirit and identity which produces sharing activities from bottom up
- Historically was seen as a neglected part of the Borough “It was left behind” but is now seeing extensive regeneration and with it investment of resources which support sharing.

Results – Barriers to sharing

PARIS

- Language was suggested as a barrier for foreign residents to join the Agrocité. They did not necessarily feel unwelcome, but one (French) user of the Agrocité presumed that her foreign neighbours would rather speak their native language(s) in their spare time.
- Lack of resources (mainly human) can cause sharing spaces to close.
- Institutional barriers. One interviewee remarked that “there is a very bureaucratic desire to do participatory or sustainable work,” although “participatory approaches are infantilising, [so] people boycott them.” Lots of turnover in the municipal government in the last two years “slowed down the town hall’s actions.”
- User preferences changing. For one association, public preferences forced them to adapt their activities from what they initially proposed.
- Conflict can inhibit people’s will to share. For example, many respondents spoke about a power struggle between actors; the theft of vegetables at the Agrocité; the conflict of interest of elected representatives in associations.

LONDON

- Language and cultural barriers were widely cited towards success of sharing activities, often leading to a nervousness about the first exchange between communities
- lack of resources, specifically lack of time to properly organise and engage with sharing activities
- institutional barriers - specifically when sharing initiatives are organised by local housing association or council due to historic or previous negative associations
- Getting the word out, people knowing about the sharing practice, how to access it or be part of it is hurdle to access

Results – Conditions for sharing to happen

PARIS

- Access in terms of membership cost, open hours of shared spaces, and proximity to transport all impact how much sharing can occur.
- Communication is seen as very important and a good way to enable sharing, but also to scale it up (through Facebook, Whatsapp groups).
- Government support. One user interviewee was very appreciative of the town hall's support to set up organisations, their generous subsidies, and putting people in touch with one another.
- Horizontal governance has been described as a good "breeding ground" for sharing new ideas.
- A human connection is necessary for sharing, and the lack of it is used to explain the failure of the "Partageries" (sharing facility). "It dehumanizes sharing"

LONDON

- Building trust, having something in common with the group engaged with the sharing practice was important
- Proximity, sharing practices work best when hyperlocalised addressing smaller neighbourhoods rather than whole regions
- Demonstrating need, successful sharing practices were those which were addressing specific local needs a lot of emphasis was put on responding to local conditions
- Institutional partners supporting sharing initiatives e.g. municipal government and housing association can provide space and resources for sharing practices. They can also provide credibility by association if working closely with bottom-up sharing initiatives

Results – Policy guidance/planners perspectives

PARIS

- Policy makers have a particular focus on green spaces, shared gardens and the Agrocité, ultimately leaving out those with other interests. While these people's interests could be accounted for in the participatory budget, the local government could work more directly with more diverse actors to co-design sharing initiatives based on their actual needs, "at no point does anyone do a needs analysis."
- Policy makers should mediate issues arising from shared initiatives. In relation to the conflict between associations at the Agrocité, one interviewee suggested that "[the] elected official... should intervene, but in fact, she does nothing..."
- On top-down sharing initiatives (specifically the *partageries*), one respondent said that it "dehumanises sharing, if the human contact is missing, initiatives like this don't work.". He calls for a more informal intervention of the municipality to promote sharing opportunities throughout the life of the project.

LONDON

- Value of community hubs as physical spaces which host sharing practices run by multiple local groups. Teviot Centre is a good model of this something the housing association was keen to learn from
- See their role as building partnerships and networks of groups and organisations to implement projects, often not running the spaces/projects themselves
- Perception within the team that Poplar HARCA has many underutilised assets which could be shared or used more productively e.g. green spaces, common spaces on estates "no coherent strategy"
- Success as viewed by policy experts was to initiate sharing projects but to be able to completely withdraw and the project sustain itself.