Urban policies in today’s Europe are often marked by a contradiction. On the one hand, such policies seek to increase the participation of the inhabitants; on the other hand, they often posit the same inhabitants as security concerns and subject them to various forms of surveillance and control.

Christophe Foulter shows how this contradiction manifests itself in the multiethnic French banlieue, as he makes detailed portraits of two sites in the metropolitan area of Paris that have been integrated into various urban programs. Combining a close, empirical approach to the real dilemmas of urban planning with a theoretical discussion in part centering on Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality, this book intervenes in ongoing debates about social unrest, civic distrust and urban citizenship and makes a major contribution to critical urban studies.

Foulter explains how institutional modes of engagement in multi-ethnic areas can fuel feelings of suspicion between residents and local stakeholders and thus provoke civic distrust. Also, community development processes often intensify socio-ethnic stigmatization.

In urban strategies, the representatives of municipalities, housing companies and associations develop daily routines that articulate participatory devices and security procedures. These processes result in what the author calls “regimes of hospitality”, which are symptomatic of the contradictory tendencies that set the rules for social integration and citizenship.

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