The Middle Classes and the City

A Study of Paris and London

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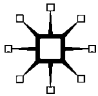

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Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2015 978-1-137-33259-2

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First published 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN 978-1-349-46178-3 ISBN 978-1-137-33260-8 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137332608

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Bacqué, Marie-Hélène.
The middle classes and the city : a study of Paris and London / Marie-Hélène Bacqué [and eight others].
pages cm

1. Middle class—France—Paris. 2. Middle class—England—London. 3. City life—France—Paris. 4. City life—England—London. 5. Sociology, Urban—France—Paris. 6. Sociology, Urban—England—London. I. Title.
HT690.E85B33 2015
305.5′50944361—dc23 2014028724

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Acknowledgements

The research on which this book is based was part of a research project funded in a bilateral agreement between the Nationale Agence de la Recherche in France and the Economic and Social Research Council in England (Project ANR – 09 – FRBR-005; ESRC – RES-062-33-0002) and we are grateful for their support. We are very grateful to all our respondents in Paris and London for their participation in this study. Our thanks also go to Lester Jones (King's College London) who drew the maps, Rachel Lander (University of Bristol) who compiled the bibliography, Sabine Starita at LAVUE Paris, Mel Tomlin at the University of Bristol and our hard-working transcribers in Paris and London. We would also like to thank Emily Russell and Philippa Grand at Palgrave for their support and advice in seeing this project through to publication and to Carmel Isaac who project managed the book.

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1
The Middle Classes and the City

The impact of the middle classes on the city has been a focus of considerable academic and political attention, most recently concerning the spread of gentrification through cities across the world. Yet the middle classes are increasingly occupying a diverse range of neighbourhoods across the urban system. Through a comparison of such neighbourhoods in Paris and London, this book seeks to explore the dynamics of these forms of territorialisation and the consequences for understanding the sociology, politics and geography of the contemporary city.

Why write a book on urban research that focuses on the middle classes?

In France and Britain, the question of the "middle classes", their definition and their social role is currently a significant topic in both the social scientific and the political domain. A number of publications, news articles, essays and research articles (Burrows and Gane, 2006; Butler and Lees, 2006; Chauvel, 2006; Donzelot, 2004; Lojkine, 2005; Savage et al., 2005) have recently analysed their decline and downward social mobility, their secessionist logic (into exclusive neighbourhoods, opting out of public services) or their problems in grappling with the financial crisis. Debates around the nature and composition of the middle class have continued since the Industrial Revolution but most concentrated discussions have concerned the expansion of the middle classes since World War II. These discussions increasingly accorded a powerful role to the middle classes in terms of the reproduction of capitalist relations of production (Baudelot et al., 1974; Lipietz, 1996) – in the UK and the US, the group was discussed as the professional-managerial class (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1979), the new class (Gouldner, 1979) and the service class (Goldthorpe, 1980, 1982). More recent commentary has involved a discussion about the fragmentation of the middle class into the middle

classes (Butler and Savage, 1995), a term "used to define social groups whose income can vary by a factor of four" (Bidou, 2004; Chauvel, 2006; Dagnaud, 1981). They are increasingly detached from upper-class lifestyles and aspirations and, in certain fractions, there is increasing emphasis on the relations with working-class trajectories which themselves are no longer part of a solidaristic bloc (Ehenreich, 1989). It is now increasingly evident that these different trajectories and experiences of the middle classes and their relationship to other classes are being registered in the different settlement patterns of the middle classes in the city (Butler, 1997; Préteceille, 2007; Webber, 2007). For instance, the current urban research literature tends to depict the middle classes as striving to safeguard the urban and educational enclaves they have managed to carve out for themselves (Bridge, 2006; Butler and Robson, 2003; Reay and Ball, 1998).

At the same time, social mix has become a major driver of urban policy whereby the middle classes are seen as the guarantors of social cohesion. An extensive international literature has examined the rhetoric of so-called social-diversity policies and their contradictory effects (Bridge et al., 2012). This issue is not new and has been discussed by the urban literature since the 1950s (Chamboredon and Lemaire, 1970; Gans, 1961) and has been evident in urban policies and housing policies since the turn of the last century. Over the last 20 years, research on neighbourhood effects and the international debate that followed indirectly addressed this question, but from the perspective of poor neighbourhoods. Work on gentrification on the other hand considers the logic of urban middle classes and the consequences of social division or mix. Such representations and policies shed light on the relationship of the middle classes to urban space as well as their basis of political and social engagement.

However, few studies have attempted a more comprehensive approach to the middle classes and their social relations across urban space. That is the goal of this book.

What do the middle classes do to the city? How do they contribute to transforming their socio-spatial logic? And conversely, how does urban space contribute to transforming the middle classes (through classifying and constructing their identities)?

We concur with previous arguments that territorial relations of the middle classes are nowadays relevant to their social identity (Bridge, 2003; Butler and Robson, 2003; Savage et al., 2005). Territorial identity can be seen as a catalyst of their wider relations with the world and their

vision of themselves (with political consequences at different scales). What we argue in this book, however, based on the evidence from a range of different neighbourhood contexts, is that the relationship between territory and class identity is highly interactive and transactional. Middle-class practices in urban space are conditioned by the social composition of the neighbourhood but also in relation to surrounding neighbourhoods. Residential trajectories into and out of the neighbourhood have their effects on identity and ongoing practices. There are what we might call marked "localisation effects" seen in practices of social reproduction and, indeed, in normative worldviews.

These observations have to be situated in relation to a range of major theoretical issues that are implicated in the question of the middle classes in the city. There have been a series of debates on the social polarisation of cities (such as Sassen's dualisation thesis – Sassen, 2001) and the effects on urban segmentation and fragmentation (Marcuse, 1989). They also have implications for more practical political and policy issues of, for example, social-mix policies, as well as welfare policies more generally.

The social analysis proposed here also impacts on various forms of political representation, the direction of public policy and the construction of social issues as highlighted by, for example, the numerous debates concerning social justice, taxation or education. The outlooks and possible affiliations of different fractions of the middle class is a subject of keen interest to politicians on the left and right – a phenomenon that Clinton, Blair, Cameron, Sarkozy and Hollande all grasped. As well as political support, there is the question of the degree to which the middle classes (or their different fractions) continue to subscribe to the concept of a welfare state and the extent to which they themselves use state-funded education, health or social services or whether they rely on privatised provision in a pure or "hybrid" form. The issues of middle-class "voice", "loyalty" or "exit" (adapting Hirshman, 1970) raise important questions about the future sustainability of the public realm. More specifically, there has been an assumption in urban policy that the middle classes are a "good thing" for poorer neighbourhoods (more "voice" leading to more spending and representation). This assumption of middle-class conscience, self-interest and advocacy is a theme addressed by this book.

Beyond the opposition of secession or social mix; beyond gentrification and peri-urbanisation

We wish to get beyond the stereotypes that either depict the middle classes as the glue that binds urban society or analyse them in terms of

decline (whilst accusing them of withdrawal and shutting themselves off), but rather to focus on the many different ways in which they integrate or divide urban space and the political sphere.

For some years now, most of the theoretical and empirical research on the middle classes in urban geography has focused on gentrification, gated communities and peri-urbanisation. This work has been essential in capturing a range of neighbourhood impacts, social and class divisions across the global urban system. And yet middle-class residential mobility and social reproduction continues in a range of suburban, exurban and inner urban neighbourhoods as well as those that are gentrifying or gentrified. How do we understand these different middle-class neighbourhoods in terms of intra- and inter-class distinctions and divisions? To what extent does this reflect a fragmentation of the middle classes and to what extent do their political engagements contrast or cohere across these different locations in the city and in the two nation states? Does this residential expansion represent the historical growth of this class over the long boom, and what are the impacts of the increasing economic and social limits on this expansion? Butler and Savage's (1995) book *Social Change and the Middle Classes* came out at a time when the notion of the middle class*es* was still highly contested. Now would be a good time to examine how they have evolved/developed. What class processes and practices are evident in these different neighbourhoods – in terms of local politics, social mix and social reproduction (such as schooling)? What are the relationships (if any) between these different middle-class neighbourhoods in terms of residential and social trajectories (both within cities and between neighbourhoods of different cities in the world system)? What are the political and policy consequences that result from this investigation in terms of understanding both the impact of middle-class practices for the policies of the welfare state at the local level and their relationship to the main political parties vying for their vote at the national level?

In this research, we developed a multidisciplinary approach that tries to articulate both social morphology and spatial morphology. It seeks to intervene in re-emerging debates on social stratification and debates on urban patterns of urban development (following on from the Chicago, Los Angeles [LA] and New York schools of analysis). How are we to understand contemporary patterns of urban development that are not dominated by analyses of segregated urbanisation (Chicago school) or postmodern suburbanisation and separation (LA school)? The middle classes reveal patterns of both continued suburbanisation

and renewed urbanisation (such as gentrification). How do we understand the nature of social stratification and identity in the light of these simultaneous and contrasting paths through the city? Can we examine ongoing debates on neighbourhood effects as "selection effects" in which the neighbourhood simply reflects prevailing social structures into which different social groupings select-in? Or does the neighbourhood itself have an effect, either in terms of local peer effects or in how identities and worldviews are constituted through everyday practices?

Our approach tries to analyse space in its different dimensions as advanced by Lefebvre (1974) in taking seriously the significance of the production of space through material, political and everyday practices and representations. The inter-relationships between perceived and lived space is particularly germane to our understanding of our respondents' neighbourhood trajectories and forms of activity in the neighbourhoods. We thus put the Lefebvrian categories of spatial practice, representational space and representations of space to work in understanding the interventions of middle-class residents and their efforts to change place. Our analysis is not framed around strict definitions of Lefebvre's categories, but rather the understandings that these intersect, with the result that space is produced through a range of everyday practices, imaginings and regulatory processes (the governance of space). Whilst Lefebvre mainly focused on how these processes operate in the production of large-scale urban space, demonstrating how this reproduces capitalist society, we examine here processes of production taking place on a smaller scale, examining how these processes roll out in the different neighbourhoods in the study and with what consequences. As we demonstrate, the processes by which space is produced are political in character, conflictual and contradictory; there are winners and losers. The analysis of trajectories and neighbourhood activities is also relevant to an engagement with Bourdieu's ideas on class that have informed previous work in sociology, geography and urban studies (Bridge, 2003, 2006; Butler and Robson, 2003; Savage et al., 2005). In this study, we see how the neighbourhood context reveals a range of class trajectories and how these influence, and in turn are influenced by, certain localisation effects in the neighbourhoods themselves. The prior trajectories, different mixes of capitals (economic, social and cultural) and the trade-offs between them and the strongly gendered aspects of class reproduction, disrupt the assumed relationships between class habitus, generations and practices. The processual aspects of space are critical for an understanding of these more contingent relationships.

The comparison of national institutional contexts, metropolitan systems and neighbourhood practices greatly assists in analysing the relationship between class and space.

The value of comparative urban research

A French–British comparison enables the issues just discussed to be analysed in terms of two global cities and contrasting nation state structures and political cultures. It of course encompasses two national welfare and education systems and two metropolitan environments. Paris and London are the dominant global cities in Europe, and their place in the global urban system and the processes of globalisation have particular effects on the composition of the middle classes, their residential trajectories and potential fragmentation in these cities. Some fractions are drawn into a globalised professional marketplace whilst others are more embedded in national markets and public institutional contexts (Beaverstock, 2002; Hamnett, 2003; Massey, 2007; Sassen, 2001). Paris and London have much higher housing prices than elsewhere in France and the UK and these housing market pressures have diverse impacts on different fractions of the middle class. A comparison of Paris and London also captures the effects of global, national and local processes on the structure and lived experience in these different fractions. To what extent does the city have effects – in processes of acceleration and accumulation or deviation and constraint – on social and economic trajectories of households – that might explain middle-class differentiation and forms of identification? In this context, the book advocates seeing space as a process of differentiated trajectories through the urban system as well as in the ongoing "work" of class in different neighbourhood settings.

The study compared the middle classes in different types of neighbourhood in Paris and London. This typology represents a range of neighbourhoods both in terms of their relationship to the overall urban system and in their different degrees of social mix within the neighbourhoods themselves. The types were inner urban gentrifying (socially mixed); inner urban gentrified (less mixed); suburban; exurban; and gated communities. One of each type of neighbourhood was studied in both cities (ten neighbourhoods in all). Three hundred and eighty-six in-depth interviews were conducted with residents and some key informants across the two cities. The selection of neighbourhoods and the organisation of interviews and management and analysis of data was conducted comparatively by the two branches of the research

team throughout. This reflected the bilateral nature of the funding of the project (Economic and Social Research Council in the UK; Agence Nationale de la Recherche in France). As discussed, the study examines the degree of diversity or coherence of middle-class identities and activities in Paris and London and their political impacts. Can these cities reveal the nature and political significance of the middle classes in the contemporary context? Are place and location especially relevant for social identity? Does the fragmentation of middle-class residential localisation reflect the atomisation of this social nebula? Does each stratum find through its form of territorialisation a way to build itself against (or link with) others? How far are these identities and practices limited to the national context or are they more transnational in scope (Favell, 2008)? To what extent do the attitudes, activities and political engagements of the middle classes vary across the different neighbourhood types they occupy in Paris and London? How do other forms of difference (ethnicity, nationality) intersect with class identities? What are the similarities and differences across neighbourhood types in both cities? What are the implications of these variations for policy and politics at the local, city, national and transnational scales?

Alongside these social and political questions, there is a long tradition of social science research that has developed perspectives specific to each national social and cultural context, although there have always been many worthwhile exchanges between the two traditions. Consequently, Anglo-Saxon research into gentrification or the service class has been imported into France (Bidou-Zachariasen, 2003; Fijalkow and Préteceille, 2006) while the approach to social space put forward by Pierre Bourdieu has become a standard reference in Britain (Bridge, 2001a, 2001b, 2003; Butler, 1997, 2003; Savage et al., 2005). These studies look at the relationship between the middle classes and their degree of practical and symbolic dominance of urban space with, for example, Savage et al. (2005) and Savage (2010) making an initial distinction between "elective belonging" versus nostalgic association with neighbourhood, or Andreotti and Le Gales (2008) identifying of locally rooted upper middle-class cosmopolites who, in terms of networks and services, partially exit their cities. There is considerable scope to investigate further these relations between middle-class identity and urban space. This study also brings a comparison of the distinct theoretical and empirical research traditions to bear in the analysis of the contemporary situation of the middle classes in the city.

Key research issues addressed in the book

The book provides first of all a detailed mapping of the characteristics of the middle classes in a comparative context. It also considers their treatment in the respective national sociological research traditions. This involves a re-theorising of the middle classes in relation to the contested nature of space and identity in the context of the economic forces and social diversity of these two global cities. There is an emphasis on the importance of urban structure and space on the particular realisation of middle-class outlooks and activities and whether the dynamics of the global city stretch or consolidate middle-class identities and practices. We also provide a nuanced political mapping of the activities of the different fractions of the middle classes and their relationship to politics and to public services and consider in more detail the possible effects of urban policy in relation to the middle classes in *different* parts of the city.

In this research context, we investigate the extent to which the middle classes feel that they are on an upward or downward social trajectory. Are these trends the same or different for different middle-class groups? Are the middle classes a coherent group or do they differ politically and socially and what are the implications of this for politics and political parties more generally? Does living in different neighbourhoods in and around the city reflect differences in middle-class lifestyles and outlooks? Do the middle classes mix with others or only people like them? There are also questions that relate to the nature of Paris and London as cities and their impacts on middle-class life. How do London and Paris differ in terms of middle-class lifestyles and politics? In what ways are they the same? Are there particular effects on the middle classes that could be said to be distinct to global cities? A final set of questions concerns the relationship of the middle classes to urban policy and politics. In what ways has their relationship to the provision of key state services (notably education) been changing? Do they continue to subscribe to public services or are they increasingly opting out to private forms of provision? To what extent can the activities of middle-class residents be in favour of the neighbourhood as a whole? This last question provides the opportunity for a critical analysis of the question of neighbourhood advocacy. Finally, in terms of the study as a whole, we ask what the findings of this research mean for understanding class in the 21st century.

The structure of the book

We begin by "locating the middle classes" (Chapter 2) both theoretically (especially in the French and English research traditions) and geographically (their present and recent social geography in Paris and London). This discussion is situated in the context of the changing dynamics of Paris and London as global cities. The chapter then goes on to specify the ten neighbourhoods we selected to study and the rationale and basis of comparison of these neighbourhoods. In Chapter 3 (Being Middle Class) we ask whether, or in what ways, our resident respondents in Paris and London considered themselves to be middle class and how these senses of their own position relate to academic understandings and political discourses. In discussing what being middle class means for the respondents, we explore different aspects of life, including jobs, neighbourhood and social ties. The way that urban neighbourhoods are represented – in planning, local politics, by housing market intermediaries, media and popular culture – impacts on people's interpretations and feelings for place as well as for what is seen as desirable, even normal. These relationships between the representations of space and people's lived spatial practices are explored in Chapter 4 (Residential Choice and Representations of Place). Conversely, the way that spatial practices and everyday "place-making" (Benson and Jackson, 2013) shape and reshape neighbourhoods as well as acting back on representations of space is explored in Chapter 5 (Lived Space). Neighbourhoods shape the way that social diversity and difference are conceived of and the way these are negotiated by residents is revealing of wider relationships of class and space. Those wider relationships involve practices and institutional processes of social reproduction. In staying middle class (Chapter 6), forms of intergenerational wealth transfer (inheritance and cash transfers) and trajectories through the housing market are identified as being increasingly important, as are of course questions of education and schooling, which was a very "live" issue for middle-class parents in Paris and London. The strategies of social reproduction adopted in these two national and urban contexts, through comparison, are highly revealing of processes of class reproduction through space more generally. As well as everyday practices that shape place, there are more intentional activities and mobilisations of middle-class place-making. Representations in the planning system, historic preservation, and a range of political action and the degree to which these vary by neighbourhood across the two cities and how these impact on other

social groups is the subject of Chapter 7 (Changing Places). Also at issue is the impact on politics, the public realm and public services in the city. In the final chapter (Rethinking Class and Space), we review the results of this cross-national study to think about the significance of middle-class trajectories and forms of settlement in the city and the impacts of Paris and London as cities on these trajectories. We conclude with a discussion of the consequences (theoretical, political) of this more detailed analysis of the intimate connection between class and space in the archipelago that is the middle-class city.

2
Locating the Middle Classes in London and Paris

Introduction

The discussion in this chapter is informed by the two key research questions presented in the introduction about how the middle classes give identity to the areas in which they live and secondly, how they in turn derive their identities from living there. In other words, we present the different social and spatial morphologies of our research areas and how they help us understand how the middle classes relate to the city and the city region and to other social groups within these areas. The chapter is divided into four main sections, the first two of which are concerned with "locating the middle classes" theoretically (especially in the French and English research traditions), firstly, sociologically and, secondly, geographically. We then move on in the third section to identify their present and recent social geography in the specific contexts of Paris and London. This discussion is situated in the context of the changing dynamics of Paris and London as global cities. In the fourth section, we specify the ten neighbourhoods that form the basis of our study in which we discuss the rationale and basis of the comparison we draw between these neighbourhoods.

Before exploring the differences in the two sociological traditions and the morphologies of both cities however, we develop some of the points elaborated in the introductory chapter about why we are writing this book about class and the middle classes and their interactions in these two European global metropoles. In order to do this, we need to start off by making some very broad and general comments about class and its operationalisation in sociology and geography in urban contexts.

Theoretical discussions of the middle classes often revolved around distinctions between Marxist and Weberian approaches. For Marx, class

was the only source of power, so it makes no sense to qualify it as social or economic – class position is a collective relation to the ownership/non-ownership of the means of production. On the other hand, for Weber, "social" (and the qualifying word is crucial) class is but one dimension of the wider problem of power where there is a triangulation of social, economic and political aspects of power at the level of the individual. Aggregations of these positions are then mediated through a process of structuration into a set of class positions. These two approaches were regarded in much post-war sociological scholarship as largely incompatible and contrasted the relative importance of "structure" and "agency" – although these tensions could also be seen in the work of the early and later Marx.

Once these debates were no longer confined to discussions of sociological "theory", whether at the factory gate, in the bar or in our everyday professional practice as sociologists and geographers, there has been a tendency to use "middle" and "working" class(es) as labels for comparing the relatively advantaged and more disadvantaged. It is here that the term class and particularly middle and, more recently, working class, has become problematic.

It is possible to argue that in both France and Britain, sociologists and geographers began to distance themselves from basing their work around class at the same time as much of the industrial working class was restructured out of employment in the 1980s. Sociologists – it might be argued – moved from a focus on inequality between classes in favour of a focus around identity and difference "within" the middle classes, whilst geographers – who had never focused on class to the same extent – adopted gentrification as their modal category for studying urban inequality. Gentrification unfortunately, as is now well documented, often then became something that was studied solely through the (middle-class) lens of the gentrifiers – not least because of the serious problems presented in identifying the displaced. There is then a danger that the "language" of class has displaced that of its "analytic" properties (i.e. middle class *versus* working class) – which was never the case in either of the founding (Marxist and Weberian) formulations of stratification (Giddens, 1973).

If we accept that neither the middle class nor the working class are hermetically sealed groups, we need then to explore the variations in their interactions with more attention to spatial and social detail than has usually been the case. In the first part of this chapter, we examine briefly how this has been done in British and French theorisations of the post-war middle class(es) and identify commonalities and

differences as a precursor to our methodology for examining these "border issues" through the concept of "social mix" in London and Paris. In contrast to the hard edge of "gentrification", "social mix" is an infuriatingly ingratiating concept that is able to imply a cosy feeling of social well-being – particularly amongst those articulating it as a policy imperative. However, if nothing else, the study of gentrification has shown that single-class communities subjected to social mix by incoming people of a higher class become dominated communities in those neighbourhoods – assuming they are not physically as well as socially evicted from the neighbourhoods in the process of gentrification itself.

Doing comparative work on class and social mix, although complex, also simplifies the task precisely because of the lack of a common language of class, classification or indeed political assumptions. Despite both being advanced capitalist nations separated by only two hours on the train between their capitals, Britain and France (London and Paris) are – as we indicated in the introduction – very different places with different political, social and cultural traditions. We therefore decided, as we explained in Chapter 1, to approach the problem by selecting different kinds of middle-class areas and looking at the ways that, in both cities, their residents related to other social groups and the reasons they gave for this. The five different kinds of middle-class areas we identified in the introduction were:

- Gentrifying and socially mixed
- Gentrified (less mixed)
- Suburban
- Ex- or peri-urban
- Gated

As discussed in Chapter 1, the idea was to see whether this would take us beyond the rather fixed models of middle-class settlement provided for in the literature – based around secession, gentrification and peri-urbanisation, which are briefly discussed in the second section of this chapter.

In the third, and particularly the fourth sections of the chapter, we explore the differences between the cities and our research areas. Whilst not wishing to preview our analysis or findings at this early stage in the book, we suggest that whilst there are similar overall narratives of engagement/disengagement between both cities, these vary both by social group and spatial location and this is probably related to overall national differences in class formation. However, and perhaps not

surprisingly, it is when the social and economic situations of the middle-class and non-middle-class residents are most proximate that most negotiation takes place, although this often involves quite different actors.

Who are the middle classes in British and French sociological traditions?

In this section we discuss the differences between sociological work in the two national traditions mainly in terms of a set of problems about conceptualising and actualising a definition of these social groupings in the middle of the social structure of both societies. This discussion will be articulated further in Chapter 3: Being Middle Class. We also draw attention to the existence of two different sociological traditions as well as there being different statistical and census criteria. The neighbourhood typologies geared to the question of degrees of exposure to social mix have captured certain professional and managerial middle classes from an English perspective; however, elements of this might be considered upper middle class or even upper class in the French context. Nevertheless, central to our approach is an analysis in both countries of the middle classes as an archipelago more than as a homogeneous entity. This is a very important point, as otherwise, the differences between groups could be obliterated, thus obscuring one of our key research questions which is about the relationships between them. A summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the background socio-demographics of the neighbourhoods is given in the appendices. How and why we chose our case-study neighbourhoods is explained in the final section of this chapter. Our task here is to summarise the main points of convergence/divergence in thinking about "the middle" in Anglo-French theorisations of class.

The middle class: A neither/nor class?

Whilst the middle classes constitute, arguably, the largest stratum of society in contemporary post-industrial societies, it is only in recent decades that they have received significant sociological attention. In the case of the UK, this was largely the consequence of a focus on the "traditional working class" within British studies of stratification. Although the presence of the middle class has been well documented since the mid-18th century, Lockwood (1995) argues that sociology only began to examine the middle classes in the 1960s, perhaps in response to the rise

of the new middle class at that time (Goldthorpe et al., 1968). In contrast, the middle class is well documented in social and urban history literature, and this provides us with some important perspectives in locating the contemporary middle class by highlighting many of the definitional problems about a number of the themes which are central to this study; notably, the discursive positioning of the middle class; the significance of knowledge (and education) in middle-class formation; and the significance of space in a number of dimensions (regional variation, the city, the significance of London and its surrounding periphery and the contested relations between public and private conceptions of space).

In France, a political debate about the middle classes emerged during the 1870s, with the arrival of the 3rd Republic in which Gambetta talked about "a new social layer" (Charle, 2003), with an eye on working-class upward mobility, against the Marxist vision of society. Until the 1930s, the debates continued focusing on the variation of the economic context where the middle classes were successively described as central or as weakened and were made the focus of political attention. One of the powerful political gambles of the discussion was to put forward a three-layered representation of society, centred on a middle class which was considered a "healthy" and "stable" component of the nation and by which one could thereby evade the Marxist representation of class struggle which pitted the worker against the bourgeoisie (Charle, 2003; Ruhlmann, 2001).

At that time, sociological works on the middle class were not very significant. The expression "middle classes" apparently first appears in French sociology during the 1930s, notably in the works of Maurice Halbwachs. However, as in the UK, a renewed interest in the academic literature appears towards the end of the 1970s. Two approaches came to dominate the debates. On the one hand, there were those taking the Marxist approach, focusing on the "petite bourgeoisie" – salaried or not – which was certainly not a "new" class, but existed in the shadow of the dominant class, to which they aspired to belong to and in relation to which they defined themselves (Baudelot et al., 1974; Poulantzas, 1974). On the other hand, there were those trying to supersede the social groups/Marxist vision of society. One of the main contributions of that period is a book by Henri Mendras: *La Seconde Révolution française 1965–1984* (1988), which emphasises the appearance of a "central constellation", a group representing 25 per cent of the population around which social transactions revolved. The members of this "central constellation" were at the same time limiting the power

of the elite (representing 3 per cent of the population) and becoming a model for the working-class constellation (representing 50 per cent of the population).[1]

Both in France and in Britain, the analyses which gained ground during this period were focused on that portion of the intermediate categories which experienced the strongest and most continual expansion: the salaried worker, but more specifically, middle- and upper-level white-collar workers, members of the intellectual professions, mid-level technicians and social workers, health care professionals and those employed in cultural occupations – all of whom were linked to the development of the welfare state. In a general sense, the debate pertained to those salaried workers who were engaged in functions which oversaw the production and the management of society.

From the middle of the 1980s, the issue of social class and of the middle classes tended to disappear from the media's radar screen and from the sociological scene in favour of a focus on new forms of poverty and social problems, with a heated debate between researchers framing the current changes in terms of the "exclusion" of a minority (Touraine, 1991) and those insisting on a growing "disaffiliation" of the lower social groups (Castel, 1995). Convergently, social identification with the middle class became widespread (Peugny, 2014). This was supported by a strong political entrepreneurship towards the middle class: for example, former President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing emphasised the importance of the middle classes for French politics in his 1984 book, *Deux français sur trois* (Two French out of Three). Indeed, defined as a neither/nor class, from which the upper bourgeoisie on one side and the true working classes as well as the poor and the indigent on the other side are excluded, the middle classes would account for up to 70 per cent of the French people, including most of the independent workers and farmers as well as some workers and employees, in particular the most qualified amongst them (Chauvel, 2006).

From the 2000s onwards however, a collection of works reverts to a broader perspective on social inequalities. Some emphasise an analysis of society in class terms (Bouffartigue, 2004; Chauvel, 2006), whilst others stress the blurring of reference points (Lojkine, 2005). In France, a feeling of downgrading ("déclassement") within the middle class became a feature of the sociological debates (Chauvel, 2006; Maurin, 2009; Peugny, 2014). Chauvel in particular challenged strongly the general dynamic towards upward mobility. To him, proof of this was a form of social despair amongst many members of the younger generation, questioning their belonging to the middle class.

Central to this debate is the definition of the middle class. As Peugny (2014) notes, the lower the middle-class definition goes down the social scale, the more the feeling of downgrading is developed amongst its members. More generally, in France, as well as in Britain, definitional problems are a key feature of the sociological literature. As Savage (1995) stresses, the middle class is very difficult to define, beyond its position as a heterogeneous group that is neither working nor upper class. This raises the question of what the different sections of the middle classes have in common with one another. This problem of definition is partly at least the outcome of the history of analysis of the middle class. Efforts to locate the middle class within a polarised system of stratification have resulted in it being defined in opposition to other classes, rather than being understood, like the working class, as a class in its own right (Jager, 1986).

The service class and fragmenting middle classes

In seeking to identify a coherent intermediary social group, sociologists found the term "service class" attractive, especially in Britain. They saw such a class as one whose main role was to service capital and/or the needs of the growing welfare state whilst remaining dependent on the sale of their professional and managerial labour – for an enhanced "consideration" ("emoluments" or "compensation") rather than mere wages (see Butler and Savage, 1995, for a full discussion of the service class). The incorporation and recognition of the middle class as the subject of sociological enquiry coincided with the expansion of the middle classes in the 1970s (Lash and Urry, 1987; Lockwood, 1995). As Savage (1995) argues, early analyses of the middle class were thus conducted against the backdrop of an existing class schema, and within well-established traditions of both Marxist and Weberian class analysis. Faced with a new segment of society which did not conform to existing categories, and whose characteristics could not be attributed to either the working or the capitalist classes, the terms "service class" in the UK (Goldthorpe, 1987) and "new class" (Brint, 1984) or professional-managerial class in the UK and the US (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich, 1979; Gouldner, 1979) were developed. This was a class that had a certain amount of autonomy at work and whose members were seen to be managing the social relations of capitalist production.

In Britain, as in France, the extension of the welfare state had led to an increasing number of people being employed in the public sector (Lockwood, 1995). In this respect, as Abercrombie and Urry (1983) argued, the rise of the middle class was contingent upon a particular

work and market situation which had no historical precedent. In other words, the new middle class who were caught between capital and labour, were distinct from any prior middle class. Against this background, studies of the burgeoning middle classes were concerned with the positioning of this class in relation to other classes. As Savage et al. (1992) argue, rather than being defined as a class in their own right, they were slotted into an existing class schema between the working and capitalist classes. Nevertheless, there were differences in the theoretical approaches to the middle class which shaped the conclusions of the research. Whilst Butler (1995) argues that these theoretical approaches were rarely "pure", the predominance of particular theoretical undercurrents remains apparent. Thus British and North American sociologists in the 1990s adopted the idea of the service class, first identified by Renner (1978) in relation to the higher state functionaries in early 20th-century Germany, as a way of characterising both these aspects of the higher end of the middle classes whose job was to "run the system" but, at least in terms of the welfare professionals, advocate the needs of the "socially excluded" in the interests of its longer term survival by incorporating them into a broad Fordist consensus. It might be suggested that the term has not survived the transition from Fordism to its neo-liberal successor in which the needs of the market trump those of the state, the poor and the advocacy of welfare professionals.

The notion of the service class has been less developed in France (Bidou, 2000). The idea of an "alternative class" (Dagnaud, 1981) or of the "daily adventurers" (Bidou, 1984) were pointing in similar directions, but those approaches were caught within the debate between the Mendrassian and Marxist visions of the middle class.

As Butler (1995) argues, the middle class has been particularly difficult to study – in relation to the working class and the "bourgeoisie" – because of its fragmented nature. However, theoretical shifts in the way that the middle class and class relations are understood have given rise to new conceptualisations of the middle class which, as with the working class, recognise its internally fractured composition as integral to our understanding of it.

The contrasting ideas of a singular middle class, with its own class-consciousness, and those of a pluralised, heterogeneous class (the middle classes), has framed and shaped scholarly understandings of the British middle class. Furthermore, the shift from a focus on production to one on culture and consumption practices has also been an important theme in how the debate around the middle classes has developed in recent years. The focus on consumption practices has provided insights

into the role, not only of economic capital and resources in its formation, but also of cultural capital. It is against the background of these various positions in relation to the middle class that debates over its demise, expansion and continuity have taken place.

Pierre Bourdieu's framework for studying class, in which he identifies different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural and symbolic) has been crucial to the development of an understanding of differences within and between sections of the middle class – at least in the UK (Savage et al., 1992, 2005). Bourdieu argues that the difference between the traditional middle class ("petite bourgeoisie in decline") and the salaried middle classes is due to the fact that the latter group have more cultural capital than economic capital (see Savage et al. [1992] for an early exposition of this "assets-based" approach to the middle classes).[2]

The middle class in France and Britain today

The British and French literature has emerged from a wider sociological tradition of class analysis. In this respect, it is unsurprising that early literature on the middle class grounded itself in the perpetuation of social inequality, focusing on the relationship of the middle class to working-class exploitation. This was part of a wider theoretical effort to locate the middle class within a well-established system of classification. Other developments, which we have discussed, in particular in relation to the literature on the service class, have had a great influence on British conceptualisations of the middle class and have also – though to a lesser degree – been significant in the way that French sociologists have understood the middle class. Moving beyond functional explanations and descriptive accounts of the middle class, this has explored the process of middle-class formation. Finally, the middle-class relationship to the city is captured in the literature on gentrification, which has emerged particularly in human geography as a separate tradition that has not followed the key sociological developments in the debate over the middle classes in Britain. We open up this specifically urban and more spatially delimited approach in the third section (below).

In Britain, since the incorporation of the registrar general's classification into the census in 1911, occupations have been formally grouped by class. In the 1990s, what was then the Office for Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) called for a review of government social classifications. The conclusions of this review (see Rose and O'Reilly, 1997; Rose et al., 2005) presented a case for classification based on socio-economic classification (SEC) rather than social classes based on occupation (SC) socio-economic groupings (SEGs) that had been previously used. This

new classificatory schema (NS-SEC) largely reflects Goldthorpe's neo-Weberian schema and remains in use today – despite its inability to reflect the cultural dimensions of class (Le Roux et al., 2008). It differentiates positions in the workplace on the grounds of employment relations rather than skill level. In this system, the classes may be broken down into eight, five or three classes (Erikson et al., 1979; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Goldthorpe, 1987). The respondents in this study mostly occupy the middle-class positions of categories I and II (higher and lower grade professionals and managers) with some category IIIa and IIIb routine non-manual respondents (higher and lower grades).

In France, the statistical social classification was established after World War II by the National Institute of Statistics and Economics Studies (INSEE) and its transformation in 1982 was inspired by Bourdieu's work. This incremental classification is more complex than the British model, as it mobilises 14 statistical variables including diplomas and employment status (Desrosières and Thévenot, 2002). Unlike the NS-SEC, the French "socio-professional" categories are constructed with reference to conventional standards (wage statutes and collective agreements) and thus are very specific to the French context. The economically active population is regrouped into six categories. Our respondents could be classified as (4) "professions intermédiaires" (intermediate professions), as (3) "cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures" (managerial and professional occupations) and less often as (2) "artisans, commerçants et chefs d'entreprise" (craftsmen, shop keepers, businessmen).

The spatialisation of the middle classes in British and French urban geography

In this section, we look in more detail at the dimensions of urban change which have affected the middle classes and their relations with their social others and with the city itself. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the literature revolves around three main models: secessionism, gentrification and peri-urbanisation. In our view, one of the major contributions of this book is that it goes beyond such models in the manner in which it brings together an analysis of the relation between the middle classes and the city.

Secessionism and enclavism

Cities have long been considered as places in which "organic solidarity" established itself against the "mechanic solidarity" around which the

rural world was structured. Contemporary cities – as Wirth (1938) first indicated 75 years ago – seem to have lost their capacity to develop solidarity (Gans, 1962). On the contrary, they are more and more widely considered as Balkanised, juxtaposing a collection of islands. Alongside residential "enclaves" (epitomised by gated communities), office parks, shopping centres and increasingly, city centres managed through business-improvement districts (BIDs) and the like, such places are considered by critics to have become sterile and stripped of everything that was deemed valuable in public spaces (Sorkin, 1992). Confrontation with difference – of class and of ethnicity – seems to have been reduced to the strict minimum. For the middle and upper classes, the city seems to have become an archipelago of islets where like brushes with like, where people exhibit similar behaviour and share similar representations (Graham and Marvin, 2001). Travelling between one islet and another is unlikely to produce the confrontation with otherness that used to give ethical value to public spaces. In some narratives of the contemporary city, travelling takes place behind the safe shield of a car that is entered or exited behind gates under the protective eye of a parking video-surveillance camera; cars glide with all their windows closed on highway corridors that cleave the deprived inner suburbs where the new "dangerous" classes are located (Atkinson and Flint, 2004).

The consequences of such socio-spatial transformation are yet to be properly evaluated. In this book, we contend that this dire dystopian view of urban life, whilst clearly having some foundation (Wacquant, 2008), is nevertheless extreme (see also Charmes, 2007). Having said this however, it continues to frame discussion about issues of social mix and social divisions. Many authors take for granted that the reduction – not to say rejection – of tangible confrontation with otherness causes the other people – should they be different – to become politically invisible.

Such concerns echo the "secession of the successful" arguments (Reich, 1991). Economic growth and globalisation have indeed been associated with an increasing sense of separation within the middle class with a top section achieving unprecedented economic affluence and in turn demanding a level of service which the state, itself being under pressure to reduce its provision, is no longer able to provide. This threatens many at the lower end of the middle class who are unable to provide for themselves through private provision. So there has been a sense of voluntary secessionism at the top end of the middle classes as its members practise strategies of "exit" or "partial exit", as Andreotti et al. (2014) prefer to represent it in their book on the managerial middle class in Paris, Lyon, Milan and Madrid. The concern is that the secessionist

attitude of the rich might spread down amongst the relatively well-off sections of the middle classes, starting from the top.

The poorer sections of society are the first victims of those processes, but there is growing concern that the lower fractions of the middle classes may be affected. Whilst this process of segmentation and decline in state provision has undoubtedly gone further in "neo-liberal" Britain than in "republican" France, it is ironically perhaps the case that it is in France that the sense of "precarité" and the feeling of "déclassement" is more pronounced (Chauvel, 2006) – a theme that is developed through this book. Eric Maurin provided an interesting explanation for this paradox: due to the more protective nature of work contracts, the French middle classes have, as it were, more to lose from the prospect of being unemployed (Maurin, 2009). They may be less affected by the changes in the labour market than in Britain, but they are more fearful of being affected. To be sure, some, maybe most parts of the middle classes, are still faring quite well even if they are not amongst the elite section. Amongst lower sections of the middle class however, "fear of falling" is frequently expressed in the media. The fear of "déclassement" and the feeling of being in the squeezed middle is a matter of concern for many politicians. Whether there is more than fear and whether the "déclassement" is real is a matter of debate amongst academics (Goux and Maurin, 2012; Peugny, 2014).

Gentrification

There has been a good deal of discussion about gentrification in recent decades. These debates have involved a discussion of social mix which has however, until recently, tended to remain tacit. Indeed, it is quite a paradox that two of the main discussions in urban studies are, at the same time, about secessionism and gentrification. It is a paradox because in the discussion about secessionism, many point to the fact that the middle classes are seceding from the public realm. Yet, at the same time, a dominant dynamic of change in cities is the increasing presence of the affluent and the middle classes in dense city centres. And gentrifiers, especially in Paris (on social tectonics in London see Butler and Robson [2003] and, more recently, Jackson and Butler [forthcoming] and Benson and Jackson [2013] on Peckham), place considerable value on the fact that they have daily encounters with many different types of people, including low-income residents and ethnic "others".

These discourses of the gentrifiers deserve a critical analysis for a number of reasons. Several researchers have for many years pointed out that living in ethnically and socially mixed neighbourhoods does

not entail real interactions between people of different backgrounds (Chamboredon and Lemaire, 1970; Gans, 1962; also Blokland and van Eijk, 2012; Butler and Robson, 2001; Robson and Butler, 2001). Social distance is strongly maintained despite spatial proximity. The limited will to interact – or in some cases the desire for separation – is especially evident in respect of school choice (Bacqué and Fol, 1997; Butler et al., 2013).

Until recently, debate about gentrification has not been articulated in terms of the policy imperative of achieving social mix. Bridge et al. (2012) have considered this, as the title of their edited book (*Mixed Communities: Gentrification by Stealth?*) suggests, by asking to what extent social mix policies can be seen as "gentrification by stealth". This idea has also emerged in relation to Paris in the French literature (see Bacqué et al., 2010). It is a useful lens through which to examine the various approaches to social spatial segregation which have dominated in the post-war period.

The most acute and sharply focused of the debates has been around how gentrification has been coupled with processes of displacement, which has seen others forced out with varying degrees of brutality and visibility. Gentrification put a new stress on "right to the city" issues, with the displacement of low-income or working-class households. The issue is especially salient in Paris since this displacement leads most of those households to leave the city of Paris and cross the barrier of the "Boulevard périphérique".

Suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation

Discussions of social mix and secessionism are strongly linked to arguments about suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation. Whilst the suburbs may be defined as the sprawl of detached and semi-detached houses around the city centre, the peri-urbs (also called "exurbs") may be defined as the urbanisation of the countryside (Charmes, 2011). Regarding suburbanisation, and more specifically regarding the development of residential areas around the cities, many of the earliest debates were about leaving the city. Whilst being connected to that process, the growth of free-standing communities beyond the suburbs but still tied to the city seems to go one step further in forms of counter-urbanisation. Literature on this latter dynamic has developed into a discussion in which many aspirant groups during the long post-war boom (the so-called Trentes glorieuses in France) eschewed the city with its cramped accommodation, poor housing standards and low levels of

public services for the countryside, where they could recreate at least some aspects of the rural idyll, whilst still being able to get access to its resources through commuting. In the UK, this had a long history in terms of the Garden City movement which was also replicated in the US. Similar traditions existed in France, and during the 1960s and 1970s there was a systematic construction of such communities around Paris beyond the newly constructed Regional Express Network (RER) suburban rail system with its suburban satellites but still within reach of them by private car. The link to the city, however, was the private car, which enabled day-to-day mobility both to the city and the wider nation via the developing system of motorways and airports.

The move to the residential suburbs as well as the move to the periurbs has many motives. Amongst the lower middle classes, the search for lower housing costs is a major determinant. This factor is also significant for the other fractions of the middle classes, but they are additionally motivated by a desire to live in a protected environment and to be insulated from the supposedly deleterious influences of the city. Living in the suburbs is thus largely considered as a way to stay away from the public realm. In France, some influential geographers like Jacques Lévy depict peri-urban denizens as people who are much more conservative and narrow minded than their urban counterparts (Lévy, 2013). He relates that to the fact that suburban and peri-urban neighbourhoods are fairly homogeneous, populated by like-minded people, and to the fact that suburban life is much more inward-oriented, focused on the space of the home and of the domestic life. He even goes so far as to link a peri-urban way of life with the vote for the extreme right (which is indeed at its peak in the most remote peri-urban areas of Paris). Formulated in this fairly extreme form, such a thesis is highly questionable. Indeed, the results of our survey invalidate most of that thesis (Charmes et al., 2013). But these claims nevertheless underline how the discussion about suburbanisation and peri-urbanisation is strongly connected to issues of ethnic and social mix and daily experiences of otherness. This is the case in London with a more multicultural centre – long a Labour Party bastion – surrounded by Conservative homelands in the suburban boroughs edging out into the peri-urban greenbelt. The character of such areas is well captured in Nayak's description of a "silent cartography of whiteness" (2010: 2375), although this is now changing quite dramatically, as the London suburbs become more ethnically diverse (see Butler and Hamnett, 2011; Watson and Saha, 2013). This is also the case in Paris, with a white "bourgeois" centre that has for a long time been surrounded by the working-class and ethnic-minority

neighbourhoods of the banlieue, the so-called red suburb, and peri-urban white and middle-class villages. Recent research shows how the Paris region tends to be more socially polarised, the upper class being the most segregated group, followed by foreigners, ethnic minorities and the lower classes (Préteceille, 2006).

We may also note the discussion on the fiscal motivation of the move to the suburbs and peri-urbs. In many US states (California is a case in point), especially after World War II, the middle classes moved to suburbs in order to lower their taxes (Jackson, 1985). In making that move, they explicitly dissociated themselves from those in need that they left in city centres which were becoming increasingly derelict (the so-called doughnut effect). This contributed to the financial difficulties of central municipalities. In France and the UK, local taxation does not carry anything like the same weight as in the US, and redistribution mechanisms ensure that municipalities' fiscal resources are not as differentiated as in the US. Yet, in France (and to some extent in the UK), there are debates about the contribution of suburban and peri-urban residents to the financing of facilities and services offered by central municipalities, although, at least in the UK, this is articulated in debates over taxation in general and particularly that on individuals and corporations.

London and Paris as global metropoles: Where are the middle classes in the two city regions?

Historical development of the middle classes in Britain and London

A clear distinction could be drawn in 19th-century Britain between the northern and Midlands industrial middle class who founded and ran the burgeoning industrial economy drawing on their practical engineering, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, on the one hand, and, on the other, a professional middle class rooted in medicine, the law, science, the civil service and the financial sector whose capital derived from elite schooling and/or professional training. The elite of this middle class was centred in London (and to a lesser extent Edinburgh). This reflected a polarisation that developed through the second half of the 19th century between the "practical" industrial middle classes and "practitioner" professionals based in the expanding system of (so-called red-brick) universities, firms of solicitors and doctors' practices and a London-based elite where these professions had their imposing headquarters. The civil service was divided between a professional and administrative class in which nearly all the former were located in London.

The professions, with their smart "institutes" or "colleges" (whether in medicine, arts, sciences and engineering), attracted the "brightest and best" to London. The division of the law into solicitors and barristers (who had a monopoly on pleading before judges and particularly the higher courts) meant that the top end of the legal profession was almost entirely confined to the so-called Inns of Court in London. Finally, the City of London attracted the sons of the gentry and others to its gentlemanly practices of servicing the distribution of Britain's industrial (and largely non-London-based) production around the world and particularly the Empire.

The City of London's role was not so much to create financial commodities (as it does today) but to enable, through the provision of credit and other services, the trade of the Empire, which in practice meant facilitating imports to and exports from the UK's industrial economy. London and its middle classes therefore occupied an elite position in the economy and society but one that was largely dependent on an industrial economy and imperial system which were located elsewhere. As a consequence, as it is today, much of London's economy was largely dependent on servicing the consumption needs of the elite and much of the working-class population was engaged in consumer goods industries and transport rather than producer goods sectors which were heavily concentrated in the Midlands and the North of the UK as well as (South) Wales and Scotland.

East London was London's backyard, producing an infrastructure of consumption (particularly gas and sewage), direct consumption (food markets, clothing, furniture) and transport (railways and the river-borne industries) (Stedman Jones, 1974). This gave rise to a physical and social geography with an elite concentrated in the centre (the "West End") whilst working-class areas were concentrated in the "East End" away from the prevailing winds and river currents, which maintained the salubriousness of the richer areas. As the city developed, it became surrounded by a system of lower and upper middle-class suburbs often growing with the railway network – Dyos' (1961) account of Camberwell as a "railway suburb" or Goldsmith's (1892) *Diary of a Nobody* whose subject Mr Pooter lives in Holloway and works in an office in the City of London exemplify this. The combined growth of the middle class and London in the late 19th century gave rise to the development of some parvenu suburbs in what are now seen as affluent inner London – examples being Chelsea, Notting Hill and Fulham. In the early part of the 20th century, many of these neighbourhoods declined and, in the aftermath of the bombing of London during World War II, many became

areas of multiple occupation firstly by returning service men and subsequently by migrants from the Commonwealth. Many of these areas became subject to gentrification in the late 20th century and form the basis of several of our case-study areas (e.g. Peckham and Balham).

During the inter-war period, London's rapidly expanding non-manual occupational structure and its associated middle and lower middle-class population became owner occupiers in the city's expanding suburbs beyond the north and south circular roads. For the most part, these were in newly built, detached and iconically semi-detached housing which was built speculatively by small private-sector developers. The increasing availability of mortgage finance at attractive rates enabled both the demand and supply for housing for this group of people who, like most other classes, had previously been largely private-sector tenants. The expansion of the underground and overground railway system (to the north and south of London, respectively) greatly facilitated this development. Indeed, the promoters of such housing were often directly or indirectly connected to the private railway companies who profited from them considerably. The building of the north and south circular roads and a number of other arterial roads – for example, the A127 from London east to Southend along which many of the housing developments were built – characterised this period with an expansion of private consumption and privatised motor-driven transport as car ownership, but particularly the bus network expanded (London Transport and also the London and Country Green buses). Our Berrylands study area – near to Surbiton in southwest London – epitomised this process of suburbanisation linked by fast and frequent electric trains between Waterloo and south west London. Berrylands was built on low-grade land, covered by brambles, to meet a huge demand for owner-occupied housing with good access to the centre of London by a new generation of middle-class workers – routine non-manual or lower middle-class professionals working in the civil service or the booming large-scale private sector with large London head offices. Further out on the same railway network which fans out from Waterloo, those further up this corporate or state hierarchy bought or had built for themselves houses in areas like our West Horsley and Effingham research areas with single detached houses often built in the so-called stockbroker Tudor style.

By the end of World War II, London's social geography comprised a small elite core in its centre (the West End and South Kensington), surrounded by a working-class inner city which in turn was surrounded by a middle (lower and upper) set of suburbs connected to the centre by a network of railways (Hall, 1962; Willmott and Young, 1973). This inner

London working-class core has been subject to dramatic gentrification in the intervening years and, whilst there is dispute about the extent and consequences of the transformation, its existence is not a source of contention. There is disagreement over what happened to the working class – to what extent have they (or more accurately their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren) become part of an economically inactive lower mass or have they become absorbed into a new non-manual white-collar proletariat that does the routine work in London's new post-industrial services and financial economy along the lines suggested by Braverman (1974)? The nature of this middle class has also changed and become more variegated along the lines proposed in Chapter 1. Our research areas reflect these different socio-spatial settlements as indicated previously – Oak Tree Park (a "gated community") is a good example of a long-standing development in which the upper middle class has seceded, at least partially, from social integration.

Historical development of the middle classes in France and Paris

The Paris metropolitan area has been built around a social tension between the city centre and the suburbs on the one hand and east and west on the other. Consequently, the west has long been, and is still today, solidly more bourgeois than the east (the northeast being especially working class). This is due to the fact that the western side of the city was urbanised at a much later time and was therefore able to take in a large proportion of the housing stock which was constructed under Haussmann during the second half of the 19th century and was originally intended for the bourgeoisie (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 2004). This division between west and east also extended into the suburbs. In the 19th century, the few "beautiful suburbs" ("belles banlieues") around Paris were developed mainly in the west. Even today, the most well-off suburbs are in the west, whilst the most working-class suburbs are found in the northeast (even if there are a few exceptions such as Le Raincy, one of the areas of our research).

This division between east and west is further complemented by the division between the city centre and the suburbs. In continental Europe and especially in France, the development of residential suburbs has been a lot more limited than in the US or in Great Britain, especially with regard to its bourgeois component. What we saw instead is a mostly working-class and industrial make-up in the suburbs.

This occurred mainly for two reasons. The first is that in Great Britain and in the US, the threat of a land invasion was significantly less than in Europe. The idea that the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy would go

to live beyond the city walls was more easily imagined than in Paris. The city was thus the last bastion of safety and the city walls were not demolished until the years following World War I (and would eventually give way notably to the interior ring road – the Périphérique – around Paris).

The second reason is that in continental Europe and particularly in Paris, powerful interests were involved with the renovation of certain poorer neighbourhoods in the city centre and used the available areas for real estate development which would be aimed at a well-off clientele. In the heart of Paris, first Baron Rambuteau and then, on a totally different scale, Baron Haussmann created a space which was made for the bourgeoisie. The large Haussmannian developments which were carried out between 1852 and 1870 promoted, all at the same time, an urban model (wide avenues, tall buildings made of carved stone), a dwelling-space model (the Haussmannian apartment) and a lifestyle model (dressing well, the use of public facilities and public spaces, gardens, opera). These models first involved the milieu of the well-to-do and then spread to the rest of society.

Haussmann's destruction of central low-income neighbourhoods also increased Paris' economic attractiveness, particularly on the right bank of the Seine. By the turn of the 20th century, the areas around the Bourse and the Opera-Garnier had become centres of big business, with a heavy concentration of large company headquarters and a focus on finance. On the other side of the Seine, the left bank, the long-established focus was on cultural life centred on the important schools and the universities. This tension between the right bank, with its attention on business and economic activity, and the left bank, which was devoted to culture and intellectual life, has been toned down considerably today, but it was publically apparent at the end of the 19th century and underscores a wide division in France between economic capital and cultural capital.

Haussman's urbanism did not, however, modernise the entire city of Paris. A number of working-class neighbourhoods remained, particularly in the south, in the east and in the north. These neighbourhoods received the populations which had been displaced by the public works. In 1911, when the city of Paris had reached its peak population (three million), 180,000 dwellings were being condemned as unhealthy, but due to diminished judicial capacity and lack of money, these poorer neighbourhoods were not really dealt with until after World War II – either by complete demolition and renovation (e.g. Les Halles, Père Lachaise, the 13th arrondissement) or by rehabilitation (e.g. the Marais, Mouffetard). Those latter rehabilitated neighbourhoods saw a rapid

gentrification which began in the 1970s. For other areas, gentrification would be both late in coming and less intense. The presence of areas of social housing which had been built in preference to renovation of the existing stock was seen as a major obstacle (in Lower Belleville, amongst other areas).

Beyond the city limits of Paris, there are lower income suburban communities and départements. At the beginning of the 1910s, more than 4.5 million inhabitants of the Paris metropolitan area lived outside the municipality of Paris. During the 1920s, the expression "red suburbs" began to appear. If it was a social and political myth, this vocabulary was an expression of several articulated realities (Fourcaut, 1986). First of all, there was the urban social reality: suburban communities, especially in the northeast – in the present-day département of Seine-Saint-Denis (commonly known because of its number as the 9–3) – were areas which saw the arrival of working-class households as well as a concentration of industrial activity. The "red suburbs" were also a political reality, as in a large number of suburban working-class communities were home to the Communist Party. The Communist Party built up a social structure in the suburbs which expressed a social, political and territorial identity which lasted until the end of the 1960s, before being progressively dismantled. The representation of the "red suburbs" tended to erase the diversity of the various locations, in particular the very real existence of the chic suburbs. However, the expression does offer a broad picture of a city centre which is rather bourgeois and conservative surrounded by (and even threatened by) working-class and poorer suburbs which are squarely ensconced on the political left.

The working-class character of the suburbs would then be solidified by the "grands ensembles". The enormous housing crisis after World War II was dealt with according to the principles of the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM). In France as a whole between 1954 and 1973 (when the project ended), six million new housing units were constructed in large housing developments called "grands ensembles" (out of a total of 18 million units in all of France). These large housing estates were built in a wide variety of contexts. In the Ile-de-France region they were constructed in the poorer neighbourhoods of Paris which were considered slums, in working-class suburbs and in peripheral areas which were still very rural, on untouched terrain (such as in Clichy-sous-Bois). In the beginning, these large housing developments were the very incarnation of modernity and especially of access to comfort, with well-lighted dwellings surrounded by green space and equipped with running water, toilets and bathrooms – which were rare

in working-class areas just after World War II. Originally, these housing developments took in not only working-class households, but more generally, young households who saw their standards of living rise during the period of prosperity preceding the oil shock of 1973. This shock and its aftermath changed everything. Today, the large housing estates have a totally different image and represent social failure. They symbolise the concentration of poor populations.

In fact, the suburbs have also been areas of large subdivisions (Fourcaut, 2000). In the first half of the 20th century, urbanism in the Paris region was especially marked by the development of subdivisions made up of individual building plots. The model of individual home ownership spread from the well-off classes and the bourgeoisie towards artisans, shop keepers and supervisors, as well as towards routine non-manual employees and skilled labourers. This expansion was already noticeable at the end of the 19th century and became more apparent after World War I in conjunction with the decreasing cost of rail transportation. After World War I, subdivisions increased along the edges of the Paris metropolitan area, primarily within 20 or 30 kilometres from the city centre. In the period between the two world wars, in Ile-de-France, there were around 3,000 subdivisions covering 160 square kilometres of newly urbanised territory spread over more than 300 municipalities. Thereafter, particularly beginning at the end of the 1960s, the expansion of family housing developments took on a different appearance, which had the look of peri-urbanisation – (discussed below).

In the Paris area, as in London, the region is organised around transportation infrastructure. The limits of the city of Paris were emphasised by a very wide, half-buried highway – the Boulevard périphérique – built between 1960 and 1973. This roadway has now become a reinforcement of the barrier between Paris and its suburbs. The division between the city and suburb can also be seen in the public transportation system. Whilst the city of Paris is linked by an extremely dense system of metro stations, suburban commuters are served by a system of lesser quality. Even though several metro lines have now been extended into the suburbs, only a few communities very close to Paris are served. Beyond these communities, public transport depends on buses and on the RER. The regional plan of 1965 for the Paris region established the basis of this network which primarily serves the work hubs of the new towns and converges on Paris. All of this helps maintain the city centre's pre-eminence. Although the RER offers rapid access to the capital, symbolically it remains associated with peripheral Paris and today the most

gentrified suburban communities are those which have access to the city centre via the metro rather than the RER.

Today, the centre of Paris is largely bourgeois and most of the city's formerly working-class arrondissements are involved in the process of gentrification. The suburbs offer a contrasting image which continues to pit the well-off western and southern suburbs against the less prosperous suburbs of the north and east. The peri-urban areas which continue to be developed still constitute a more mixed social mosaic, but less well-off populations are being pushed farther and farther out into areas less well positioned for the acquisition of an individual home.

Divergence and convergence: The implications for the middle classes of de-industrialisation and re-industrialisation in London and Paris

These contrasting histories of the two cities have resulted in very distinctive urban structures and some rather different positioning of the middle classes. We will point to these differences in what follows, but we begin by underlining the convergences. Both London and Paris city regions have been subject to the similar forces of de-industrialisation and re-industrialisation over recent decades, although the social and spatial manifestations of this have been somewhat different. The middle classes are distributed and distribute themselves around the two cities according to tradition and constrained choice in different ways, but in both cities the issues of economic constraint and subjective choice are segmented according to economic capabilities, generational and socio-cultural disposition. Yet, although their spatial dispositions are still significantly different, to a large extent, the range of possibilities and their social structuring are broadly similar.

At the same time, the opposition of the North American and continental European urban models can now been seen to be fading in many respects. Many important differences remain, but with gentrification now having been ongoing for decades in London, and peri-urbanisation similarly in Paris, the urban structures of the two cities have been significantly converging. Despite their still significant differences, they are now more similar than they previously were.

In both countries, the capital city regions are somewhat of a special case and the unaffordability of their centres is having a dramatic effect on the structuring of divisions within the middle classes which are not similarly experienced elsewhere across their respective nation states. In both cases, the central city is increasingly beyond the means of all but the most affluent new entrants into its housing markets. The Parisian

middle classes do have access to social housing, but the stock is limited. In 2006, the average fiscal income of a household was €39,900 within the city of Paris and €32,500 within Ile-de-France (for households with children, the figures were, respectively, €62,800 and €44,300).[3] A single person earning less than €40,000 per year was entitled to "logement intermédiaire" within the city of Paris (this limit was around €85,000 for a household of two adults and two children). Yet there is a limited amount of those properties: 56,000 inside Paris city, around 4 per cent of the total housing stock and slightly more than a quarter of the total social housing stock.[4] For the regular social housing, the income limit was around €20,000 for a single person and €50,000 for a family of four. Those limits are much more restrictive and movements out of this social housing category are extremely low. Currently for the Paris municipality, there are more than 120,000 demands for social housing that are unsatisfied. The municipality of Paris is promoting middle-class access to social housing, but this would mostly concern the "professions intermédiaires" (e.g. teachers or nurses). Unsurprisingly, Paris is now becoming very interested in the key worker policy implemented in London. In London, just over half the householders (56 per cent) were owner occupiers in 2007 (with an income of approximately £27,000 per year), whilst 24 per cent were socially renting tenants with an income of £10,400 per year and the remainder (26 per cent) were private renting tenants with an income of just over £18,000 a year. It is interesting that those buying property with a mortgage had an income that was nearly double (£35,500) compared to that of those who owned their homes outright, who earned £17,500, which is an outcome of the age differences between the two groups (Figures from Shelter, 2009). The latest earnings data, which in London is for individuals not households, gives a median average income for London of £658 per week (£34,216 or €41,500) per annum (Office for National Statistics, 2014). The UK Department of Work and Pensions estimates that the weekly income of social housing tenants in London is £335 (before housing costs) compared to £488 for all tenures (with a mean income figure of £678, which indicates the disparities in income) (UK Government nd).[5]

In both cities, house prices and rents in the private sector have risen dramatically in spite of the long recession since 2007.

Thus, in both cities, the aspirant middle classes wanting to live in the centre have to pay very high rents. In Paris, private-sector rental contracts are more secure than in London, but prices are also high. In the eastern arrondissements, where rents are cheapest, it is common to pay more than €1,500/month for a small three-room apartment

with a living room and two bedrooms at 80m^2. An income of at least three (or even four times) the rent is requested to be accepted as a renter. In London, similar levels apply and private-sector rents have – if anything – been rising faster than house prices. A two-bedroom flat will have a median weekly rent of £323 in Greater London and £369 in the eastern borough of Tower Hamlets. (http://www.london.gov.uk/rents/) This is partly because the demand for houses by international buyers has continued to exert an upward effect on houses, putting owner occupation in the inner London area out of the reach of all but the richest members of the middle class, thus displacing the frustrated demand by those who wish or need to live in the inner London area onto the private rented sector.

However, beyond those commonalities, Central Paris differs in three crucial respects from central London:

1. Central Paris (which can be defined as the city of Paris, the area within the Boulevard périphérique plus the Bois de Boulogne and Vincennes) is much smaller than the Greater London Authority. However, comparing the 20 arrondissements of inner Paris and the area bounded by London Transport's "zone 1" is not comparing like with like. The municipality of Paris also comprises of only 2.3 million inhabitants, whilst "inner London" is 3.2 million in a metropolitan area of more than 12 million in the case of Paris and 8.2 million in the Greater London Authority area living within the M25 motorway. Living outside the core area delimited by the city of Paris is significant not only in terms of distance from the centre, but also in symbolic terms (crossing the border of "Paris") and in socio-cultural terms. Living in a neighbourhood governed by a wealthy municipality is different to living in a neighbourhood governed by a poor suburban municipality. In London, the cultural geography of the centre is somewhat different, with the middle classes largely absent from the centre but increasingly concentrated in its gentrified former inner suburbs around the boundaries of transport "zone 1". Increasingly however, affordable single dwelling houses are only available in the suburban belt of outer London and beyond the M25 motorway.
2. Low to lower middle-income spaces have survived better in Paris, mostly due to the presence of social housing neighbourhoods (it should be noted however, that in France, the poorest often do not live in social housing but in privately rented, low-quality buildings or slums, which have almost disappeared from the centre of Paris and which are to be found mostly in Seine-Saint-Denis).

Thus, considering the limited access to the centre for many middle-class households, there is a form of polarisation at the scale of the municipality of Paris (Préteceille, 2006). In several arrondissements, including the 9th, middle-income households, which are the most numerous at the national scale, are less numerous than lower and higher income groups are. Yet, and this is an important cautionary remark, Paris city inhabitants are all getting wealthier, whilst the poorest are pushed out towards the city limits.

3. A key difference which has long been recognised is that the middle classes and particularly the upper middle classes never left the centre of Paris in the same way that they abandoned large parts of central London in the post-war period. In this sense, Paris can be seen to have remained loyal to a European model of urban settlement, whereas London became much more similar to the Anglophone model of North America and Australasia in which the middle classes played what the British sociologist John Rex (Rex and Moore, 1967) termed the game of "urban leapfrog"; migrating out of the city centre to the suburbs.

The lack of suburbanisation explains why gentrification has perhaps been less visually dramatic in Paris than in London, even if it is noticeable (especially in some formerly working-class neighbourhoods of the north and eastern part of Paris). Ironically, though the smaller size of Paris probably means that the Parisian middle classes are feeling more constrained by gentrification than London, this is forcing many to look to areas beyond central Paris and the symbolic reach of the Métro (this point will be developed in Chapter 5). This is not simply a matter of access to the centre but is emotionally and symbolically painful given the value that the Parisian middle classes ascribe to the resources of the centre (with its high-performing state schools, restaurants, bookshops and cultural institutions for instance). In London, there is a long tradition of "going up West" for entertainment, but also the middle classes tend to assume that education and other social and environmental services are of a higher quality outside the centre (Butler and Hamnett, 2011).

Differences between London and Paris also involve the type of housing, with many more individual houses in London and a much higher density in the centre of Paris (within the city of Paris, which covers 105 km^2, the density is around 22,000 inhabitants/km^2, whereas in the most densely populated inner London boroughs, the density varies between 9,000 and 14,000 inhabitants/km^2). This density is not only

accepted, it is sought after in exchange for centrality and its attributes by the upper and middle classes. This acceptance may partly be the result of an adaptation to the necessity to live under the protection of the city walls, as stated above, but today, although the fear of land invasion is long gone, the preference for a dense and central location is still very strong. This also means that the difference in living environments may be much starker between the centre of Paris and its suburbs. "Urbanity" (defined as the diversity and density of uses and activities) is much stronger in the centre than in the periphery. This may contribute to the premium put in Paris on city-centre living.

Many middle-class people in London would like to live in the inner gentrified areas but, as we indicated above, are increasingly being forced to trade space for distance and move to the outer areas. Thus, London's middle class tended to live in the "commuter belt" surrounding London which is served by a long-established system of railways into the centre of the city. The suburbs in the French and British context have come to symbolise something entirely different from each other. Although the word "banlieue" does not translate exactly into suburb, the social meanings could hardly be more different. In the collective imaginaries, the term "banlieues" is now associated with deprivation, minority ethnic communities and modernist estates ("grands ensembles"). This is certainly a very partial representation of Paris' "banlieues", but amongst those living in the city of Paris, the idea that the "banlieue" is a different world, separated from the centre, is very strong. It is reinforced by the strong barrier in the urban fabric established by the "Boulevard périphérique" (see Chapter 3).

The so-called red belt of industrial suburbs housing industrial workers and largely run by the Communist Party could hardly be more different than the "green and leafy" suburbs of the British "home counties", which is how London's periphery is often described. The high-rise buildings inspired by a mixture of modernism and welfare capitalism had their counterpart in the UK, but they were more often found in the inner city than the outer suburbs which more generally favoured low-rise housing estates. In much of the inner area of London – particularly in South East London – many high-rise modernist housing developments were built for the still large working-class populations in the 1970s. Many of these are currently being "re-developed" by the private sector (in "partnership" with the local state). This usually involves demolition and replacement by low-rise housing for middle-class populations. A current example of this is the Heygate Estate in the Elephant and Castle where 3,000 working-class and poor households have been

"decanted" and will be replaced by predominantly privately developed housing for the market sector.

The Paris suburbs are, however, far from being devoid of middle-class households. In Paris, from the 19th century onwards, there have been moves to the suburbs which became quite significant amongst the lower middle classes between the two world wars, as noted above. From the 1960s onwards, there have been significant moves amongst middle-class households to outer suburbs or peri-urban areas. Many crossed the limits of the continuously built-up suburbs in the search for the rural idyll, buying a house in a small town or in rural villages. Now around 1,200 villages of less than 2,000 inhabitants have been integrated into the peri-urban ring of Paris, according to the national statistical office.[6] All those villages are governed by a municipality which, amongst other things, controls land-use and zoning by-laws, something which is not devoid of importance, as we will see in Chapter 7.

In both contexts, peri-urbanisation was to some extent specific to the post-war generation who parented the baby boomers who, in their turn, were the foot soldiers of gentrification in which some parts of the middle classes (starting with those with the highest cultural capital) turned their backs on the non-urban settings favoured by peri-urbanisation. In Paris, the move to the peri-urbs by the middle classes began to be significant at the end of the 1960s, with a first significant book describing it published in 1976 (Bauer and Roux), whilst gentrification began to take off in the 1970s, first described by Catherine Bidou in 1984. Whilst the middle-class flight from London to the suburbs began earlier in the 20th century and peaked in the decades after the end of World War II, the process of gentrification was first noted by the urban sociologist Ruth Glass, who coined the term in 1964. There were multiple and contested reasons for this which we do not explore in detail here, but they included the rise in oil prices following the 1973 Middle East conflict, the increase in dual-earner households and the related sense by a generation that came of age in the years following the cultural revolutions of 1968 that the city was "where it was at" (see Ley, 1996). However, the dominant cause of "the return to the city" lay in the ways in which urban economies in successful cities like London and Paris were developing (Veltz, 2012). These were based around new industries dominated by finance which was becoming increasingly globalised, requiring long hours at work. Long days became common for managers and professionals once they reached a certain level, whether or not they worked in the financial sector. Fifty hours per week or more is commonly the norm. Thus, being a manager or a professional became less compatible with

long commutes associated with suburban and peri-urban living. It was all the more so, in both cities, when dual-career households became somewhat of a norm amongst the middle classes with women, however, still remaining predominantly responsible for the domestic sphere and needing to minimise the distance between work and home (Butler and Hamnett, 1994).

Many of these new urban industries are also in the media and cultural sectors which often demand a continued presence in the urban cultural milieu, both for symbolic and material reasons. Nevertheless, in Paris, many households working in those sectors are pushed out of the centre due to the house-price increases. This section of the middle class tends to cross the Boulevard périphérique in search of more affordable houses and the most well-off amongst them are attracted by an individual house with a small garden. This phenomenon is significant in many suburban working-class municipalities abutting Paris. In any case, the Parisian middle classes are significantly present in peripheral locations.[7]

The research areas

We put forward in the introduction to the book two related research questions about the social and spatial structuring of the middle classes and the city around what the middle classes do to the city and what the city does to the middle classes. Whilst we have contextualised our approach within Franco-British sociological work on the middle classes, we reasoned that an area-based study along the lines previously adopted by Butler and Robson (2003) in relation to London, and by Savage et al. (2005) for Manchester, would yield the kind of comparative insights we wished to investigate. Indeed, an area-based study is the only way to comprehensively gauge the effect of a place (Sampson, 2012). A neighbourhood is not just a collection of characteristics such as distance from the city centre, age and the income of the local population, it is also a set of relations between those characteristics. A specific social mix cannot be accounted for without being related to the architectural characteristics of the housing stock, the quality of the local schools and the position inside the metropolitan system, especially regarding job accessibility. Thus, it would be impossible to evaluate what the city does to the middle classes and vice versa without taking those relations into consideration. In other words, neighbourhoods should be considered holistically; that is, with a focus on the relations between its different characteristics. Accordingly, we drew up a schema – described

in Chapter 1 and reiterated earlier in this chapter – that required us to investigate five area types; we decided to work on neighbourhoods that are both strongly associated with the middle classes and to raise questions about segregation and social mix.

Whilst we were confident that we would find such areas in both cities, we accepted they would almost certainly occupy different positions in the spatial hierarchy and be populated by different representative fractions of the middle classes. In other words, the spatial classification has enabled us to encompass the range of variation in middle-class "situs" in both cities and to make meaningful comparisons between the two city regions.

One of the main failings of the literature on gentrification, secessionism and peri-urbanisation is that its perspective is narrow. It is so in two senses: first because the focus is on a specific urban dynamic (e.g. gentrification) and second because investigations are generally conducted at the neighbourhood scale (e.g. the 9th). Within that context, we consider that one of the major contributions made by this book lies in the fact that it is based on a large number of interviews and observations, made at the same time and with the same methodology, across five types of neighbourhood in the two cities (ten neighbourhoods in all). Those neighbourhoods have been chosen first to encompass different degrees of exposure to social mix, both internally to the neighbourhoods and in their immediate social geography, and ranging from fairly homogeneous to highly heterogeneous groupings (both in social and ethnic terms). But social mix was an issue which we wanted to discuss in relation to the main dimensions of urban change affecting the middle classes in London and Paris. Thus, we chose our neighbourhoods in order to address simultaneously the issues of gentrification, peri-urbanisation and secessionism. This choice influenced the team to choose neighbourhoods from a metropolitan perspective, and to select not only interesting neighbourhoods, but neighbourhoods which were interesting to consider *in relation to each other*.

The choice of the ten neighbourhoods was itself the object of long discussions both within the London and Paris teams, and between the two teams. Discussion included on-site field trips. For its part, the London team decided to work along a transect that moved out of the city in a south westerly direction, in part because this area has not been studied before in relation to the middle classes, but it consists of long-established middle-class suburbs and exurbs. This is a largely white area of London (with the significant exception of the inner city neighbourhoods studied in Balham and Peckham) and so this

choice was reflected in our sample of predominantly white middle-class respondents.

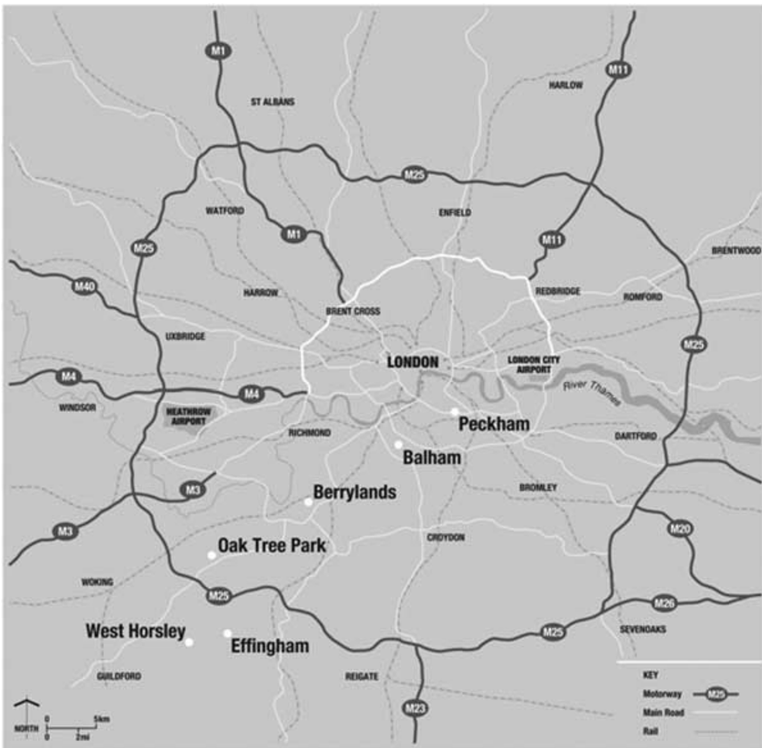
The Paris team took a somewhat different approach which ruled out the suburbs to the west of Paris (as being too bourgeois and so above the middle classes, at least from a French perspective) and focused more on the north east and the south of the city as areas to which people had moved in recent years as (central) Paris became increasingly constrained. In the French case, two neighbourhoods are in Seine-Saint-Denis, a "département" that is well known for housing a large post-colonial ethnic-minority population. This choice was made because it was felt that it would enable us to work with both urban and social processes; the upper middle-class and largely white neighbourhood of Le Raincy, in particular, is a few hundred metres away from the stigmatised neighbourhoods where the 2005 French riots started. In contrast, the middle classes of Noisy-le-Sec, the other neighbourhood within Seine-Saint-Denis, include a significant population of lower middle-class residents of ethnic-minority origin, although most of those interviewed were white middle-class residents. Despite well-known problems around the study of ethnicity in France, largely resulting from ideas embedded in "the Republican project" about how the nation is constituted (see also Garbin and Millington, 2012), studying these neighbourhoods brings intersections of class and ethnicity to the fore.

In both cases, railway lines (respectively, the "classic" London southern commuter lines and in Paris, the more recent and strategic investment in the RER) provided a context for this "moving out of the city" strategy that we adopted. This is one of the factors that brought us to West Horsley and Effingham and Port Sud in Breuillet. Some outer suburban neighbourhoods are not connected to the centre with the railway, however. This is especially the case for Châteaufort.

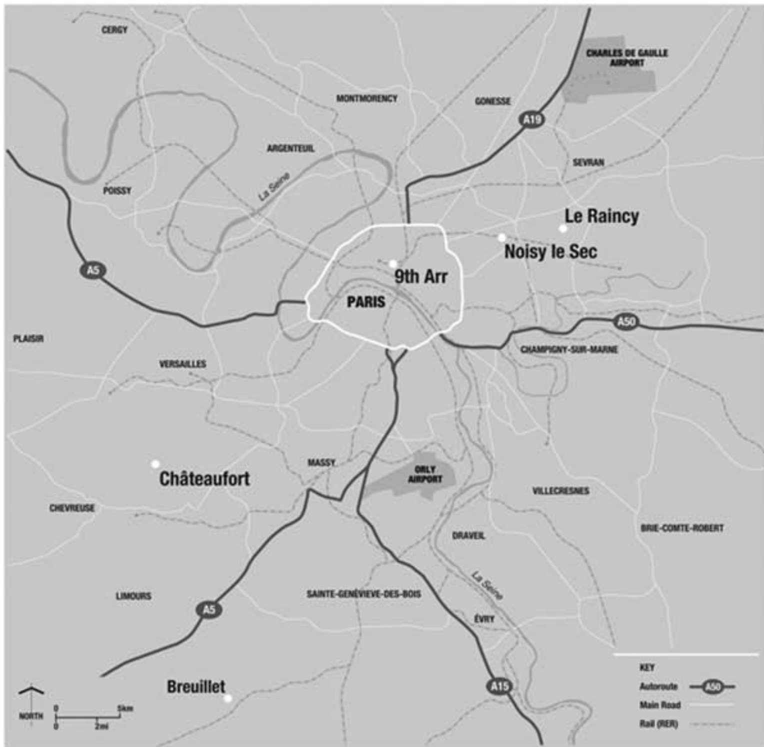
In each area we conducted around 35 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with residents that covered a range of topics about why they came to the area, how they saw, defined and used the area, what their relations were both with people like them and people who were different from them, how they used the wider city and their aspirations, including, importantly, their aspirations for their children (where these existed in the household). Indeed, in households with children, school was one of the most talked about topics. A significant part of the interviews was used to cover issues such as self-positioning within society, self-evaluation of income level, relation to work and feelings of downgrading or upgrading. We also focused in on respondents' relation to politics, both local and national. Interviewees were also asked to position themselves within the political spectrum.

Residents were contacted through various methods, including mailing target streets and snow-balling from interviews, with a focus on representativeness.[8] We do not claim that the residents we interviewed constitute representative samples of middle-class households living in each of the neighbourhoods that were surveyed, but we went to a considerable effort to limit discrepancies. For example, in the Paris neighbourhoods, it was easier to get in touch with people positioning themselves between the centre right and far left within the political spectrum. We thus had to make a special effort to get interviews with people who felt acquainted with the right and far right. In London, we made a particular effort to ensure that we had an approximate gender balance and that, in some areas, it was not dominated by the retired.

We supplemented these interviews with about five interviews in each area with local "key informants" who we judged would be well placed to provide insights into the social nature of the area and the interactions



Map 2.1 Study neighbourhoods in London



Map 2.2 Study neighbourhoods in Paris

between its residents. These included health and educational professionals, real estate agents, vicars, shop keepers, local elected representatives and public figures. We also analysed local media and searched in national media and elsewhere for insights into the local areas to provide a "discursive positioning" of the area and its social interactions. Often, of course, this attempted triangulation provided contradictory views and it was also clear that the communities did not speak with the same voice – even amongst the middle classes.

The neighbourhoods[9]

London

- *Peckham* (gentrifying, socially mixed) is situated in inner southeast London four miles from the centre of London (ten minutes by

overground train to the centre of London). It is socially mixed in terms of ethnicity and class (see Appendix 1 and tables 2 and 4). It has areas of large block social housing in the north and Victorian terraces in the south (which have been subject to gentrification in the last five years and where our research was concentrated). Peckham has a rapidly growing international reputation for its arts, media and cultural activities and a number of the study respondents worked in these areas of the creative economy. Our particular focus was on an area bordering Rye Lane on one side – an ethnically mixed, busy shopping street catering largely to African and Caribbean consumers (see Hall, 2013) – and Bellenden Road – characterised by a consumption infrastructure that includes a deli, a general store and a book shop amongst other things – on the other. It loosely maps onto the area developed through the council-led Bellenden Renewal Scheme.

- *Balham* (gentrified, less socially mixed) is an area of Victorian terraced housing in inner south west London 5.6 miles from the centre of London (15 minutes by London underground). It is relatively socially and ethnically mixed (see Appendix 1 and tables 2 and 4) but certain sub-areas within Balham have been gentrifying strongly over the last 15 years and are most solidly middle class in character. One such sub-area, "The Nightingale Triangle", was our study area. It represents an area dominated by (male) employment in the City of London in finance and related services. Many of the semi-detached Victorian terraces and much of the semi-detached housing have been or are being substantially renovated and gentrified.
- *Berrylands* is an archetypical middle-class suburb with semi-detached houses built in the 1930s and typical of a ring of such suburban development in the inner ring of outer London (12 miles to the centre of London – 40 minutes on the train from Berrylands station or 20 minutes from neighbouring Surbiton). Surbiton was immortalised as the archetypal middle-class suburb in the long-running television sitcom of the 1970s and 1980s "The Good Life". In recent years, Berrylands has been subject to an increasing social mix, both ethnically, but also in class terms, with an increase in residents with skilled manual occupations (Appendix 1, Table 2).
- *"Oak Tree Park"*[10] is a gated community in a suburban/semi-rural location 20 miles from London. It consists of large detached houses mostly on half-acre plots along private roads. The journey time to London is 40 minutes from the nearest station. The newer residents are more involved in London's financial markets, whereas

many of the longer standing residents played a senior role in a national/European business economy. Part of the Park's attraction is the easy accessibility to the motorway network and London's two international gateway airports of Heathrow and Gatwick. In conceptual terms, we were interested in the extent to which the decision to live in a gated community like Oak Tree Park was indicative of a wider secession or partial succession that has been much discussed in the literature (e.g. Andreotti et al., 2014).

- *West Horsley* and *Effingham* are exurban commuter villages in a semi-rural location beyond the M25 London orbital motorway, 28 miles from central London (a 45-minute journey by train to central London). The two settlements consist of a village core with commuter-shed ribbon development built from the 1930s onwards and consisting of detached and semi-detached dwellings. The socio-demographic profiles of West Horsley and Effingham are given in appendices 1 and 2, and show that they have an overwhelmingly white and older population. It is representative of an earlier iteration of counter-urbanisation that is perhaps more generation specific and finds strong echoes in Paris (particularly in relation to our study areas of Port Sud Breuillet and Châteaufort).

Paris

- *Noisy-le-Sec* (gentrifying, socially mixed) is a municipality of 39,000 inhabitants, situated northeast of Paris, in the heart of the Seine-Saint-Denis département. Noisy-le-Sec itself has an ambivalent social position. On the one hand, there are a number of low-income parts of the neighbourhood which are getting poorer. On the other hand, however, some neighbourhoods – especially those with small single-family dwellings – are beginning to experience some upgrading of properties with the arrival of middle-class households. When selecting those latter neighbourhoods, the team wanted to track the first seeds of gentrification in the context of a poor and ethnically diverse municipality (mostly people coming from the post-colonial emigration from the Maghreb). Yet it appeared that gentrification is less evident than might be expected by a handful of recently arrived Parisian households who, contrary to their counterparts in Peckham, do not do engage much in strategies of place-making. The team also wanted to evaluate the extent to which middle-class households feel at home amongst the poorer residents (Bacqué et al., 2014).

It appeared that relations to ethnic and social mix vary greatly, depending, amongst other things, on the issue at stake or on the generation of incomers.

- *The 9th arrondissement*, or the 9th (gentrified, less socially mixed and mostly white), is one of the 20 districts in which the city of Paris is subdivided. It is located between rapidly gentrifying neighbourhoods and long-established wealthy neighbourhoods. Unlike Balham, the 9th is not strictly residential, as it concentrates numerous cultural amenities including the Opéra Garnier, and many offices, including the headquarters of large banks like BNP Paribas. In this way, it epitomises some of the key differences we have explicated between central Paris and central London. The particular places on which the survey was focused, that is, the surroundings of rue des Martyrs, are frequently quoted as a "bobo" (or bourgeois bohemian) area. The upper middle-class households moving into the neighbourhood all stress how almost everything can be done on foot, even going out at night. For them, this is an important criterion of distinction. They appreciate the social and ethnic "entre soi" of the neighbourhood.
- *Le Raincy* is a suburban municipality of almost 14,000 inhabitants. It used to be, and still is for the most part, the quintessential "beautiful suburb". It was originally a high-end subdivision which started in the 1860s in the park of an aristocratic castle. The landscape of Le Raincy has diversified over time, but it is still characterised by its many beautiful mansions. Le Raincy's private and public schools are also amongst the most attractive amongst the areas nearby. This makes Le Raincy one of the few "havens" for the upper middle classes in the largely poor and stigmatised Seine-Saint-Denis département. An important concern of many households is to maintain this status in the midst of the neighbouring poverty. In contrast with Noisy, also located in Seine-Saint-Denis, the "others" – of working-class and ethnic-minority backgrounds – are outside the municipal limits, not inside.
- *Breuillet* is a typical railway outer exurb, served by the RER line C. The team focused on the common-interest development of Port Sud, built in 1970. This development of 700 individual houses was designed for managers and professionals who worked in Paris and wanted to live in a resort-like environment. Port Sud is managed by a homeowners' association and has its own school, sports facilities, a lake and a small shopping mall. Yet, as chapters 5 and 7 will show, the attractiveness

of the resort-like model of Port Sud has faded over time. Recently arrived households belong more to the intermediate classes than to the managerial class. This translates into a diffuse feeling of discomfort amongst those who moved in the 1970s. In any case, Port Sud has become more diversified in terms of social profiles and age groups even if its population remains largely dominated by the white middle classes.

- *Châteaufort* is a residential peri-urban municipality, whose landscape is quite similar to that of West Horsley and Effingham. Whilst its population was originally modest, it currently tends to be dominated by upper managers of the private sector. As explained in Chapter 7, with its 1,400 inhabitants and the ability of its municipal council to establish the local planning rules, Châteaufort can be described as a residential club. Châteaufort is not surrounded by barriers and its access is not restricted by gates, but we hypothesise that, from a functional perspective, Châteaufort is very similar to a private gated residential development. This was confirmed by our study. At the same time, there are significant differences to private developments like Oak Tree Park. There is a local public (state) school, a bakery, two restaurants and numerous local residents' organisations which give daily life a taste of village living.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have developed some of the contextual arguments proposed in the introduction about the nature of the middle classes and their relations with each other and with other social groups in the context of two European global metropoles. We have fleshed out some of the rationales for our choice of analytical typologies in the context of a reading of the continuities and discontinuities in Franco-British sociological theorising about the middle classes and accounts of the development of the middle classes in both cities since their rapid (and somewhat different) developments from the mid-19th century. We have given brief portraits of our research areas in London and Paris. The themes we develop about the middle classes and the way they settle and mix with each other and others forms the subject matter of the remainder of the book. In this final section to this chapter, we look back briefly on the different experiences of the middle classes in both cities and the different urban, national and cultural contexts of the middle class. What is clear is that middle-class groups have built their identities

not only, or not even on their occupational backgrounds, but on where they live, with whom and in what areas in and around both cities. Factors that influence this would appear to be their values (often associated with "small p" politics) and their upbringings. The way in which these middle-class people put boundaries around themselves by (to a greater or lesser extent) huddling with themselves and distancing themselves from others is an important way of nuancing boundary distinctions within the middle classes. We investigate this in the rest of the book and it will involve not just issues of class, occupation and money, but also of generation, gender and ethnicity – how the last two are articulated is particularly complex yet important to analyse. Perhaps the key message at this stage is to suggest that "social mix" is more about the way in which the middle classes make statements about their own forms of distinction than about any substantive relations with non-middle-class groups.

Amongst these differences, an important one is whether the development of a top-tier part of society that takes most of the benefits offered by the globalisation of the economy has become more generalised. Some hypothesise that this top tier is drifting apart from the rest of society which stays much more connected to the local/national economy with local incomes. This is a keenly debated issue, particularly in France, since it is considered a threat for political solidarity. There is an increasing separation of an upper class with interests which are more and more global and disconnected from their national territory, which is also the level at which redistributive policies are decided and implemented (Piketty, 2014). This raises a question about the extension of this separatism into (upper) professional-managerial middle classes in cities like Paris and London. Is the upper part of the middle class also drifting apart from the rest? What is the impact of those changes on the middle classes in terms of localisation, identity formation, relationships to social mix and so on?

Préteceille (2006) points to the fact that the middle classes are still significantly present in the Paris region (in fact their presence is growing), but at the same time, upper-class spaces are getting more exclusive, whilst those of the lower classes are becoming more and more specialised and segregated. Butler et al. (2008) and Hamnett and Butler (2013), in response to Davidson and Wyly (2012), have made a similar argument for London. This issue in both cities then becomes a debate around polarisation in which there are two different stories around the same theme. The socio-spatial formation of the middle classes in both cities is therefore the outcome of a dynamic interaction of class forces

in a historical context. We discussed this briefly in the second section of this chapter as a prelude to our discussion of the social spatial structuring of the middle classes in both cities. In the next chapter, "Being Middle Class", we develop this theme on the basis of our interview findings.

3
Being Middle Class

Introduction

This chapter investigates whether – and to what extent – our respondents consider themselves to be middle class, how they explain what being middle class, or just "in the middle" means to them and the role of place in forging these classed identities. As discussed in Chapter 1, many political claims have been made on behalf of the middle classes. Here we ask whether such strategic uses of the term in contemporary political discourse bear any relation to our respondents' sense of their own position.

There was a significant difference between France and the UK, in that we found a strong identification with being *middle class* in the UK neighbourhoods whereas in France respondents were more likely to describe themselves as being *in the middle*. Despite these differences in how social position is expressed, we found striking similarities in how this middle social position was made sense of in relation to other people, the local context and biography. Within this murky "middle" we find different strategies of delineating and explaining identity.

In our discussion of what being middle class/middle means for the respondents, we examine how different aspects of life, including jobs, feelings, relative position and neighbourhood are drawn upon to explain social position. For example, to what degree does professional status matter? What role does neighbourhood or the proximity of Paris/London mean for respondents' sense of their own position?

Class identities and class feelings: Middle class or just "in the middle"?

Whilst there were a range of class identifications made across the London neighbourhoods, most described themselves as being middle class. In the UK, it was common for those who were from middle-class backgrounds originally to express this identification by default – "we are neither upper class nor working class, so we must be middle class" (or as Elizabeth put it, "the kind of grey middle class") whereas those from working-class backgrounds were often more reflexive about class and what becoming middle class meant for them and their families. Alongside, or sometimes as well as, this default position, we find respondents drawing variously on biography, relative position, lifestyle and occupation in order to explain their class position.

One respondent who was French, but living in London, described his shock in encountering the way British people conceptualise the term "middle class":

> We don't have classes in France . . . it's not as, clear as stated in the UK. I was actually shocked when . . . my wife talked about middle class in the way that she did, she "belongs" to the middle class, her parents belong to the middle class, and then I suppose I do have to belong to the middle class, and the class "moyen" in France is not at all – to me – what is described in Britain, class "moyen" it would mean probably lower class, in England. So to be considered middle class for me today is a bit wrong.
>
> – John (Peckham)

Although we might question the assertion that there is "no class" in France, we have certainly found a difference in the way that the term middle class is interpreted in France and the UK (see Chapter 2) as well as a keener identification with being middle class in the London neighbourhoods than those in Paris.

In the French neighbourhoods, the shared lack of a solid identification with a "middle class" was notable, at the same time the respondents in France see themselves in the middle of a broad in-between category, bordered by the rich – and even the super-rich – on one side and the lower classes and the poor on the other end. The sense of belonging to the middle class exists but it is neither a generally shared feeling nor an automatic one. Often it was necessary to push the question of belonging to a class in order to elicit a response. In each area, only a few people

would come up with the term. Furthermore, even when it came up, it was not so much about belonging to the middle class but often about the relationship to consumption: the "middle" does not refer to a class, but rather to a broad middle with the poor, the disadvantaged and the people who receive social assistance on one side, and on the other side the very rich; those people who do not have to worry about their budgets. And they feel just as far from the one as from the other, whence comes the feeling of being in the middle, being average.

> Obviously, I feel quite far removed from those with nothing, but I also feel at the other end of the spectrum from . . . I work near Place de la Concorde in the fashion business. I used to work at Franc bourgeois for Chanel so [. . .] I used to see him [Karl Lagerfeld] regularly in his bullet-proof Hummer. It's just out of all proportion. I feel worlds away from that type of lifestyle.
>
> – Sylvain (9th arrondissement)

To put it another way, in expressing a sense of belonging to the middle class, it is not so much the word "class" that needs to be listened to so much as the word "middle". This may seem strange, as respondents may describe themselves as well off and privileged, but at the same time rate their position as six on a social scale going from one to ten. Even when people have rather high economic capital in terms of annual income, the awareness that a tiny fraction exists that live very comfortably is enough to change the perspective of one's own position.

> I really do feel well off but I also feel a world away from the most privileged people and I see them as inhabiting a different world from me . . . from us [. . .] And there's also a gulf between me and . . . I mean, we are very well off but we do have to deal with day-to-day problems: childcare, getting the shopping done, etc. . . . and we do deal with these and we get on just fine because, again we have the means of dealing with them, but I understand the problems. I mean, I'm not too far removed not to be able to understand how well off I am and how hard it must be for – I don't know – single mothers, for example, who have jobs where you have to be there at specific times. That must be hell [. . .] Yeah, I've really thought this through and I do think the world is divided into those who have to grapple with problems and those who don't.
>
> – Jean-Daniel (9th arrondissement)

Jean-Daniel thinks of himself as closer to the working classes as he can understand some of their difficulties, unlike the richest who live completely different lives. When we started the fieldwork, there was a scandal about and huge French media interest in Liliane Bettencourt (owner of L'Oreal, the world's richest woman and the richest person in France) and many of our respondents referred to her saying that she was "the rich". Here a "middle" sense of social belonging is therefore largely relative and tends to get adjusted downward, and often takes its definition from what one is not.

When explaining how they perceived class in the UK, a common point of reference for the UK respondents was an old comedy sketch from *The Frost Report* (featuring John Cleese, Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett) which satirises traditional British class divisions. The sketch features three men standing in a line, each representing a social class (given as upper, middle and lower). Each, in turn, recites their position in relation to each other ("I look down on him. I am upper class"). Respondents often drew on this sketch in order to point out that class boundaries in Britain have changed from this stark hierarchy. However, our research would seem to confirm that despite a perception that class boundaries in the UK have changed, respondents are still engaged with the intricacies of divisions of social class. Social class remains relevant to how people perceive themselves and those around them in both explicit and implicit ways. In France, the question of inequalities is still very important, and the representation of class is built on the opposition between working class and bourgeoisie, but, as the working class tends to disappear in public discourse, and as an identity, class identities are blurred and not used.

Whilst there is a broad acceptance of "middle class" as an identity in the London neighbourhoods, there were also significant differences in articulations of class across the five neighbourhoods. We can broadly categorise these as ambivalent (Oak Tree Park, Peckham), confident (West Horsley and Effingham, Balham) and ordinary (Berrylands). For example, Oak Tree Park residents made use of biography, identifying themselves as middle class *now*, because of their lifestyle and place of residence, but as self-made people often from working-class backgrounds. Here, people were less clear, and ambivalent, about their position within the middle classes than in other neighbourhoods. For example, Nigel was a retired stockbroker, living in Oak Tree Park, in his 70s. He had made a lot of money and unashamedly described his rather luxurious lifestyle; he felt that he had worked hard and was reaping the rewards. He also continued as a member of an elite stockbroker's club in London.

Nevertheless, his class identity was rather ambivalent, describing himself as middle class but yet different to those around him. During his working life he had been surrounded with men from elite public schools (Eton and Harrow) and whilst very proud of the fact that he had come to his current position through his grammar school education, he stated, "my father is trade, you can't get over that". Reflecting back on making the move into the city as a young man, and an episode where he wore the wrong clothes to a black tie dinner, he describes the difficulty in becoming like those around him, "I didn't know what was the right way to do things. The lessons I've learnt were very, very painful". He may now have a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu et al., 1999b) but this has been learned through the mistakes he has made. Similarly, Diane, a woman who described herself as coming from a working-class background reflected, "My husband says I can't leave my background behind, and I don't think you can sometimes". Often in the narratives of people from working-class backgrounds, class had an emotional register rather than just relating to a set of objective characteristics or a sense of values.

In both Paris and London, social mobility affects feelings of class identity. In the French sample, few people talk about being upwardly mobile and about the difficulties of fitting into another world, because examples of upward mobility are rare. Nevertheless, we have a few cases which highlight the fragility of social position and the role of place of residence in belonging to a new class. For example, Paul Junker, who had moved from social housing at the very beginning of the Port Sud program in Breuillet, described discovering a new way of life in the new house he and his wife lived in. But he also felt they were not involved in the Port Sud social life as they had the feeling it was not for them and they had other priorities. And for Sylvain, originally from an upper working-class background who now lives in the heart of the 9th arrondissement, in a social environment that he considers to be a good fit for him – i.e. upper middle class – and in an area that projects his new "image", he goes on to talk about how he sees himself now.

> I was born in a residential area like that where all the houses are exactly the same and the one thing I want is never to go back. (Laughs.) I know exactly who lives there because that's where I grew up, but I wouldn't like to live around them again. It is a type of snobbery and a question of image as I have left my roots to a certain extent . . . I come from a fairly comfortable working-class background. You know, my Dad was able to afford a detached house back in

> the 1970s and . . . I know that I could have ended up in a place like that and have made friends no problem, but I would be a little bit different, that's all.
>
> – Sylvain

Here the new place of residence and lifestyle is part of moving on; the residential and (upward) class trajectory are closely linked.

Such reflections on the classed trajectory of the household can draw not only on the past but also on the future. For example, when one Berrylands resident was asked if she considered herself to be middle class, Andrea answered: "Me? No. [My partner] definitely is, his parents are, [child] will be." (This theme will be explored fully in Chapter 6.)

In stark contrast, in Balham, West Horsley and Effingham, respondents tended to characterise themselves more straightforwardly and confidently as an upper strata of the middle class and defined this in terms of occupation (see below) and values ("Would you describe yourself as middle class?" – interviewer, "Oh indeed, of course we would" –Annette, West Horsley). Being middle class in Berrylands was articulated rather differently, and compared to Balham, this was an ordinary (Savage, 2001) rather than a distinctive sense of being middle class ("I just say we're in the middle of a middle class or lower middle class" – Janet, Berrylands). This emphasis on ordinariness of social position was in tune with descriptions of the neighbourhood as comfortable but unexceptional.

Professional identities

In both countries, the traditional way of delineating class identity comes from occupational status. The differences in class identities and feelings outlined above notwithstanding, we found that occupation was drawn on in order to explain social position and in descriptions of who "people like us" were. These descriptions were often not reliant on a specific occupational identity but on the category of "professional" in the UK and on the category of "executive" in France.

In the UK, where "professional" was used as a self-categorisation, this was usually embedded within a list of other middle-class attributes. For example, two women, a teacher (Patricia) and a city lawyer (Sarah), list the things that made them middle class, with "being a professional" sitting within this longer list:

> . . . because I have a degree, because I own my own home, because I would class myself as a professional person, because as soon as

> I could afford it I was doing the things that the middle classes do, like holidaying abroad, going to nice restaurants, going to the theatre.
>
> – Patricia (West Horsley)

> I earn a very decent wage, I went to Oxford, you know I'm quite highly educated, so is my husband, so . . . where do I sit? I don't have any aristocratic connections . . . I'm the professional class, that's what I am . . . and so, you know, what the professional class does is isolate itself, from the rest of society by spending money.
>
> – Sarah (Balham)

However, the way that "professional" was used varied amongst respondents. For most people, being a professional was used to indicate belonging to the upper strata of the middle classes (see Sarah above) whereas for a few others it referred to being in one of the traditional professions (lawyer, teacher, doctor) as opposed to working in business. Bridget, a coroner living in Balham, explains the distinction as she understands it:

> My parents were professionals and they were Irish and Scottish, so for them, professions was very, very important. You had the teacher, the nurse, the doctor, um . . . the Church. So that, that was really my culture. My mother used to say "I really don't understand business" and . . . I kind of identify with that. We earn a salary – you go, you see a patient, you get this and you get a salary at the end. What do big business people do? It's wheeling and dealing and making light of it – what do you actually do? So I think I am professional; so where . . . where that fits I don't know, but I think within the profession, professional classes . . . Yep, we're probably you know, higher up.

Here we have two different iterations of what "professional" means. For Patricia and Sarah, being a professional is only one aspect of being middle class and is closely linked to education, lifestyle and consumption. For Bridget it is the status and seriousness of her occupation that places her differently within the middle classes, rather than the power to consume. However, it is the former, wider sense of "professional" that is consistently drawn upon by Balham residents to describe who lives in "the Nightingale Triangle"[1]: "professionals, like us". It is in this neighbourhood where we find the least variation in types of profession amongst the respondents with a high proportion of accountants, lawyers and those who work in finance.

In France, several divisions within the working world are used to identify with and to define others. One strong identifier is the category of "executive" (Boltanski, 1982), which seems to be the most frequently used term, as three-quarters of respondents use it in Châteaufort, half in Breuillet and Le Raincy, and one-third in Noisy and the 9th arrondissement of Paris. Sometimes it is used simply to designate professional status or to indicate level of income:

> Even the young people who are gradually arriving here are executives because you do need a bit of money to be able to live here.
>
> – Jacqueline (Châteaufort)

But "executive" is also used as a broader indicator, not just confined to profession, which includes a certain measure of culture:

> It's fairly homogeneous and yes, I feel quite positive about Châteaufort and we do have a very pleasant lifestyle. There is a good structure for the kids and the people are very nice and polite and cultivated. There are a lot of engineers and executives and you can feel that ... There's a lot of education and a lot of kids – most in fact – who have gone on to university like my kids.
>
> – Caroline (Châteaufort)

Also, we note that if we adopt a Bourdieusan approach, people pay attention to each other's level and type of "culture", especially those who are working in the cultural sphere:

> A job in the cultural sphere: I don't earn a huge amount of money but I make enough to live well and you know, the people I meet at the nursery school, the parents that have become friends, they are very similar to us in terms of, you know, income, references, environment and livings standards.
>
> – Sylvain (9th arrondissement)

Another – significant – distinction is between employees and entrepreneurs:

> I don't necessarily have the same ideas as my entrepreneur neighbour [...] there are differences within a group composed more or less of middle-class people and the different sub-groups – professions,

> activities, being self-employed, running a company, having your own business, etc. – not everyone is in the same category.
>
> – Michel (9th arrondissement)

This distinction is quite similar to that made between the public and private sector, with differences between how the public/private sector distinction is perceived and experienced, and how this interacts with professional or occupational identity. In France, there has long been a distinct difference between people working in the public and private sectors. Today it is still present in conversation, although it is referred to in a roundabout way:

> I must say that it's also a choice. I am interested in working in the social sphere, possibly for political reasons – similar opinions about society and how it should work. I was honoured to be able to be a part of these post-war social achievements implemented by a government of national unity that included communists . . . Institutions are currently being challenged. I will have had the honour of working in a group, in a social institution.
>
> – Michel (9th arrondissement)

Arguably, this division is more pronounced in the UK sample, and it is important to note that during the period of our UK fieldwork, there were strikes in the education sector and civil service and discussions about public-sector pay and pensions were high on the political and media agenda. In the London neighbourhoods, we found a degree of contempt amongst some people who worked in the private sector for public-sector employees, expressing the feeling that those in the public sector were not working as hard as those in the private sector. Sarah, the corporate lawyer from Balham who we met above, explicitly excluded those who worked in the public sector from her definition of "people like us", arguing:

> People like me have contempt for people who work in the public sector. Why do we have contempt? Because I work all the time. You know, they don't want to work, they whinge, they're always off sick, they are, all the time . . . their sick levels are extraordinary.

Thus, her definition of professional seems to exclude people working in some of the traditional professions (teachers and doctors and nurses).

Meanwhile, those working in the public sector often described how wage freezes and a decrease in pensions were affecting their lives and making them worse off in comparison to other middle-class people. For example, Emily explained how her National Health Service (NHS) salary disadvantaged her in the London housing market:

> I'm a nurse in the NHS, so I feel that I have less disposable income than the average middle-class person in London . . . I don't imagine that I would be capable of buying a house here. And . . . so overall I feel like I probably have to struggle a bit more to . . . generally live. I feel that London is not an easy place to live in . . . on a kind of NHS income.
>
> (Peckham)

In both Paris and London, occupational identity and employment sector are drawn upon to position oneself within the middle classes in terms of status and income but in ways that are closely tied to either other attributes (education, culture and lifestyle) or, in London in particular, moral discourses (e.g. of hard work or public service).

World views and values

Alongside talk of occupation there was a strong moral dimension to class identification in the UK neighbourhoods, as already hinted at in Sarah's moralised account of public-sector workers, with a discourse emerging about sharing "middle-class values" of prudence, fairness and a commitment to education. This was in stark comparison to France, where there was virtually no explicit discourse about "middle-class values", but rather an implicit discourse about values that are identifiable as particularly middle class (Bidou, 1984; Chalvon-Demersay, 1984; Vermeersch, 2006).

In the UK sample, this response from Ruth, an artist in her 60s living in Balham, exemplifies this "value talk", bringing together a discourse of personal responsibility and an interest in culture:

> I believe in taking responsibility for yourself, for working rather than living on benefits. I'm not talking about people who are ill. I don't like the culture of thinking that the state owes you everything. And I'm very interested in culture.

This moral aspect to class was particularly prevalent in Balham, West Horsley and Effingham, areas where political outlooks were generally

Conservative and with high concentrations of those working in the financial sector. In France, the only instance of this discussion of "middle-class values" was in Noisy, where certain upper middle intellectual people spoke of cultural values and a certain way of life: of the value of social mix, being open-minded and developing social exchanges with people from different cultures. But even if people recognise that these values are common to many of them and are the basis for creating social links and common practices, they are never presented as values of "the middle classes". We found something similar in Breuillet, where another group of middle-class people from the private sector, working in technical and commercial professions, expressed a commitment to "vacation village" values (see Chapter 4).

A rather different understanding about what being middle class meant in terms of values was characterised more by social responsibility and public service. This kind of discourse was common in those who worked in the NHS. For example, Henry, a young doctor living in Balham, linked his commitment to society with being "professional" rather than "entrepreneurial":

> I come from an aspirational middle-class, education, education, education class, that's where I come from and, you know, I was brought up, professional classes, I'm not entrepreneurial ... I am quite driven by public service you know, doing good, working for the NHS, I didn't go into private practice for example, I don't believe in private practice, to me medicine is serving the public.

Or as Jim puts it succinctly, "I feel the contribution of the middle class is to ... help to enable society. And to grab some money off the rich and to spread it around". This kind of discourse was more widespread amongst those who were left-leaning (or Labour Party members, like Henry) and/or who lived in Peckham. Indeed, Henry invokes New Labour by alluding to the famous speech made by Tony Blair: "Ask me my top three priorities for government and I will tell you, education, education, education" (Blair, 1996). Cutting across both sets of middle-class values, a link between being middle class and an obligation to be responsible for the local community was most keenly expressed in Peckham and West Horsley and Effingham (see chapters 5 and 7).

In the UK, such middleclass values are thus articulated as part of a wider political outlook and world view. The London neighbourhoods present the spectrum of political representation in terms of the main parties (Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Labour) at national and local

level. They also register to some degree the range of impacts of more structural contemporary political and economic issues (recession and austerity) – from being largely insulated from these impacts (Oak Tree Park, West Horsley, Balham) to neighbourhoods where the impacts are beginning to be felt (Peckham, Berrylands), especially in relation to public-sector employment and fears of unemployment – and these differences are reflected in the kinds of "value talk" we encountered. However, the overt expression of political world views and affiliations tends to be much more muted than in the Paris neighbourhoods, perhaps reflecting differences in the socio-political cultures of the two countries.

Even if values are not mobilised as "middle-class values" in the Paris neighbourhoods, their expression is perhaps linked more to politics than in the UK, and political opinions tend to be expressed freely, ranging from the extreme left to the right, but excluding the extreme right (see Chapter 7). We can also identify congruence between occupation type and political opinions, which is consistent with previous research on the French organisation of political opinions, although some professions appear to be shifting. For example, teachers, traditional supporters of the Socialist Party, are nowadays less likely to systematically vote for the Socialist Party and more for centre parties. Broadly speaking, two distinct cultures exist amongst the middle classes: the public servant and the private-sector "cadres" (see Bouffartigue et al., 2011).

Selective belonging and spatial distinctions

Even if people do not express their belonging to the middle classes in the same way in France and in the UK, in both contexts they try to mark their place in a social hierarchy by relating to the places in which they live and to those around them. Spatial distinction is a key characteristic of the middle classes and there are both similarities and differences in the way this takes shape in Paris and London. One similarity is linked to the feeling, expressed in all of the neighbourhoods (apart from Berrylands in the UK and the 9th arrondissement in Paris), that more affluent groups were moving in. Therefore, positioning themselves against or within these changes was central to forms of class identification amongst our respondents. For example, in the 9th arrondissement, many residents expressed the feeling that the neighbourhood had been gentrified by a wealthier population and they clearly articulated the difference between this wealthier group and the others.

> Now, I have the impression that there are more sophisticated, original goods than before. The same goes for the building in which we live. The people who used to live there were more traditional and those moving in generally work in finance like us. When we meet at a neighbour's for drinks, there were bank lawyers and financial analysts – it was like being in the office . . . I wouldn't say nouveau riche, but people who are quite happy.
>
> – Pascale

> . . . as my children keep saying, the neighbourhood has changed enormously, and I have to agree. It has become very yuppified. Prices have quadrupled or even more and prices in general have gone up. This is true, but the place has lost the nice feeling it used to have [. . .] I'd say that it's not working class anymore. It used to be but it's become bourgeois now. I'd say that now it's young executives with lots of money.
>
> – George

In the UK, we found a variety of distinctions made between other groups in order to define class identity. This relates to Watt's concept of "selective belonging" (2009), middle-class place-based identity being established through defining their own neighbourhood against another more working-class area.

We also found people making sense of their social position by comparing their area to those areas around it. This unfolded in a more fractured and mosaic-like way in London than in Paris. For example, despite Berrylands being consistently described as "nothing special" or "much of a muchness", the area was distinguished by the interviewees from neighbouring suburban areas of Tolworth (more working class), New Malden (more ethnically and socially mixed with a large Korean population), Surbiton (more young couples) and areas of Kingston and Surbiton that were more affluent.

These processes of affiliation and disaffiliation also involve the mapping of social distance *within* the middle classes onto space as well as forms of distancing from social others. This was even more evident in the inner London neighbourhood of Peckham. Here respondents focused on nearby East Dulwich, characterising it as more mainstream middle class and less bohemian (Jackson and Benson, 2014): "I do like East Dulwich, and it's very chi-chi, but there's something not – I like the raw-er feeling about Peckham, bit more real life" – Julia. This could

be interpreted as evidence of "mini-habituses" (Butler and Robson, 2003) existing amongst the middle classes in London neighbourhoods. However, residents also co-opt East Dulwich into their discourse of neighbourhood in order to distinguish their residential area from the rest of Peckham.

> I'm living in Peckham but close to the East Dulwich border. So . . . when I say Peckham, Peckham is Peckham; but when I say close to the East Dulwich border, what I'm basically trying to indicate is that it's the sort of smartest possible end of Peckham. And the reason I say that is because you get this reaction when you tell people you've moved to Peckham, they're amazed that you're not bleeding to death in the corner somewhere.
>
> – Daniel

Thus residents draw on the neighbourhoods around them to both claim distinctness from other middle-class people (not East Dulwich) but also to make claims about their neighbourhood as a middle-class "bubble" distinct from the rest of Peckham (Jackson and Benson, 2014). Drawing on and against neighbouring places and peoples, the imagined community of middle-class residents in Bellenden Village construct a narrative of what their neighbourhood is and isn't. These are as much reflections on who they want to be seen as, reflecting the uncertainty and "unmadeness" of their own middle-class identities. As we shall go on to argue in Chapter 5, the ways in which these neighbourhoods are used and lived are also important in processes of the spatial mapping of social difference and claiming space.

In places that had been dominated by the middle classes for a long time and that were surrounded with other predominantly white middle-class places, such as West Horsley and Effingham, being middle class and living in a middle-class area were often taken as an unspoken norm. However, here other nearby places were still drawn upon in order to shore up identity. Classed and racialised others also featured in the place-narratives of those in West Horsley and Effingham, mainly in discussions of "the gypsies". This became most apparent in discussions of established gypsy-traveller communities in Effingham and on the edge of Berrylands.

> . . . so there's the end of Orestan Lane, which is the end nearest the Plough and going down, and a concern you get at the other end of Orestan Lane, it turns into something rather different, there's a bit of

> mistrust of the other bit . . . It's got a traveller . . . there's lots of houses down there that are actually illegal, no planning consents.
>
> – Timothy

In these accounts, the gypsy-traveller population was presented as being on the periphery of the village, as distinct from the rest of the village and in need of control. In the French sample, the question of gypsies and their right to the city was evoked by the Mayor of Breuillet, and he seems to be very concerned with this. But, the residents of Port Sud never talked about it.

An emphasis was put on the commuter-belt villages as being well-established middle-class places but with the handful of working-class people necessary in order to qualify it as "a proper village". For example, in West Horsley, nearby East Horsley was characterised as less authentic, more commuter belt and less of a village than West Horsley, whereas in Effingham, residents considered "the Horsleys" as a whole to be less community minded:

> I think that Horsley where people are very much commuting, they come and go. Here I think people do know each other quite a lot, whether they're the old families that have lived here for ages, who are mainly, what word can I use that doesn't sound bad on your tape recorder? . . . more manual jobs if you like, but we know them a lot, because some of come and do work for us on the house, and painting and building, and one thing and another.
>
> – Mary

Across the commuter belt, suburbs and more urban neighbourhoods, space is read by our respondents in London as a much more intricate classed landscape than by those in Paris who rather make use of the scale of "cite", "département" and Paris.

In Paris, spatial distinctions are organised in a different way and this varied between the neighbourhoods, depending on local contexts and issues. For example, Le Raincy, which is an island of wealth in comparison with the poverty of the wider département of Seine-Saint-Denis (residents of Le Raincy declare €37,000 per year of average income for state taxes, against €20,000 in Seine-Saint-Denis), we often heard "Le Raincy is the Neuilly of the 93", referring to Neuilly sur Seine, a city to the west of Paris which symbolises opulence and wealth. This comparison is made to distinguish the speaker from their poorer neighbours: they might live in the 93, a stigmatised district, *but* they live

in the richest town of the 93. However, most of the time the French neighbourhoods we worked on were relatively socially homogenous, and people did not seem to express hierarchies in the same way as in London. Social hierarchies were often implicit, and involved larger areas than in London, for example discussions of the eastern districts or "les banlieues" for the 9th residents. In France, identities of "communes" still have an important role and tend to be the main frames of reference.

Processes of affiliation and spatial distinction are dependent on the social division of spaces in France and in the UK, though not in exactly the same way. It would seem that processes of social distinction and the micro-segregation of neighbourhoods are more complex and fractured in middle-class resident's imaginings of London than those of their Parisian counterparts. This partly reflects the impacts of the ways that the global socio-spatial organisation of the two cities plays differently in the two cases. In France, despite an important and influential literature describing the process of social separatism on a spatial basis (Donzelot, 2004; Maurin, 2004), it seems that in certain neighbourhoods, expressions of belonging do not include making distinctions against nearby social "others" (as in Watt's notion of "selective belonging" [2009]). This does not mean that the process of opposition does not exist, for example people living in individual houses near poor neighbourhoods strongly define themselves in opposition to the "cite", but that this social separatism on a spatial basis is not as widespread.

Classed figures: "Yummy mummies" and "bobos"

Despite these differences in how class is interpreted spatially, in both national contexts, middle-class people make intra-class distinctions and use recurring figures both to describe the nature of the neighbourhood and as part of their descriptions of themselves. We found two important figures that are used in this way: the "bobo" and the "yummy mummy".

In France, the idea of "bobo" has gained popularity after the publication of the book *Bobos in Paradise* (Brooks, 2000). Journalists interested in this term – perhaps feeling close to being "bobo" (short for bourgeois bohemian) themselves – used and popularised the word and now it has slipped into popular use. The term "bobos", used by respondents spontaneously, was brought up more than anywhere else in those places with the closest ties to Paris, namely the 9th arrondissement and Noisy, each evoking certain differences depending on context. The "bobo" is not a category with any kind of fixed definition but is used to cover different levels of economic capital and different lifestyles. It is also linked to

certain forms of individualisation as well as group recognition (Brooks, 2000). Households in Noisy call themselves “bobo”, whilst at the same time pointing out differences with the “bobos” of Paris – whose high income levels they do not share – and the “bobos” of Montreuil (another suburb city close to Paris) who are more artistic. Nevertheless, what they have in common is the way they see life, a certain level of education, a certain privilege attached to culture and certain values which, in their eyes, make up the group:

> We find ourselves, you know, we like to go out, we like cultural things and all that, but it’s not like the bobos in Montreuil . . . the bobos in Noisy are people who have some higher education, who are interested in cultural things but who don’t have big salaries . . . and then in general who are more or less open to mixing, to social mix, to the public . . . but as far as Montreuil goes, we are less artsy, and then it’s very family oriented [. . .] we don’t know a lot of single people, we don’t know any homosexual couples, in any case that fits a certain profile, and as yet there aren’t in Noisy, so it’s not really very bobo.
>
> – Evelyne

In the 9th arrondissement, the image of the “bobo” is used in a different way; much more negatively. It serves to designate other people, households which are singled out as being upper middle class, or even upper class, with very high economic capital, working in cultural areas, in art and in the creative industries, and whose style of living would be different from the bourgeoisie’s lifestyle. The primary consequence of the huge influx of “bobos” to the neighbourhood over the past 15 years has been a rapid increase in the price of real estate, cited by everyone as a major transformation. On the one hand, this poses a problem because it has an impact on residential plans and/or on plans for having children. On the other hand, it has positive benefits for property owners because it is a sign that their property has value. The people who correspond to the profile of the “bobo” rarely identified themselves as such. In these two cases, the “bobo” is identified as both an agent and symptom of neighbourhood change. However, in Noisy this process is desired by the people we interviewed, who realise that they are the agents of change. In the 9th arrondissement, these changes have already taken place and in part have been carried out to the detriment of those who use this method of classification. The “bobo” is associated with the process of gentrification, which would explain the fact that within areas which are not concerned with this process (Breuillet, Châteaufort, Le Raincy),

the people we interviewed rarely used this category. Seeing oneself as a "bobo" or not is tied to what one group or another has to lose/gain through the process of gentrification.

A different classed (and gendered) figure emerged from the London research. "Yummy mummy" is a category that has arisen in the UK over the last ten years to describe a certain kind of affluent mother and through which middle-class motherhood has become "symbolically loaded as a glamorous and aspirational *lifestyle choice*" (Allen and Osgood, 2009: 6). This term recurred frequently in the Balham and Peckham interviews. Key to descriptions of the "yummy mummy" were visible consumption, selfmaintenance and cars. The "yummy mummy" is spoken of as visible and present in public spaces such as cafes and appears to be enjoying leisure time (there is also perhaps a split between the appearance of leisure and the amount of effort it takes to uphold this image) and the option of spending money. The "yummy mummy" then not only represents a mode of motherhood and femininity but also comes to symbolise the class of an area. "Yummy mummy" is thus used to invoke a particular kind of urban space and lifestyle, certain kinds of family friendly spaces of consumption (such as cafes), whilst also hinting at particular family and employment formations amongst the middle classes:

> Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean by "yummy mummy"?
> Joanne: [Laughs] It's one of those expressions isn't it . . . I guess it's the sort of 30s' mums that have the babies sort of later into it I guess and so are fairly . . . I don't know whether age has got anything to do with it actually, but it's just that real sort of . . . There are areas in London when you go out and all you see are these [laughs] very, you know 30s um, mums and all the big pushchairs, so there's quite a lot of that around. I think of Northcote Road, and you know you're surrounded by them.

The expression was used most often in the inner London areas of Peckham and Balham but with subtle differences. In Peckham it was used to describe the process of gentrification and the type of people moving in, whereas in Balham it was used to describe those who lived in the neighbourhood. In both neighbourhoods, "yummy mummy" was used pejoratively. Unlike "bobo", which was sometimes claimed albeit in a jokey way, no one claimed to be a "yummy mummy", although some did reflect that this lifestyle could be in store for them in the future.

An attraction of Balham is that it is family oriented and provides the infrastructure of cafes, sociability and classes that people with young children need. Within this context, the "yummy mummy" functions not only as shorthand for describing a middle-class area but also as a figure to position oneself against. Those who are most disparaging of the "yummy mummies" were older women. Key to this disapproval was the visible consumption practices and the occupying of space in public:

> The 4 x 4 people discussing their – their jeeps, and Saabs, and their skiing holidays and their nannies, you know . . . I don't feel I've got a lot in common with the – the young marrieds round here, you know they're – they just lead a different lifestyle and you know, the mummies sort of just seem to spend loads and loads of money.
>
> – Maria

> They don't stay at home, because either the builder or the cleaner is in there, they colonise the cafes. I went into Starbucks yesterday and counted the number of seats that were taken by three women with their children, nine seats altogether and that left about five seats for the rest of the Starbucks customers.
>
> – Ania

Meanwhile, younger women were often disparaging about the "yummy mummy" type and distanced themselves from this type by making subtle distinctions, having two rather than three children, or stressing that they worked part time and so were different to this type.

Although other classed figures were used sporadically by respondents, including "gauche caviar" ("champagne socialist") in Paris and the classed and gendered figure of the "Surrey mum" in the London commuter belt – a snobby, pushy figure – the repetition of these archetypes was striking. These figures allow middle-class people to position themselves within the middle classes and within processes of neighbourhood change and gentrification. For example, in Peckham and the 9th, respondents use these figures to position themselves as middle class but not as gentrifiers.

The major difference between the two archetypes is that the "bobo" is gender neutral, whereas "yummy mummy" refers to women, and more specifically, to mothers. Arguably, the rise of the "yummy mummy" as a figure is not only about consumption (and perceptions of consumption) but also about a return to a more traditional division of labour in some middleclass households, where highly qualified and high-flying women

give up their careers or put them on hold to look after their children. Meanwhile, the (still high earning) male partner continues to work long hours. The forms of sociability, consumption and networks amongst such women can be seen as a response to this. This is less marked in the Paris neighbourhoods where we see more women returning to work after having children, although often making other adaptations in their working lives (see Chapter 5). What these two figures do have in common is a certain implicit discourse of whiteness and the association of whiteness with being middle class (discussed in more detail in Chapter 5).

Making sense of class through place

Our research found a strong relationship between class, social and ethnic "others" and place. Class identities and boundaries are mapped onto neighbourhood. This involves, in the UK, demarcating the area from surrounding ones (e.g. from less affluent areas, e.g. "There's Peckham and there's Peckham *Rye*" – Peter, original emphasis) at quite a micro-level, and in France, playing with territorial scales in order to explain social position.

Neighbourhood effects and scales

In our Paris and London neighbourhoods, perceptions about the status of the immediate neighbourhood had a very big influence on the way the people we interviewed see themselves vis-à-vis society overall (e.g. as a stigmatised place that needed to be defended as in Peckham, or as a place that signified success such as Oak Tree Park).

In Noisy, the people we interviewed were living in this largely working-class area, in one of the poorest "départements" in France, and mingled on a daily basis with families who were a lot poorer than themselves. At the same time, they were still rather focused on Paris, which is where many of them work, where they have friends, where they go out for the evening and where, on occasion, they can observe people who are much richer than they are (see Chapter 5). In these conditions and for these interviewees, living in a working-class area lets them experience the feeling that they are in a relatively higher social position than their neighbours in Noisy; but the people and the social realities that they can get a glimpse of in Paris convince them just as much that there is still a section of society living a lot more comfortably than they are:

> I would put us in the middle, we say to ourselves all the time that we are in the middle class but here, when you're looking at ... certain families, really who are have a hard time, you can see, you get the feeling that we are really bobos who have a lot of resources. And with respect to the bobos in Paris, we know that we don't have the same means that they have.
>
> – Amélie (Noisy-le-Sec)

In a similar fashion, living in a rich city like Le Raincy can cause people to place themselves lower on the social scale than where they would put themselves vis-à-vis society as a whole ("Across the whole of France we would be at 9 out of 10, within Le Raincy itself we are maybe 7 out of 10" – Olivier). So what they experience on a local level causes them to downgrade themselves whereas they see themselves occupying a higher position in terms of the rest of France. However, their experience of the departmental level, which is relatively poor, causes them to adjust in the opposite direction and to classify themselves amongst the most privileged or most advantaged. For the areas in our study, the social partitioning of space in the Paris metropolitan area brings about a double effect of place: in Noisy, the focal point for affluence is the city of Paris, whilst in Le Raincy, which is itself a focal point of affluence for the rest of the département, we see an upgrading in relationship to the département as a whole.

In the 9th arrondissement we see the same phenomenon. Some of those we interviewed saw themselves below the social average on the local level. They made the distinction between their position locally and their position across the whole of French society, placing themselves lower down the scale locally because of the presence of the upper and upper middle classes with high economic capital. It is on the basis of this last criterion that they make the adjustment and not from the point of view of cultural capital, which is largely explained by the fact that the majority of people living in the 9th arrondissement have a rather substantial level of higher education. In fact, François, a researcher, is able to make the distinction: "we're upper middle class, so 6 ... national 7 and maybe 5.5 in the 9th arrondissement".

This discourse of being middle class, but not feeling well off within the context of the neighbourhood, was also common in Balham in London amongst those not working in finance. For example, Belinda, who works in research was in her 50s and lived with her husband and two teenage children, described how her family were the last of "people like us" to remain in the street; by that she means at their stage of life, with teenage

children. She described how others who moved in at the same time as them, in similar positions, have moved either to the country or to bigger houses. Although she expressed a desire to stay in the neighbourhood, she also described the burden of paying private school fees and how that had meant not moving house. Her perception of the household's position was linked to those around them and others who had moved away:

> We've both got quite well-paid jobs um, but do we feel well off – no, not really just . . . I mean we should do, we should do um, but you know, I mean it is an area where you know, a lot of people are city bankers and you know, kind of have, you know no mortgages and kids at private schools, no problem at all, houses in France, Spain, wherever and we're not in that bracket at all. You know we work bloody hard and my husband's doing quite well and you know, our kids had a rave education. Are we rolling in it, absolutely not, you know, it kind of [laughs] like, just . . . But, are we fortunate, yes of course we are.
>
> – Belinda

People's perceptions of their own status vis-à-vis the neighbourhood also draw on changes in the neighbourhood over time. For example, Hilary, a librarian in Balham, compares her household's position with previous occupants of the area and the people that surround them now in the local area:

> I suppose we might be wealthy by comparison with some of the people who lived here, the people who had the house before us, not wealthy, but better off – but people who have really big money. Um, they kind of gut the houses . . .

Hilary thus positions her family within a trajectory of neighbourhood change as well as within the current neighbourhood population of those around them who spend "big money" on their houses. Similarly, Susan, who grew up locally, positions herself within the changing neighbourhood of Berrylands. She describes a diversification of the types of people living there:

> There used to definitely be a Berrylands type. When I lived a little bit further out it was a bit snobbish; you could say – they *literally* would say, 'I live in *Berrylands*' although . . . really, we've got the

> sewage works down the road, it's not exactly that salubrious [laughs]. But no I think it's um a whole range of people, um, just very sort of very regular people – usually perhaps their second homes, children – but I'm noticing um, sort of more diverse range of people – you know nationalities – and it's nice. It used to be very sort of white middle class and now, you know, a lot you know, Indian, Iranian – my next door neighbour's Iranian – um, you know and other sort of Continental European people there as well.
>
> – Susan

Susan describes a change in the neighbourhood to "regular people" and positions herself within this change from "snobbish" to normal neighbourhood.

In contrast, for many Oak Tree Park residents, living in the area is emblematic of their social arrival or success:

> I just cannot imagine anywhere on earth better.
>
> – Alison

> It represented, apart from I think the delight when you come in here, it it's still I think a beautiful place to live . . . It represented also something to be proud of . . . that . . . if you said that you lived in Oak Tree Park within a local context then anyway it kind of meant something.
>
> – Christine

However, there was trouble in paradise. A process of distinction was going on within the Park concerning those incomers perceived as "nouveau riche" and not "people like us", who were building bigger houses that were judged distasteful by the longer term owners (see Chapter 7 for a discussion of how such tensions play out in discussions and actions of planning and building work).

> The original people that lived in the Park weren't so wealthy at all . . . professionals earning reasonable salaries, but nothing special, the houses weren't that expensive initially. But the people that are coming in now are the people that are buying £3-million-houses, a different type of people. They're generally city people or some of them being investment properties being rented out. So it's a different type of person . . . it's a different community now.
>
> – Jane

These reflections on population change should also be understood within a longer history of the changing population of the Park. Gladys, a long-term resident explained how when she had first moved in over 50 years ago, the Park had been peopled by “Jews and black marketeers”, a category of people that she distanced herself and her husband from. She also stressed that when they had first had their house built, “there were six [houses] at the beginning, and of course we were the council house end”. Her house had not been a council house, but this analogy was adopted instead to demonstrate the social distance between herself and her wealthier neighbours. This example demonstrates that discussions about changes in the values of people living in the Park may be interpreted not only as evidence of change, but also as evidence of processes of distinction taking place. Indeed, many of the people taking part in the interviews stressed that they were not the most likely inhabitants of the Park, they were not rich (like other people living in the Park), rather a series of unusual events had led to their residence there (see Chapter 4).

Other neighbourhood and personal trajectories were less easy for the respondents to understand. Gilbert and his wife had been tenants living near Paris in crowded accommodation with their two children. So they bought a bigger house in Port Sud. From the beginning, they struggled to get to grips with the social position of the neighbourhood and therefore their own local position. Gilbert described the development of the area:

> When we arrived in Port Sud, it was considered a residence of good standing and the nice part of Breuillet. That was a little strange as the reason we chose here was because it was cheaper than elsewhere, but that’s just the way it worked. And today we have the impression that the socio-professional background of the people buying here is not the same as it was 30 years ago. It used to be senior management, the professions, etc.

Interviewer: And yet prices have gone up.
Gilbert: Prices have gone up a little, yes.
Interviewer: Yes, prices have gone up.
Gilbert: But they are still amongst the cheapest in the area.
Interviewer: So, it has moved downmarket a little?
Gilbert: That’s the impression we have, but 30 years ago I think the area was more downmarket than today and that’s why I told you that I don’t know if it is us or Port Sud that has changed.

Here, the respondents struggle to separate their own story and residential trajectory from that of neighbourhood ("I don't know if it is us or Port Sud that has changed").

Thus, in order to make sense of their social position, neighbourhoods are drawn upon in a variety of ways. Living in a well-off place like Oak Tree Park might signal personal success and high social position, whereas in Le Raincy or Balham (also well-off areas) residents might compare themselves to richer neighbours and feel poorer. Furthermore, neighbourhoods are not static and our respondents also place themselves in the context of ongoing neighbourhood change.

However, as we shall go on to explore, people do not merely exist in the places where they reside and the wider metropolitan context is also important in respondents' sense of their own class position.

The London/Paris effect

London and Paris are both capitals and financial cities, with a concentration of the highest salaries and most powerful jobs, although the effects of the financialisation of the economy are more marked in London. This situation has a strong (but varied) influence on the position of middle classes in these cities and society. Paris has a certain level of affluence which makes it easy even for those who are amongst the highest paid on a national level to downgrade themselves as they measure themselves against the better off. This self-classification reveals a certain lack of awareness about French social realities on the part of the middle classes. Furthermore, with reference to the French neighbourhoods, the importance of referring to a middle position, as opposed to identifying with the upper classes should be noted. This is true even for those households which are obviously very well off and who could lay claim to a certain level of personal success and to belonging to the higher categories.

In London, this effect is arguably even stronger because of the presence of the City of London and London's reinvention as a "global city" (Sassen, 2001). This has created a wealthy upper middle class (portrayed in the introduction to John Lanchester's (2012) novel, *Capital*) and their presence effects how other, less wealthy middle class feel about their own status and income, as well as property prices. For example, conceptions of what it is to be middle class in Balham were heavily influenced by the presence of those who work in the City, showing the effect of the financial sector on the neighbourhoods that house its workers, not only in terms of the housing market and gentrification but also in understandings of class position. Those not working in jobs linked to the

financial sector often made a distinction between the "City types" and the rest. The City types were seen as being an affluent self-segregating group who were not having to make some of the trade-offs that those in other sectors were making; that is, "belt-tightening" in order to afford school fees. This had an impact on residents' perceptions of their own class position. For example, one man in his 60s, a semi-retired education consultant, described himself as "middle income", which he then went on to define as someone earning £50,000 to £120,000 a year, as opposed to someone in the City, like his neighbours, who earn £120,000 plus.

In the neighbourhoods of Peckham and Berrylands, where respondents were most keenly aware of the impacts of austerity measures and the economic crisis, the expense of London and their relative positioning amongst the middle classes both financially and in terms of status was discussed. Alan, a recently retired civil servant, reflected on his relative position compared to a friend in Newcastle:

> Now a friend of mine was up in our Newcastle office – same salary as me – he was the local JP, magistrate, head of the local freemasons, so he . . . picked up on all the um, middle class of bits that go with it. And we were, we were scratching round, sort of thing.
>
> – Alan (Berrylands)

In this narrative, the friend with the same salary was nevertheless considered higher up the pecking order in Newcastle, was more respected locally and carried the trappings of being a high-profile figure in the community. As outlined above, others were experiencing the constraints of living in a city where the costs of living are high, for example Emily, the NHS nurse (see page 7 of this chapter), who was struggling to afford London rents.

Conclusion

> I know I'm middle class, I think we have aspirations but . . . but financially I think the value, are middle-class values, but financially we're not up there.
>
> – Harry (Berrylands)

> If you are in Vietnam, being a doctor is probably very middle class. I'm not sure in this country . . . My plumber, he is earning more money than me.
>
> – Dr Huang (Peckham)

> I think Britain still is a class-ridden society, it's very much where did you go to school? Or who do you know? Where do you live? What's your address? What's your postcode? And a postcode makes a big difference.
>
> – Mark (Effingham)

Although there is a perception that boundaries of class have been reconfigured in the UK, class continues to be made use of in explicit ways, such as in talk about middle-class values, and implicit ways, such as through the highly classed and gendered category of the "yummy mummy". If, as Kuhn argues, "Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes at the very core of your being" (1995: 98), then this is something that those who feel a mismatch between their present situation (here, as ostensibly middle class) and where they are from, feel most keenly. Others weigh up a combination of different attributes, including wealth, status, background, values and occupation in order to make sense of class position.

In France, there is increasing social inequality but this does not correspond to the way that people talk about class on the ground, which is perhaps indicative of the heterogeneous nature of the middle classes. This does not mean there is no public consciousness of social inequalities in France, and the question of social class is never very far away. But in our interviewees' accounts, there is some blurring of boundaries between categories of working class, middle class and the rich, and the public debate, which focuses on the ill-defined "middle classes", does not help people to clarify their own position.

As perceptions of class amongst the middle classes shift and boundaries are reconfigured, place becomes important in how respondents make sense of their own relative position (Savage et al., 2005). The immediate neighbourhood and the wider metropolitan and national contexts are drawn upon in order for respondents to position themselves in relation to others. There are key differences between the cities: more micro-distinctions are made between different middle-class groups and places in London neighbourhoods (i.e. down to postcode level as in Peckham and East Dulwich, or about neighbouring villages) than in Paris, where the scales of cite (municipality), département and Paris are made use of. However, intra-class distinction is still part of class discussions in France, as can be seen in the figure of the "bobo", a classed figure that the French interviewees draw on in order to position themselves within the middle classes.

Neighbourhoods are not static and unchanging. Thus we find respondents placing themselves not only in comparison to other residents ("people like us" or not), but past occupants and visions of the neighbourhood are also referenced in order to make sense of the present. The next chapter takes this further, exploring the relationship between such neighbourhood ideals and the choices made by respondents about where to live.

4
Residential Choice and Representation of Place

Introduction

For middle-class households, residential choice is part of the way in which they seek to position themselves in social and urban space. The choice of residential location, tenure and housing type thus brings together the social and the spatial in various ways, reflecting desires for lifestyle, social and urban practices and identity. The choices of individual households translated into action can impact on socio-urban and population dynamics and the transformation of urban space.

This chapter outlines the representations and imaginings of place that influence residential choice. Such representations, as we demonstrate later in the book, inform lived experience, practices of place-making (Chapter 5: Lived Space) and the politics of place through which middle-class actors intervene in local space (Chapter 7: Changing Places). The chapter here takes as its point of departure the idea that representations of place are a dimension of residential choice. In this respect it calls for the recognition that perceptions and understandings of space are significant within residential choice and become references by which people relate to the places in which they live.

As we argue, middle-class residential choice is inherently spatial and social; concerns over residential environment are central to the decision over where to live, intersecting with well-rehearsed practical considerations such as whether a particular environment is suited to daily family life. Our focus is intended to highlight the ways in which idealised understandings of space – the place-in-the-mind (to paraphrase Pahl's [1965, 2005] community-in-the-mind; see also Butler and Robson, 2003) – influence the choices that people make and the lives they lead within neighbourhoods. In particular, we reflect on the way(s) that

people represent place in relation to use, identity and symbols, and appropriate space through imagination.

Beyond this, we question the relationship between habitus, social/residential trajectories and residential choice. In this manner, we demonstrate that residential choice needs to be understood within the context of people's lives, taking account of their histories and biographies, and recognising the role of embodied structures on these decisions.

Complicating residential choice

The question of residential choice has been examined in both the French and British literatures. One rendering of this is the focus on selection effects into neighbourhoods – that much of the observed activity within neighbourhoods is explained by the characteristics of the population that select into it in the first place. This is especially important in terms of family formation and social reproduction, such as school catchment areas and subsequent schooling strategies (Authier et al., 2010a; Burgess et al., 2011; Clark and Dieleman, 1996; Mulder, 2006; Poupeau and François, 2008). Significantly, these literatures stress that residential strategies involve individuals and families making trade-offs and compromises as they seek to balance different considerations arising from the many areas of their lives: professional lives, family ties and educational planning (Bertaux-Wiame and Gotman, 1993). When it comes to residential choice, the decision-making process is complicated, engaging a range of criteria that are themselves dependent on various factors; questions remain as to the criteria that households use in making residential choices.

Family considerations represent a key dimension in the residential decision-making process. Some locations may be valued because of what they offer to households at a particular stage in the life course (Authier et al., 2010b; Mulder, 2006, 2007). A property that would suit a single individual or married couple might not be so appropriate for a growing family. The same may be true of neighbourhoods. For example, in London as in Paris, there were cases where people felt that they should move out of the inner city once they had children. They had enjoyed the dynamics of living in the city when they had no family commitments, but felt that raising children in the city was a different matter. This was not necessarily related to the cost of property but rather to their ideas about suitable environments in which to raise children and the location of high-performing schools (Reay et al., 2011; van Zanten and Obin,

2010). This demonstrates that residential choice may be tied up with concerns over social reproduction, with educational choice and peer group the source of compromises within residential decision-making (see e.g. Bridge, 2003; Vermeersch, 2011). Other family-related considerations may include proximity to family members who may provide childcare and other household support to young families (Andreotti et al., 2014; Attias-Donfut, 2008).

Professional considerations on the other hand relate to proximity and/or accessibility to the work place. In some cases, distance may be less important than the length of the commute and the availability of transport. For example, in Noisy-le-Sec (Paris), the introduction of the *Réseau Express Régional*[1] (RER; a high-speed suburban rail network) resulted in an influx of families from Paris. In some of the neighbourhoods there was a clear gender bias, with professional considerations relating only to the job of the male partner, perhaps reflecting the gender bias within childcare but also clearly plotted in terms of generation (in other words, it was more common for this to be the case in the older generations, which were more frequently single-income households).

Economic considerations place very real limits on the possibilities for realising residential ambitions, delineating neighbourhoods that are affordable to the household. However, trade-offs can be made here too. For example, several interviewees in the 9th arrondissement stressed that they had chosen to buy a smaller apartment in this area in order to be able to stay in the city, rather than to move to areas where they would have been able to afford a larger home. Other reasoning may be based on access to home ownership – in this scenario, residential selection is primarily focused on the desire to become a homeowner, even if that entails moving some distance away from the city.

Finally, social considerations are bound up with the cultural value placed on a particular location and the social consequences of having a certain address in a particular neighbourhood. Some residents spelled this out clearly, "I had ambitions and I chose Le Raincy because it looks better" – David. As Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst have argued, "residential space is a key arena in which people define their social position . . . One's residence is a crucial, possibly *the* crucial, identifier of who you are" (2005: 207; original italics).

This draws on the relationship between social hierarchies and space that Bourdieu first identified in *The Weight of the World* (1999b), where space within a hierarchical society is structured by these hierarchies and expresses social distance.

What this makes clear is that neighbourhoods have functional *and* symbolic importance for residents. Residential trajectories are strongly influenced by the cultural values placed on particular neighbourhood types. Indeed, it becomes clear that significant social stakes accompany residential choice; in other words, residential trajectory is intrinsically linked to the social trajectory of individuals (Bacqué and Vermeersch, 2014; Benson, 2014). If where you live can become a marker of social position, then it is critical to understand how considerations in this regard might be embedded in the decision-making process.

Representations of place in Paris and London

We focus here particularly on representations of place and related cultural values. These may draw upon a range of factors, including location within the metropolis, the urban and social morphology of the neighbourhood, aesthetic considerations, proximity to nature and a sense of community. Such representations resemble ideal types (in the Weberian sense of the term) that convey both residential (types of housing available) and the wider environmental contexts.

The discussion of these representations presented here reflects on the broadening out of Ray Pahl's (1965, 2005) "village/community-in-the-mind" to incorporate diverse locations from the inner city out to the exurban environment in a manner reminiscent of Butler and Robson's (2003) "Brixton-in-the-mind". Characterisations such as these draw attention to the imagined community of like-minded people who share these (often) classed representations of place. It is also important to note that such representations of place may also, implicitly or explicitly, contain racialised imaginaries. As Butler and Robson (2003) identify in their work, understandings of Brixton focus on ideals of multicultural living (see also May, 1996). In contrast, rural imaginaries, such as those at the root of Pahl's (1965, 2005) accounts, are "intertwined with specifically white middle-class social and moral values" (Tyler, 2003: 492; see also Agyeman and Spooner, 1997; Neal, 2002).

Whilst, for the most part, the representations of place prevalent within respondents' narratives draw heavily on the intersections of the material environment with sociality, it should be noted that in some cases, strong representations of place are absent, whilst the lifestyles available there predominate (e.g. the possibilities for family-focused life that a particular location offers).

What becomes clear is that beyond our middle-class respondents, representations of place are mobilised more broadly. Diverse actors play a

role in the construction of representations of place, from journalists and the media, to estate agents – mobilising particular imaginings of place that include the lifestyles available in particular locations (see Bridge, 2001a) as they seek to attract home buyers for whom these representations are significant. As we show in Chapter 7, such representations of place are also mobilised in the discourse of elected officials and local actors to justify their political actions and urban projects (Bacqué and Fijalkow, 2006).

Despite the earlier assertion that imaginings of place are often culturally specific, through the comparison of how middle-class respondents in London and Paris represent their places of residence it becomes clear that certain themes have resonance for residents in both cities: (1) the representation of Peckham and the 9th arrondissement as *urban villages*, and (2) the depiction of West Horsley, Effingham and Châteaufort as *rural villages*, replete with the symbolism of the rural idyll but within easy reach of the city.

Urban villages

This representation of place embeds notions of centrality, amenities (ordinarily in terms of consumption infrastructure – small [independent] businesses, often food-based) and a sense of community. Proximity is particularly valued: social proximity in terms of networks of friends and relations, proximity of services as well as a sense that the rest of the city is close and easily accessible. The neighbourhood serves as an axis for positive identification, with claims to belonging stressing place attachment and a sense of being rooted in the neighbourhood. In many ways, respondents in both Peckham and the 9th arrondissement echo the sense of an urban village laid out in Jane Jacobs' (1992) seminal work *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, with the neighbourhood acting as a site of familiarity – both in terms of the geography but also of the people – whilst allowing for people to remain relatively anonymous.

Respondents in Peckham often referred to their neighbourhood – the Bellenden Improvement Zone – as a village, drawing attention to the proximity of the local consumption infrastructure (looking towards Bellenden Road, rather than Rye Lane), the fact that they could walk their children to school, the sense of community and their familiarity with other people who lived in the area ("I would say it's kind of village-like, constantly see the same people" – Susanne), people that they would smile at in passing or say hello to ("it encourages people to feel like a village maybe where they *do* look out for each other . . . just sort of say hello to each other in the street, or at least recognise each other . . . " – Alan).

As several of the respondents highlighted, community was there for the taking, but not something that was forced upon you. Taken together, the way that respondents related the sense of life available in the Bellenden area reflected a sense of the urban village, with these dimensions of the way of life available there clearly prized by residents. Contrasting this area of Peckham with the village that she had grown up in, Charlotte first stressed, “Very different. Well maybe it’s not quite as different as you first think really”. She then went on to reflect on the similarities between her neighbourhood and where she had grown up,

> I grew up on a farm in a village . . . in a way although there’s a village school, and there’s village pubs, maybe there’s slightly less of a community there because people have to drive everywhere to do everything . . . [it] had sport days and May fairs and this, that and the other, and everyone knew everyone, but in Peckham on our road we have the Big Lunch, and there’s various other festival things in Peckham Rye . . . I suppose everywhere is a village in a way isn’t it? Or you can make every part of London a village . . . So maybe it feels villagey because you want it to be. Although I do think it feels like a community.

Representing Peckham in this way gains further significance when pitted against prevailing images – featuring gun and gang crime, high-rise estates and deprivation. Residents were very knowledgeable of these competing representations, often stressing how the neighbourhood had surprised them, their friends and their families because it was so different to how they had imagined Peckham (see Benson and Jackson, 2013) (Figure 4.1).

The inhabitants of the 9th arrondissement of Paris use the same village-based imagery to describe their neighbourhood, which relates here to the vibrant commercial atmosphere of the street and the impression of knowing one’s neighbours:

> I feel that there are a lot of busy shopping streets like this one [Rue Cadet] in Paris but people constantly remark that this street in particular has a special village feel to it.
>
> – Philippe

> When I’m going out to work, I say hello to at least five or six people I know . . . I think it’s a much friendlier place than certain towns in the rest of France [. . .] When we’re in the street, we’re not simply anonymous.
>
> – Virginie

Figure 4.1 "I love Peckham"

Despite the similarities in the ways that respondents characterise their neighbourhoods, there is a need to remain aware of particularities in the ways these are mobilised. For example, the urban village described by middle-class residents in the 9th arrondissement is valued on the grounds of proximity: everything that they need can be reached on foot.

> We have everything here, you can even go to the cinema in the 9th arrondissement. You can go to a restaurant, cinema, theatre ... You know, sometimes I go walking along the Quais de Seine or picnicking in the summer, things like that, or an exhibition ... You know, things like that, I don't really have to leave the 9th because we have everything here. That's really what it's like. I know it's good to go and see other places and things but ... I'm a real home bird and I really feel at home in this area.
>
> – Virginie

Such pedestrian mobilities are a central feature of these residents' lives in a way that is not matched in the London neighbourhoods. In Peckham it is clear that respondents rely on public and private modes of transportation, from buses, to trains and bikes. In many ways, the focus on being able to move around locally alongside the presentation of the 9th arrondissement as an urban village depicts the middle-class residents of this neighbourhood as being locally anchored; indeed, their orientation inwards, towards the neighbourhood, is reflected further in their lack of knowledge and sometimes the fear about the surrounding suburbs of Paris, an orientation that is matched by the middle-class residents of Balham.

It can be argued that the lack of desire to move extensively through the city on a daily basis, despite the availability of public and private transportation to do so, has become something of an upper middle-class value, accompanied by ready access to freely chosen long-distance mobility. Here, the distinction between mobility and motility proposed by, amongst others, scholars such as John Urry (2008) and Vincent Kaufman (Kaufman et al., 2004) is significant. Whilst these affluent residents have access to mobility (they are capable of mobility, hence motile), they choose to move around locally as little as possible. They can be considered as mobile without being constrained within that mobility. Moreover, this local focus and wish to limit daily travel is linked to the impression of being in the centre of town and the feeling that nothing important goes on

Figure 4.2 Courtyard and apartments in the 9th

anywhere else, a sentiment that was aptly captured by Cécile as "Being where things are happening, where there's life and things are moving" (Figure 4.2).

An examination of how Peckham is portrayed by respondents additionally reveals that a central feature is the role taken by perceptions of social and ethnic mix in the area, with the latter presented as

a cosmopolitan dimension that reflects these residents' own identity as worldly cosmopolitans and their unique ability to live in this neighbourhood. What is clear, however, is that whilst these middle-class residents are open to and even celebrate the diversity of culture on the ground in their neighbourhood, they are not so attuned to and concerned about poverty in the area.

Rural villages (in the commuter belt)

This representation of place embeds the notion of the rural idyll, an Arcadian vision of rural areas that idealises local community and proximity to nature, placing significant value on the rural landscape and environment. Whilst often the rural idyll has been presented as the antithesis of urban living (see Williams, 1973), it is clear that for respondents in Châteaufort, West Horsley and Effingham, an orientation towards the city – for example using the city for leisure and cultural pursuits – remains a significant feature of residential choice. In this respect, the accessibility of the city is a critical feature that should not be overlooked and is reminiscent of Pahl's (1965) seminal work on the movement of urban dwellers to the commuter belt in Britain, inspired by the desire for a quality of life that they imagined existed in more rural settings and in particular the expectation of the generic "village/community-in-the-mind".

The ideal of the rural village underpinned the residential choices of respondents in the London commuter belt, particularly those in the villages of West Horsley and Effingham (although to a certain degree there was also a sense of this in the narratives of respondents in Oak Tree Park). As Findlay et al. (2001) found in their study of commuter-belt residents, respondents in these villages privileged an explanation of residential choice that combined a sense of the ease with which they could access the city and their desire for living in the countryside (Figure 4.3). This was made particularly clear by Martin and Sarah, "it was a mixture of the accessibility by road and by rail, but we also loved the beauty of the countryside". Similarly, in Châteaufort, Angèle explained,

> We didn't want to live in the city but we didn't want to move too far from Paris either and we found that this was a perfect solution because we have the impression that we are 500 km away from Paris even though we're only 25 km away. We wanted a village-type lifestyle to raise our kids in a carefree country environment whilst still being close to major amenities.

Figure 4.3 The centre of Châteaufort

Respondents thus sought a particular type of lifestyle, at once valuing their place of residence for its access to the city whilst also allowing them to escape it. Their accounts of their neighbourhoods narrated a sense of close-knit community through local organisations and activities – although this was a contested description of the neighbourhood, with some people finding it difficult to locate and penetrate the local community. There were residents who lived within these seemingly idyllic locations but who felt that they could not access community, even though they had had an expectation that it would be there – local amenities that needed their support and the idyllic surrounding countryside ("there's some beautiful countryside up there on people's doorsteps" – Richard, West Horsley). The combination of these factors leads to the construction, by parents, of villages as good places to bring up children because of the types of residential environment that they offered (Halfacree, 1994; Matthews et al., 2000; Valentine, 1997). This is a vision that no doubt drew on the perceived safety of the countryside but also the presence of other "people like us" (or rather, an appropriate peer group). All these aspects of rural living, at least in the minds of respondents, needed protection from the threat of suburbanisation (see Chapter 7; Benson and Jackson, 2013). Albeit implicitly, whiteness and middle-classness are central characteristics of these imaginings of the rural village (Agyeman and Spooner, 1997; Tyler, 2003) (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4 West Horsley

The suburban ideal

Representations of the suburban neighbourhoods in the study share some features, whilst also having notable differences. Whilst respondents in Paris living in the neighbourhood of Le Raincy refer to "la belle banlieue" (the pleasant suburb), in Berrylands, the suburban neighbourhood in London, the imagery is rather of the archetypal suburb. It is clear, however, that imaginings of these suburbs in each country are framed by the very different geographies and histories of each city. Le Raincy, even as an example of "la belle banlieue", is located in département 93, a department that is known for its "banlieue", which, for the Le Raincy residents interviewed, comes with negative connotations of high-rise social housing projects, large multi-ethnic populations and lauded within French rap music. Consequently, residents draw on this opposition in ways that highlight the intersections of class and ethnicity in their representations of place, with Le Raincy emerging as a white, upper middle-class island. Le Raincy's proximity to social disadvantage and deprivation resembles that of Peckham (and to a lesser degree Balham), rather than Berrylands. In contrast, Berrylands is part of a wider tract of middle-class suburbia to the southwest of London, a quintessential railway suburb built up so that the middle classes could escape from the city once their working day was over.

Respondents in both Paris and London notably depict their neighbourhoods as what Fishman has referred to as middle-class suburbia, "suburb(s) of privilege" (1987: 3), underpinned by ideals for family and domestic life, a "bourgeois utopia" (1987: 4). Indeed, the history of both Le Raincy and Berrylands fits to the model of development of such suburbs outlined by Fishman. Le Raincy is one of the bourgeois subdivisions put in place around Paris during the Second Empire, whilst the development of Berrylands took place in the 1920s and 1930s. Importantly, both of these locations offer space for respondents to have a house with a garden, reflecting the centrality of family and domestic

Figure 4.5 Berrylands streetscape

life within the suburban ideal. But there is an additional sense of proximity and access to both London and Paris, making these locations good for commuters (Figure 4.5).

For respondents in Le Raincy, the environment of the neighbourhood with green open spaces is presented as restful and relaxing. Le Raincy is one of several bourgeois "pleasant suburbs" based on the model of the city park. The best-known example of this type of development is Le Vésinet. As in other "pleasant suburbs", one of the major preoccupations of the current residents in Le Raincy is defending their way of life in the face of social and urban change. The situation is particularly tenuous due to the physical location of the neighbourhood. Unlike Le Vésinet, which lies to the west of Paris and is surrounded by other well-off communities, Le Raincy is surrounded by some of the most deprived districts in Ile de France. Le Raincy residents present their neighbourhood as bourgeois, sometimes even as an enclave in the middle of a wider lower class, multi-ethnic area, and in a poor department which is highly stigmatised. The reference to "Neuilly in the 93" is regularly evoked to express this particularity:[2]

> It's bourgeois. That stays the same anyway... It remains what it always has been: the richest city in Seine-Saint-Denis [département 93]. It is just the same... To have seen old people still going about in a Rolls Royce with chauffeurs in their caps and everything...
>
> – Jacinthe

When the inhabitants describe life in Le Raincy, they emphasise protection, quietness and tranquillity – a stark contrast to the negative representations by which the surrounding area is characterised. They see themselves living in a privileged and protected space, favourable to the development of their children, a representation that diverges from the perceived ambiance of neighbouring suburbs, more specifically those with high levels of social housing which are characterised as unsafe places (Figure 4.6):

> It is also neighbourhoods which are nicer, where we find there is less insecurity, fewer housing projects. They aren't very far away but we find that less . . . less insecurity and we had told ourselves that if the family got bigger, I hope that we hadn't fooled ourselves that the schools would also be possibly less . . . what I mean is, it would suck a little less.
>
> – Léonard

In Berrylands, respondents drew on the position of the suburb within the British imagination (e.g. the vision expounded by the 1970s television series, *The Good Life*, set in neighbouring Surbiton) as a way of explaining what their neighbourhood meant to them. In this manner, they expressed an affinity for the life enabled and represented by the archetypal suburb, pervaded by a sense of ordinariness, convenience

Figure 4.6 Lane behind the houses – Le Raincy

and comfort of life there. It was therefore common to find Berrylands described as peaceful, predictable and even boring, the latter presented as a positive attribute. Drawing on and against popular representations of the suburbs, and recognising that others might perhaps look down on the suburbs, at times these accounts of life were presented as slightly ironic, with respondents presenting themselves as somewhat apologetic for living in the suburbs.

> As soon as you mention Surbiton I would say 25 years ago, you could see the will to live draining out of people . . . But that's the kind of thing really, people feel safe, I think fairly safe, and it's a respectable place I suppose, in the levels of respectability it's quite near the top I would say.
>
> – Derek

> I quite like coming, coming home here. It's not, it's not palatial, it's not special but there's, there's room to breathe.
>
> – Fraser

The protected neighbourhood

The final representation that is arguably evident in both London and Paris is the notion of the protected neighbourhood, which is variously mobilised to represent Châteaufort, Port Sud (a neighbourhood within Breuillet) and Oak Tree Park. Port Sud in Breuillet was originally conceived in the image of a vacation village. The valuation of the place of residence lies in its separation from, although accessibility to the place of work, ideally through the use of public transportation even if the distances are fairly large. This has a certain resonance with Derek Wynne's (1998) portrayal of a new residential estate that included its own private leisure and sporting facilities. In this respect, such locations are indicative of the changing relationship between place, work and leisure (see Wynne, 1998). The place of residence is thus characterised by leisure, and additionally, the sociality of collective life. The environment is often semi-rural and significantly includes the provision of club and sports facilities.

It is clear that the characteristics of a "protected neighbourhood" have value for respondents in Châteaufort and Port Sud and are mobilised in their accounts of their places of residence. Amongst residents in Oak Tree Park, this notion of a protected neighbourhood with discrete boundaries was also evident. Several respondents drew on this sense of

the Park as a place apart in their presentations of the neighbourhood; Gladys recalled how their neighbours had first described the Park to them as “an oasis of peace and quiet”, whilst Karen explained, “[W]hen you’re driving into the Park it’s like coming into a different world”. But it is also clear that Oak Tree Park did not offer leisure facilities or other amenities to its residents. Whilst there was public space – the roads and the pathways around the lake in the centre of the Park – this was not developed for socialisation; this meant that knowing or meeting your neighbours could be something of a challenge. As Jane explained, “ … you don’t naturally bump into them except for the walk to the station … you walk to the station in the morning and see the husbands, and sit on the train and catch up with them”. Any socialising that took place within the Park would be within private homes (Figure 4.7).

Oak Tree Park was also in a state of transition. Originally established as a residential Park, with perimeter bollards and a gate, it was now clear that there was a move towards transforming the estate into a gated community with gates on individual plots within the Park. This involved the longstanding question of securitisation. At the time of the

Figure 4.7 Oak Tree Park

research, all but one of the entrances to the Park had bollards that could only be lowered to allow access by residents in possession of electronic key tags. The final entrance was open and allowed unmonitored public access. Whilst transport into (and out of the Park) was controlled through these means, pedestrian access was open. Amongst the residents that we interviewed, there appeared to be some tension about whether the Park should be further securitised. Karen really captured this tension in her description of the Park,

> [T]here are tensions within the Park between having a very controlled environment, and a lot of people want to maintain the original ethos and idea of the Park, that it's a Park, it doesn't have gates everywhere. So there's a tension between those two strands of philosophical thinking about how the Park should be; you don't want it completely tidied up.

As this quotation reveals, although the sense of a relatively protected neighbourhood is appealing to residents, there is also some concern that this should not progress too far, with residents citing the exclusionary effect that security gates would have, with one resident stressing that there was a danger that estates such as this one could resemble gated enclaves in South Africa. But of course even support for a move against the securitisation of the estate was not unilaterally supported, and there were some residents who were strongly in favour of the implementation of gated entrances and 24-hour security.

Whilst there have been moves to introduce barriers (moves which were not supported by the majority of residents), the Port Sud housing complex in Breuillet is not fenced off from the surrounding area but it does represent a distinct and homogeneous urban development. The corporation of owners has managed to persuade the municipality to take care of the maintenance of the streets. Even though Port Sud is not enclosed by gates and barriers, it is relatively secure with its own guards. It has its own infrastructure and leisure facilities (swimming pool, tennis courts, function rooms) run by a residents' association as well as a public (state) school and a small shopping centre, and it is own station on the RER suburban train line (Breuillet has another station). The French expression "Breuillet des savates et Breuillet des cravats" (Breuillet in slippers and Breuillet in ties) used by the inhabitants of this small town expresses the feeling of social distance between this neighbourhood and the rest of the city. In the same way, Châteaufort is not bounded by walls but with greenery. The installation of bollards, which limit access

Figure 4.8 Lake and houses – Port Sud

on the main thoroughfare through the village at rush hour to residents, creates an enclosure at these times of day. Beyond the spatial bounding of the village, the social dynamics make clear that the village works as a residential club that, in part, resembles co-ownership (see Chapter 7). As in Port Sud, the school is a very protected and socially homogeneous place (Figure 4.8).

Neighbourhoods beyond ideal types

Whilst the adoption of ideal types to describe neighbourhoods and their attributes is quite common, these rarely tell the whole story; such representations may tell part of the story. They do not capture the dynamism by which places are represented by their residents. The remaining neighbourhoods – Balham and Noisy-le-Sec – partially adopt the imagery of the urban village. In the case of Balham, this is very loosely adopted. In their representations of the neighbourhood, respondents focus on practical considerations related to family, and the appropriateness of the local environment for bringing up middle-class children rather than the visions of community expounded in some of the other neighbourhoods. In Noisy-le-Sec, it is clear that there is a desire amongst newcomers for the neighbourhood to be representative of an urban village, but the history of the neighbourhood means that it is some way off at present (see Bacqué et al., forthcoming). Similarly, this representation is also coloured by, in some cases, the desire for “la belle banlieue”, the French suburban ideal replete with a central focus on family and domestic life (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 Balham houses

Furthermore, it should be noted that there can be debate *between* middle-class residents as to what the neighbourhood represents. This is often structured along the lines of old and newer residents. An example of this is Oak Tree Park. Whilst longer term residents subscribe to a vision of the neighbourhood framed by the expectation of a residential club, a location close to but apart from the city, they accuse newer residents of trying to transform the neighbourhood into an elite and exclusive residential space where community and sociality are prohibited through the structuring of the neighbourhood. In this respect, residents of the Park support different visions of what it means to live within a protected neighbourhood.

We reiterate here that these representations of neighbourhood are not sufficient to explain residential choice. Rather, as we move on to discuss, these are simply part of a much more complicated process that draws on a range of factors: access to particular assets and resources (Savage et al., 1993), individual histories and biographies (both social and residential). It is also subject to the constraints and opportunities that derive from the households' residential and social trajectory and from the habitus of household members (Figure 4.10).

Residential choice, habitus and social trajectories

As we argue here, residential choice is structured by, and structuring of habitus, and is intrinsically linked to processes of identity formation. In this respect, understandings of residential choice need to extend beyond a mere account of the different factors that constitute it and

Figure 4.10 A mixed landscape in Noisy-le-Sec

into the recognition of how it is mediated by habitus throughout the life course. Beyond this, however, it is also clear that residential choice may be part of a longer term residential trajectory (Authier et al., 2010a), extending through the life course and responsive to different (familial) contexts. In this respect, residential choice may change through the life course, structured by and, as a result of the changing relationship between the social and the spatial, structuring of the social trajectories of individuals and households (Bonvalet and Gotman, 1993).

Social reproduction, referring here to residential biographies and trajectories, has a part to play within this. Inheritance, both in its social and economic sense, has an influence on residential choice. Although the inheritance of housing (and wealth) plays a significant part in the residential trajectories of some households – this was particularly

notable in Oak Tree Park and the 9th arrondissement – our research additionally makes clear that the inheritance of "residential dispositions" (Bonvalet et al., 1999) or "residential habitus" (Cuturello, 1993) may also be at play within residential choice. This is a way of accounting for the sense that tastes for particular types of housing or residential environment are passed down through families, internalised into the habitus and embodied by individuals, and structuring residential possibilities (Authier et al., 2010a). Indeed, as Savage et al. (2005) emphasise, personal biographies are put to work in residential choice, with individuals striving to make these choices "congruent with their lives" (2005: 203), "to confirm a sense of who they are" (2005: 53). Emma, in West Horsley, explained that she had been attracted back to the area that she had grown up in; presenting her residential choice as "following patterns that you always followed", she gave a sense that this decision had been almost second nature. These sentiments were similarly conferred by respondents in peri-urban neighbourhoods who stressed that they had always been "country people", or residents in urban neighbourhoods who drew attention to their credentials as "city people". Jacqueline and Jean-Baptiste, who live in Châteaufort similarly explained, "I wanted to raise my children in the country because I was raised in the country and I have kept great memories so I wanted my children to know that *that* is a meadow with cows, horses … " (Jacqueline)

The ability of these middle-class actors to make these residential moves, however, relies on the capabilities of households and their access to resources. As Butler and Robson argue,

> … the nature of the habitus is constructed in terms of *the objective capabilities of individuals and their prior socialisation*. It is this which we believe goes to constitute the different habitus(es) that make up the metropolitan habitus – in other words each area, to some extent, has a distinctive habitus (or mini-habitus) but so does the metropolis as a whole as far as the middle class is concerned.
>
> (2003: 67, emphasis added)

In this respect, the middle classes may share a taste for metropolitan living, but where they are able to live within the metropolis is also shaped by their capabilities and access to assets and resources, as well as by their previous residential histories. An important caveat, however, when looking into residential choice, histories and biographies, is that in most cases these are post hoc rationalisations; they need to be treated as such,

read as a way of thinking through the significance of residential trajectories for individuals and, in particular, their role in the construction and maintenance of social identities.

Beyond the mere confirmation of residential preferences generated by habitus, our fieldwork suggests that the habitus for place of residence is not fixed and unchanging; there are possibilities for modification. As Andrew Sayer argues, "experiences can modify the habitus and produce new dispositions, and skills, enabling people to react in new ways . . . they may feel comfortable in contexts where they might not have done earlier" (2005: 25). In other words, the understanding presented here allows for the prospect of habitus, under the influence of lived experience, to adapt in part to changing social circumstances. In relation to residential choice, this might help to explain changing tastes for neighbourhoods and housing over the life course. Lahire (2004) also emphasises the generative dimensions of habitus, stressing that social mobility may give rise to varied and unexpected tastes that are dissonant with those that would be expected as a result of socialisation. Although he intended this as an observation on cultural practice, this serves as a timely reminder that habitus is not solely structurally determined but is adaptable and transposable (Bourdieu, 1977). For example, Colin lives in Le Raincy although he grew up in a village. From the latter he kept a desire for peace and tranquillity in his residential surroundings, but his personal history and his youth attracted him to Paris and its centrality. Le Raincy, "la belle banlieue", is a perfect compromise for him.

This was particularly noticeable amongst respondents who felt that their residential trajectories reflected their wider social mobilities. For example, Wendy moved into Oak Tree Park in the 1970s; she described her feeling about this choice in the following way, "I think it was that it was more upmarket than where I'd come from, and I was quite pleased about that I suppose, because you felt like you were making progress", demonstrating that her residential and social trajectory were, at least in her mind, interconnected. Joy, who had come from a working-class background, a resident of Berrylands, expressed a similar sentiment, "I knew Berrylands for being a very posh area . . . so I never ever dreamt I would be able to maybe even live in Berrylands . . . I'll be a posh woman, be a posh middle-class person living in Berrylands!"

In a similar way, Sylvain, who today lives in the 9th arrondissement, is attached to it as much for the commodities and the activities he can find there as for the image of residential and social mobility the neighbourhood symbolises:

> You see, I was born in a residential estate like that, all the houses are similar and I only have a single desire, not to return to it! (Laughter) I understand very well who lives there, I come from there; I have no desire to frequent it again. It is a kind of snobbery, a question of image, because I left my environment ... I come from a working-class background, with a little money, not really prole, you know.

There were also people who felt that their residential choice was at odds with their social status, who stressed the compromises that they had made in order to maintain the fit between their habitus and other social fields (e.g. education).

What this makes clear is that social structure, as mediated by habitus, remains an important dimension of residential choice. We additionally locate such choices within the context of the professional environments that people inhabit, kinship and love relations, and wider social environments, all of which may change over the life course and in response to social mobility. These dimensions, what Berger and Luckman (1967) refer to as circles of secondary socialisation, draw attention to how an individual may act on the basis of their habitus, whilst also allowing for an acknowledgement of the role(s) played by their social trajectory. Such an understanding of habitus, and how this may change over time in response to experience, is very useful for understanding how habitus may predispose people in relation to their residential preferences, but also how this might shift in response to individual circumstances.

This understanding of habitus, when applied to the question of residential choice, can help in developing discussions of the *fit* between habitus and various fields (e.g. housing, education and consumption infrastructure) (Butler and Robson, 2003; Savage et al., 2005), and gives an additional sense of the role of biographies and housing histories of individuals within this. In this respect, it would allow for an understanding of how people might *develop* a taste for particular locations and forms of housing and that to meet these, in reality, depends on access to particular resources. In other words, this gives a sense of how people make sense of their residential choices through the (selective) rendering of their lives leading up to that point. It is also the case that housing satisfaction may reflect an awareness of a household's limitations and constraints. Households may have achieved their goals for housing for the time being, but it is also the case that such goals have been set up to reflect what is achievable for them in their situation at that point in time. As Michelson (1977) explains, a household's ambitions

for housing might extend beyond their current situation, but they may be satisfied for the time being.

Furthermore, it is clear that some social stakes are inseparable from the residential and social trajectories of individuals and can explain inertia – the decision to stay put in a particular neighbourhood – as well as relocation. So for example, in the 9th arrondissement and Oak Tree Park, there is evidence of significant commitment to the neighbourhood, with the result that households have often made several moves within these neighbourhoods to meet their changing housing needs. It is also clear that some neighbourhoods in the study attract a particular group of people, often from the same areas. For example, residents in Châteaufort and Breuillet have residential histories that firmly locate them in the south and southwestern sectors of the Paris region. Similarly, in Balham, a significant proportion of respondents originated in the Home Counties, often attending Oxbridge and other Russell Group universities before settling in southwest London.[3] There are additionally cases that reflect some sense of social reproduction in residential choice, with adult children of the earliest arrivals in Port Sud choosing also to settle in Breuillet.

To sum up, whilst residential choice may draw on and reflect social, economic and cultural capital, it may also respond to past residential experiences and environments. Residential choice may therefore reflect the embodied desire for certain aesthetic values and cultural norms, particular lifestyles and sociality. The data indicates that the reasons for differences in residential choice might lie within the residential biographies of respondents. Over time and through experience, individuals develop a *taste* for particular residential environments. This taste is in turn supported by their value systems and, in some cases, embedded in their habitus. In other words, residential choices could be understood as revealing of "a sense of place" (Hillier and Rooksby, 2005), understood here not only in terms of how households locate themselves in relation to others, but also how they engage with and embody their residential environment.

Understanding opportunities and compromise in residential choice

It becomes further apparent that whilst it is sometimes the case that those holding similar socio-economic characteristics favour the same types of neighbourhood, it is also possible for there to be significant differences in the socio-economic characteristics of those who hold

in common particular understandings of places. This is apparent both across the two cities and within them.

This can be illustrated with the comparison of those subscribing to the representation of the commuter belt as a rural village, and those who portray their inner city neighbourhoods as urban villages. In the peri-urban neighbourhoods of West Horsley, Effingham and Châteaufort, the socio-economic characteristics of households are similar, in part the result of the high cost of living in these neighbourhoods. However, the representation of these places as "urban villages" is mobilised by respondents from quite different positions within the middle classes and within neighbourhoods that are more or less gentrified. Therefore, the differences between the populations of Peckham and the 9th arrondissement make the similarity in how middle-class residents relate to these locations all the more significant. Households with similar social profiles and trajectories may have the resources and assets to enable them to live in an urban village or a rural village. But explaining the choices that they make relies on an understanding of residential habitus and generational dimensions.

Thus, certain occupations and professions, and hence the position of the individuals within these in terms of their location in social space, appear in all the neighbourhoods. For example, we interviewed teachers in almost all of the London and Paris neighbourhoods in the study. In London, the teachers we interviewed had all moved into their neighbourhoods – Oak Tree Park, West Horsley, Effingham and Berrylands – in the 1970s. Ania, a music teacher living in Balham, aged in her 60s, was in a different position, having lived in her house since she was born. She was particularly keen to stress that Balham had changed significantly in the time that she had lived there and that its current population was far more affluent than earlier populations had been. It also seemed to be the case that for female partners, working as teachers, their husband's jobs had first brought them to the area, and so in this respect they can be considered "trailing spouses". Furthermore, it is likely that it was their partner's incomes that also allowed them entry into particular housing markets that would not have been affordable on their own salaries. This was the case for Mary, who had followed her husband, Peter, down to London 40 years ago (and then they settled together in Effingham) with the children, later getting a job at a local school. For Karen, who had started out as a teacher in a further education college and later became a university academic, buying a house in Oak Tree Park was made possible not by the salaries that she and her husband earned, but rather by their inheritance. What is

significant here is the importance of generation as a context for understanding neighbourhood demographics and the nuances of residential choice.

In the current London housing market, the incomes of teachers do not stretch very far, but as the examples demonstrate, other factors need to be taken into account to understand how people gain access to the neighbourhoods that they live in. Certain opportunities may arise that make neighbourhoods and housing types accessible in unexpected ways. These may include economic factors – other household incomes, inheritance – but they may also be related to wider contexts, such as local housing markets, the opportunities that these offer and the accumulation of property assets.

In Noisy-le-Sec, Breuillet and Le Raincy, we met with teachers from several generations. Thus in Breuillet, one of our interviewees, a retired teacher, is a former deputy mayor of the city, but many young teachers have arrived recently in Port Sud. In Noisy-le-Sec, a couple of retired teachers arrived in the city in the 1970s and became involved in local politics and community life; Evelyne, a young teacher working in a nearby town, found relatively affordable and good quality housing in Noisy. In Le Raincy, a couple of teachers working in Seine-Saint-Denis described a relaxing residential location that allowed them to put some distance between themselves and the social tensions they experienced in the schools where they worked. Economic considerations are still very important; in the 9th as in Châteaufort, where property prices are at very high levels, teachers are much rarer. But they are not all determining.

This goes some way towards demonstrating that middle-class neighbourhoods are not homogeneous; middle-class actors from a diverse range of occupations and social trajectories may co-reside within one neighbourhood. Residential choice is more than a rational economic decision, derived from a single cost/benefit analysis, even if the characteristics of the real estate market play a powerful role (Authier et al., 2010b). The significance of the neighbourhood for individual households, incorporating representations of place alongside household biographies, life course considerations and residential tastes is a more appropriate way of assessing residential choice.

Whilst the cases outlined above demonstrate the opportunities that may shape some residential trajectories, it is also the case that the realisation of particular residential aspirations is contingent on a range of opportunities and constraints; it can therefore be the subject of

significant compromise. For example, recent middle-class incomers to Breuillet often found that they had to make compromises, selecting homes that fulfilled their desires in terms of location whilst sacrificing their initial aspirations in terms of the types of homes that they wanted. As they recalled, the desire for a single family detached home was often put aside, as they favoured homes close to the station and the centre of the town where they would have easy access to amenities and urban space. Similarly, it became clear that the new middle-class residents of Noisy-le-Sec had compromised on their location within the neighbourhood as they sought to purchase affordable homes that fitted their family requirements (Bacqué et al., forthcoming). It is also clear that, for the remaining intermediate classes living in the 9th arrondissement, the desire to stay in the neighbourhood has resulted in compromising on the size of dwellings; in other words, they would prefer to live in smaller homes than move out of the neighbourhood.

In London, neighbourhood choice was often a compromise. For respondents who had recently moved to Balham and Peckham, explanations of residential choice often revealed how they had initially been attracted to neighbouring areas – Clapham and East Dulwich, respectively – but had not been able to afford the type of property that they had wanted in these areas. By moving into areas that were proximate and similar in their housing stock to these other more recognisable middle-class neighbourhoods, these respondents often stressed that they had got "more for their money". In the case of Peckham, there was an additional sense that respondents might move in response to the future educational needs of their children. Equally, in Berrylands, some of our respondents who had children of school age and who had moved into the area because of the good quality of state education, stressed that if they did not have children, their residential preferences would be for more inner city environments. These respondents trade their preferences for housing and environmental aesthetics in order to gain entry into particular circuits of schooling (see Bridge, 2003).

When it comes to the constraints at play in residential choice, it is perhaps unsurprising that those households with high levels of economic capital list very few constraints on their abilities to achieve their residential ambitions. In particular, they stress that they had found housing that corresponded to their desires and in the neighbourhood that they wanted, even if they had to make slight compromises on their location within that neighbourhood and the level of comfort of their homes. It

was therefore common to find respondents in the Paris neighbourhoods of Châteaufort, Le Raincy and the 9th arrondissement, and in the London neighbourhoods of Oak Tree Park, and commuter-belt villages of West Horsley and Effingham stressing that their residential condition matched to their initial aspirations. A caveat here is that imaginings may often be constrained by what is possible; in knowledge of what possibilities are available to them – on the grounds of their economic resources, where they are prepared to move to and which locations make sense to them in relation to their habitus and biographies. In other words, these relatively affluent middle-class respondents are self-limiting; this is part of the process by which they present themselves as successful.

However, this was not the case across all neighbourhoods, and we find some residents, particularly in the more marginal middle-class neighbourhoods – in London, Berrylands and Peckham – expressing a sense that the neighbourhood did not quite match up to their habitus. In Berrylands, some residents pushed off against the idea of the "boring suburb", presenting this as out of kilter with their habitus. One couple for example explained that they would probably be more at home in an inner city neighbourhood, such as Peckham, with the consumption infrastructure and community that this offered; they had stayed in Berrylands because the schools were good for their children, choosing to match their habitus to education rather than housing (Bridge, 2003). This demonstrates once again the types of compromises people make in relation to housing. Similarly, in Peckham there were younger people who had ended up living in the area because they had initially been attracted to the lifestyle available in neighbouring East Dulwich. They described how they oriented themselves towards East Dulwich, using the boutique shops, delicatessens, the station, bars and restaurants rather than those in Peckham. They also explained how they would describe their place of residence as East Dulwich, a tactic that positioned them differently in social space to how they would have been perceived if they had described themselves as living in Peckham.

In the Paris sample, the great majority of people were satisfied with their residential choice, even if they had to make trade-offs at the start (see Michelson, 1977). One interpretation is that the sample only included people still living in the neighbourhood, and not those who may have left. There are, however, a few cases of lack of fit between the neighbourhood and the household. In Noisy, the overall deprivation of the area and the arrival of the middle classes leads to the

sense of the middle classes being "at home among the poor" (Bacqué et al., forthcoming). In fact living in a poor neighbourhood, even with a habitus that celebrates social mix, has drawbacks that some respondents found difficult to reconcile (e.g. in relation to finance, education, quality of public services and consumption infrastructure). It was also clear that a number of the long-term middle-class residents of Noisy no longer felt that they lived in an (urban) village, a sentiment that they had previously expressed. In Breuillet, some young couples found the housing stock, which was largely similar, at odds with their preference for detached houses with distinctive appearance, demonstrating once more a lack of fit between housing and habitus and the compromises made on the grounds of access to housing.

One response to these obstacles to realising the fit between neighbourhood and household, a fit that involves a range of different social fields, is to move (Savage et al., 2005). However, it also becomes clear that at times when this is not possible or desirable, respondents demonstrate a capacity to deal with local inconveniences creatively, developing strategies in relation to schooling and residence and finding services and consumption infrastructures beyond the neighbourhood.

Conclusion

Given all of the factors involved in residential choice (relating to family, economy, jobs, etc.), the range of possibilities for the middle-class families in this study were fairly broad. The feeling of belonging and place attachment for these middle-class respondents is partially based on choice – between different cities, different neighbourhoods, different housing – but a choice that is subject to a variety of constraints and opportunities, which may in turn reflect the position of the household within the social structure and life course. Households make residential choices that are neither purely economic nor simply guided by their own comfort zone. As we have demonstrated, residential choice is incredibly complicated; influenced, amongst other factors, by habitus, social and residential trajectories as well as access to resources, social, economic and cultural capital.

Understanding the social make-up of a neighbourhood cannot, therefore, simply take the form of a habitus mapping exercise, where a neighbourhood is characterised by a single fraction of the middle classes. Instead, what we have shown here is that entry into neighbourhoods may be diverse, with the result that different strands

of the middle classes live side-by-side in middle-class areas and co-habit with working-class and/or upper-class families. Moreover, people with similar socio-economic and socio-cultural profiles may end up living in very different areas. Nevertheless, what becomes clear is that one of the things that characterises the residential choice of the middle classes is this possibility of choice – albeit limited choice – that extends into their spatial practices. This will be developed in the following chapter.

5
Lived Space

Introduction

Everyday place-making contributes to the shaping and reshaping of neighbourhoods, and simultaneously, the space of the neighbourhood can impact on the representations and practices of inhabitants and users. This chapter considers the relationship between being middle class, the shaping of neighbourhoods and daily practices. It asks, what does it mean to belong in a neighbourhood? How have middle-class people invested in the local and how does this link to their spatial practices? How do such routine spatial practices relate to the "imagined neighbourhoods" outlined in the previous chapter and forms of place-making (e.g. place as a project in Peckham or in Noisy-le-Sec) or routine maintenance (as in keeping West Horsley, Châteaufort or Le Raincy as a village)? How is social mix negotiated in everyday practices at different local scales?

In this chapter, we examine to what degree middle-class people "live space" by exploring how they invest in various metropolitan spaces, congregating with other people like themselves and also negotiating encounters with "others", revealing spatial borders and social boundaries. Lived space can be made through different ways of practising neighbourhood – across the neighbourhood types but also across generations and groups of middle-class people – including the amount of investment in public/private realms and ideas of community, ways of negotiating the spatial proximity of "others", consumption practices and forms of mobility.

Such local practices are also connected to other forms of living space that stretch across the metropolitan regions of Paris and London, and beyond. We argue that the middle classes deploy an "à la carte" (Chalas,

2000) approach to the city, drawing on local and wider space in order to suit their needs and sense of self, and avoiding proximity with "others" when they cannot control these encounters. These varied practices provide insight into how places are made and maintained and, in turn, how such practices may shape/reinforce classed identities. Furthermore, the degree to which these practices are positively embraced or are merely necessary adaptations arising from practical constraints reveals how patterns of privilege and constraint amongst the middle classes are realised in place.

Being local and everyday practices

In the study, the emphasis put on the importance of the local varied across the neighbourhoods, from a fierce sense of belonging (in Peckham or in Châteaufort) to a very loose sense of attachment (in Berrylands). In most cases, a strong form of investment in the idea of the neighbourhood is closely related to local everyday practices, even though most of the middle-class households' everyday practices are not confined to the local (see the examples of Noisy-le-Sec and Châteaufort). In stark contrast, ties to Berrylands as a place seemed relatively weak, rather residents related to the way of life it represented and the *kind* of place it was (the archetypal suburb). However, the neighbourhoods cannot merely be placed on a continuum relating to community and degree of local involvement, with Peckham or Noisy at one end and Berrylands at the other. Rather, what it means to be local or means to be a community unfolds variously across our neighbourhoods, and the ways of living place that we identify are related to the characteristics of the place (in terms of shops, reputation, architectural and aesthetic characteristics, history, local population) and of the middle classes (in terms of social and residential trajectories) and their relations to "others" (how they encounter or preserve distance from other groups). The ways of "living place" that we identify are not mutually exclusive and sometimes overlay each other.

Being local through consumption: Making and maintaining "the village"

We identify here how a sense of local neighbourhood identity and belonging is reaffirmed through consumption and also, the relationship between what is available locally and the expectations of different

middle-class groups. We thus highlight how consumption practices at different scales, from the neighbourhood to across the city and the surrounding area, correspond to how the middle-class groups maintain, shape or reshape their neighbourhood, often in the image of the representations of place outlined in Chapter 4. In both our inner city urban villages and exurban villages, everyday consumption was linked to a feeling of responsibility towards the community.

In the "urban villages" of Peckham and the 9th arrondissement, there was a strong emphasis on socialising locally and supporting the local area. In Peckham it was common for younger incoming residents to describe a process of becoming more local, with their social life increasingly becoming oriented to the immediate area (particularly the local pubs) over time. Thus in Peckham, supporting the local is done through consumption and gathering together in particular spaces (alongside local campaigns such as those to renovate Victorian buildings). Certain pubs, cafes and shops function as important community hubs. The bookshop and its owner are a good example. The neighbourhood is described as independent, arty and bohemian and therefore the bookshop, with its handpicked choices and friendly owner, encapsulates this. The owner is a "public character" (Jacobs, 1992) who is seen as a lynchpin in the community. It was common for residents to speak of feeling duty bound to support the bookshop and a few expressed worry about it failing as a business. Despite the decline of independent bookshops in the UK, this bookshop seems to be thriving. The worry about the bookshop's success is indicative of people's emotional investment in the shop as symbolising something about the neighbourhood. The ongoing success of the bookshop represents the change that is taking place in the neighbourhood and the creation of an enclave within the city. This level of investment in local institutions is not prevalent in our other London neighbourhoods. For example, in Balham there was little discussion of these sorts of places or of the need to support local businesses. However, this is not an unequivocal support of all things local. This is a particular white middle-class version of the local (the imagined urban village) that is being supported, based on involvement in the pubs, cafes and shops in the Bellenden Road area. The same level of support and energy was not expended on the shops on Rye Lane.

In the 9th arrondissement, middle-class residents mainly consume locally and also take advantage of other places in Paris. As in Peckham, being local is strongly related to using local shops: "Everything is there,

right at your fingertips, it's great" – Anaïs (9th), as well as cultural and leisure amenities:

> Everyday shopping, I do here. Including some clothes shopping, from Place Clichy, there are rather nice shops. And also, there're lots of cinemas around here, there's Place de Clichy, there's people who work in film. Well, there are two art houses and a big multiplex cinema. On weekends, you do not have to go out of the neighbourhood to see the movie you want to see, you have everything here [...].
>
> – Isabelle (9th)

All the middle-class residents interviewed here reported mainly using local shops, even those who had lived in the neighbourhood for two or three decades and complained about the transformation of the local shops due to the accelerated gentrification of the neighbourhood over the last ten years. Chain stores such as Carrefour Market or Monoprix, banks, estate agencies and luxury shops have progressively replaced the old independent shops, especially around the rue des Martyrs. At the same time, more upmarket independent shops have also moved in. They are described as too expensive, too "bobo" (the olive oil shop is one of the examples that was most mentioned) and disconnected from their needs. A couple who had been resident since the 1980s expressed regret that the newly opened bakery, that could become a chain store without middle-class people's collective action (see Chapter 7), was "trendy". "Cakes are covered" – Christelle. (Literally, cakes are covered by a bell-shaped glass, typical of luxury bakeries.) Concerns about this change reveal the attachment of these residents to the numerous independent shops, open until late at night. They are part of the "wallpaper" of the "urban village", socially valued and valuable for these gentrifying middle classes (Bridge and Dowling, 2001; Butler and Robson, 2003; Charmes, 2006). As one inhabitant said, this environment gives the feeling of being: "There where it's happening. There where there is some life, there where something is going on, there where things move" – Laure.

Taking advantage of the attraction of neighbouring tourist spots (la Butte Montmartre and the Abbesses), in the 2000s, local shopkeepers created a brand called "South Pigalle" to reframe the neighbourhood as a cultural, fashionable and vibrant place and to dispel the negative image of Pigalle, associated with prostitution, nightlife and drugs. This has been taken on by some of the middle-class people we met and used as a positive label to define the neighbourhood; a similar strategy has

been used by artistic people in the neighbourhood of Belleville (Vivant and Charmes, 2008). Beyond the practices of using local shops, the markets are also a major place of local "village socialising" (see below). These practices, and more broadly, those tied to consumption, help to invest emotionally in the neighbourhood and to create a way of "getting to know one another locally" (– Isabelle) and are close to what Patrick Simon has described for the neighbourhood of Belleville in Paris (Simon, 1997). For example, Virginie, one inhabitant, said cheerfully: "When I get out of work, I say hello to people at least five or six times, people I'm acquainted with . . . I have the impression that it's terribly convivial . . . When you are on the street, you are not anonymous". Nevertheless, this gentrified neighbourhood offers few opportunities to come into real contact with diversity, even in the merchant/client relationship. Isabelle, a resident, considers her friendly relationships with some shopkeepers to be part of the "conviviality of the neighbourhood, with people who work in the neighbourhood", which she describes as different to "the conviviality of the friendship circle", which is socially homogenous and more centred on the home, the cafes and the restaurants of the neighbourhood. Consuming locally is thus perceived here as specific to – and part of the privilege of – living in an "urban village".

A shared value of consuming locally is also found in our "rural villages" but the emphasis in these places is on preserving the village. For example in Châteaufort, a number of middle-class households associate consuming locally with becoming invested in the "village". Coming across somebody you know in day-to-day life is part of the lifestyle associated with the "rural village". Even if there are few shops (e.g. a bakery, a few restaurants), they are nevertheless essential to maintaining local life and the feeling of a "village". Households navigate between the centre of the village and the surrounding cities (e.g. Versailles, Saint-Quentin, Buc), grouping together activities for convenience (using the supermarket on the road between work and home) and consumption preferences (e.g. upper-middle-class Castelfortains, who are recent arrivals, go to the organic market in Versailles). Relationships to local shops are based on a delicate balance. On the one hand, they do not want to see more shops opening in Châteaufort, especially supermarkets, because they do not want to suffer from the various inconveniences (traffic, noise) associated with this development. However, they are concerned about the disappearance of shops, linked to incoming supermarkets: "There are fewer shops, there used to be two groceries shops and cafes, cafes where you can have a drink, not a restaurant, there is no place like this

[...] There is still a bakery. There was a butcher, now it is an estate agents" – Marin and Joëlle. This change, which resonates with the feeling of "being eaten away at by 'the urban sprawl' " – Marin and Joëlle, is regarded as simultaneously threatening the local way of life and the "rural imaginary".

In Breuillet, where inhabitants also navigate between local shops and shops located elsewhere, consuming locally does not appear quite as obviously as a key component of neighbourhood identity. However, inhabitants, especially the older ones, are concerned by the decline of local shops. The residents are frightened that the replacement of a high-quality goods shop with a discount brand shop will attract lower status outsiders ("this is a fitting image of our decay and our poverty, the commercial brand is the signal" – Jacques). For them, this change symbolises, and contributes to, the weakening of the upper middle-class status of the area.

Similarly, an emphasis on preserving the village through consumption was also present in West Horsley and Effingham. Both villages had a small number of shops. Respondents used these shops to various degrees but many expressed the opinion that the shops were an integral part of the village and expressed guilt if they did not use them. Just as the bookshop was key to accounts of Peckham, so was the local grocer in West Horsley. The shops also had an additional role as contributing to making these places "real villages" in contrast to the suburbs.

Thus, consuming locally represents a way of being local as well as allowing the respondents to play their part in maintaining and supporting the image of a "village", both urban and rural, through which social identities are shaped or reshaped. For these middle-class people, participating in the neighbourhood through consumption is key to their sense of themselves; the neighbourhood becomes "a place of substantial investment in their urban way of life" (Authier, 2002: 89). There is however a subtle difference: whilst in the urban villages, middle-class residents are involved in transforming the neighbourhood and creating a neighbourhood in their own image ("South Pigalle"), in the rural villages, the emphasis is on maintaining what is already there (Benson and Jackson, 2013). However, this discourse of localism also sits alongside other spatial practices and affiliations.

Community through collective activities; a place for selective sociability

Investing in the local is also done through forms of participation, joining clubs, through taking part in activities locally or through

neighbouring. The intensity and the types of this sociability vary according to the place and the social and demographic characteristics of the households. Through these practices, the middle classes create a local (and selective) sociability based on social and cultural affinities, which can have the effect of maintaining a distance from "others". Local networks also contribute to creating groups, following a logic of grouping together with "people like us" (Butler and Robson, 2003), and to investing collectively in place (as is the case in Noisy, the 9th arrondissement, Breuillet and Balham) in ways that contribute to creating territorial identities, and to reshaping local space or else keeping it as it is.

Banding together

Social networks that are developed locally represent another way of being local and building a territorial identity. Even though some households have chosen to live close to their family (particularly in the Paris neighbourhoods) or friends, most social networks are the result of local routine practices – including neighbouring, child-related activities, leisure, cultural or professional activities. In most cases, these local practices are a key component of the desirable "imagined neighbourhood".

This relationship between social networks and being local is particularly strong in the 9th arrondissement of Paris where several groups of inhabitants have created a strong sense of belonging from the place they live and/or practise regularly in the neighbourhood. For example, a group of intellectual professionals, who called themselves "the Mafia of Place Blanche", have built a local social network:

> It's a village. Everyone knows each other. This is an area where there is lots of culture, actors, movie directors, writers and journalists... There are all kinds of cultured people, and we have all met, through various connections. We meet on Sunday morning, after we all go to the market on rue Le Pic, to meet at the cafe and we meet at one o'clock, between one and two, for a coffee or a drink, it depends on everyone's schedules. But this is the routine.
>
> – Isabelle

This sociability is thus based on forms of cultural and social homogeneity. They mobilise their professional competences in order to invest in the space, for example through the production of a local paper, *Montmartre à la Une*. Isabelle brings attention to an issue of the paper which contains an article called "Place Blanche, it is Sunday every day"[1] which celebrates the "village atmosphere".

Whilst "the Mafia of Place Blanche" congregate and celebrate the public life of the neighbourhood, at the other side of the rue des Martyrs, other inhabitants stress their collective sense of belonging through a celebration of their more immediate residential space: "All my life I've never lived in such a wonderful place" – Anaïs. Although they like the neighbourhood as it is, they are more concerned by its gentrification. In a neighbourhood which is still socially and ethnically mixed, these inhabitants hope that the population will not be radically altered: "At least our building retains a nice mix. There's a lot of foreigners, there's the landing of illegal ..." – Hervé. This group of middle-class people, whose members call themselves, not without humour, the "Prolos [proletarians] of the 9th", have artistic and intellectual occupations but are more mixed and less professionally established than the "Mafia of Place Blanche".[2] In this second group, help is a key and valued component of everyday life. They regularly help recent migrants, deprived and/or old neighbours (e.g. through teaching French, doing the shopping), but they also reciprocate amongst their social group. For example, Grégoire had used this network to enable him to move from a rented one-bedroom apartment and buy his two-bedroom apartment. And, Amélie, a teaching student, had found job opportunities through her landlord, and now friend, Anaïs. This network is thus a social and economic resource used to mitigate against residential and/or professional vulnerability as well as helping to maintain the friendly atmosphere on the estate. In both cases (the "Mafia of Place Blanche" and "the Prolos"), local sociability is deeply embedded in the neighbourhood and is seen as unique. This social element is drawn upon by residents' explanations of what distinguishes this place from previous places of residence that were described as "convenient for many reasons" – Isabelle, but lacking this sense of belonging.

When middle-class people are a minority in the place that they live, as in Noisy, in-depth local sociability represents a way to collectively transform the place. Newcomers from Paris who are partly unhappy about the way that the population of Noisy is changing, meet for cultural and leisure activities as well as community and political activities (see Chapter 7). They know each other through school-based networks, organic food independent associations or as passing acquaintances, from using the market or the cultural amenities in Noisy: "When we go to the theatre, we always see at least two or three couples we know well and with whom we have a drink at the end ... There is a small circle" – Delphine. Becoming part of this social circle helps people to put down roots in Noisy: "We like Noisy, but because we had this circle and we

were really very close to a good group of friends [...] When new ones arrive, we welcome them" – Laure. It also becomes part of the collective work on the local area to maintain the existent cultural and leisure activities and to encourage the development of new ones (like the opening of a library or a "nice cafe" that is open at night). These forms of collectivity help this group of the middle classes to establish themselves in an uncertain local context and, ultimately, to try to reshape place and to adapt it to their way of life: "It is true we have a little hope that it evolves... with these young couples we see coming" – Laure. Waiting for the area to change, they meet "with the same people" at home or out and about. This dense sociability, which appears broadly selective and socially homogeneous, is markedly valued and presented as essential for keeping them in Noisy-le-Sec and compensates for having to leave Paris.

In contrast, in two of our neighbourhoods (Balham and Le Raincy), being part of the community was expressed through a more home-focused, ostensibly inward-facing family life. However, this way of life did contribute to a feeling of being part of the neighbourhood, a fitting in through keeping up.

In Balham, Hilary identified a "parallel world, where everything's private" of which she was not a part. Whilst this refers first and foremost to the ubiquity of private schooling in the area, it can also be used as a description of middle-class life in this part of Balham. Social life was focused firmly on the home and the homes of others and there was not the same kind of emotional investment in local places and institutions that we found in Peckham. Although a mixed picture of community emerges – with some streets or sections of streets expressing community feeling – a sense of community or of belonging to the area in Balham seems to be based on being surrounded by people similar to oneself and ensuring that "the standards are kept up" (– Hannah), through taking care of your property.

Similarly, in Le Raincy, developing local networks seems less important for being local. Middle-class people here are more focused on family and for some, on specific local networks like religious networks (especially Catholic and Jewish networks) and cultural activities (at the college of music, for example). This is striking in comparison with the other cases, notably nearby Noisy. Rather, as in Balham, the local context plays a filtering role. Middle-class families who have chosen to live in Le Raincy share this model of focusing on family (e.g. inhabitants describe their home as a "bubble"). Although the image of the "village" is also evoked in Le Raincy – through knowing shop keepers,

meeting acquaintances in the street by going shopping and having a social network within the city – it seems this local sociability is less important than other areas of investment (family, for example). "Doing the local" through socialising is essentially realised in closed networks, more so than in other Parisian cases, and is closely linked to processes of social reproduction (see Chapter 6).

Parenting networks and local life

Being or becoming parents had a major impact on how residents invested in and practised in their neighbourhood. Rather than being focused on particular local institutions, whether that be a pub in Peckham or the clubs and societies of Effingham, in some neighbourhoods, local social networks instead centred on children, schools and (in England) National Childbirth Trust (NCT) classes. As we have already outlined in Chapter 4, some residents had chosen their residential location according to their ideas about the best place to raise children. Here we shall explore how having children relates to everyday practices.

Whilst men also discussed the impact of having children on their social networks, for women, becoming mothers was more closely tied to spatial practices, with many describing how being at home with children (re-)connected them to their neighbourhood. Two stories about the effect of having children on the experience of local life crossed all of the neighbourhoods: being a woman at home with children changes your relationship to the local area; children become the base of local friendship networks. These themes were particularly strong in Berrylands and Balham due to the concentrations of types of household and age of the respondents. Most households in these areas comprised a married couple and children, although in Berrylands there were more divorced people and second marriages than in Balham, and it was in Balham and Berrylands where those who were not part of child-centred networks found local community difficult to access. Residential choice in Balham and Berrylands was predominantly and overwhelmingly based on perceived suitability for both family life and commuting. Despite these similarities, there are distinct differences between these two areas in how they are lived as neighbourhoods. Many of the distinctions in patterns of everyday activity are highly gendered in Balham: mothers at home with young children, fathers with long working days in central London (many mention leaving home at 6.30am and returning home between 7 and 8.30pm). In Berrylands, there was a less heightened sense

of a gender division and of the frenetic activity that is part of Balham life, but there were similarities in the ways that family life was central to local social networks, such networks often stemming from participation in the NCT classes and schools.

Similarly, in the Parisian cases, women were particularly strongly implicated in organising activities for their children locally and had developed parental networks as a result. If we did not see the same levels of women moving away from paid employment in Paris as in London, adaptations were still made. Several women had stopped paid employment when their children were born to devote time to raising the children whilst their partners still worked long hours. Also, in the 9th and in Châteaufort, some women adapted to motherhood by making a career change (sometimes after staying at home during the early years), opting to work in a new sector and, at the same time, working in the neighbourhood/village. These mothers met each other through school or locally based activities for children and they had forged friendships over the years: "We six mums get along very well because we work a little in the same sector (communication, culture and entertainment, etc.) and since our children are very small, we get on very well, we continue to see and to invite each other, even for the professional reasons" – Marie. This ability to change course relates to their high levels of economic and cultural capital (e.g. a journalist in the publishing sector can now work at home in Châteaufort; a manager in public relations started working for an artistic association which organises workshops for children).

This gendered form of local sociability contributes to the dynamism of local life and neighbourhood feel. In Breuillet, some mothers meet every day when they pick up children at the school: "Mothers become friends. It can lead to meeting in small cafes in the morning, forming a crafts collective, a certain solidarity, friendship is created" – Céline. Some of them refer to the TV programme *Desperate Housewives* to describe the local life during the day. In Châteaufort, this gendered sociability is used to dispel the negative stigma of "ville dortoir" (a dormitory town) associated with the suburbs: "This is not a 'ville dortoir', there is activity throughout the day, mothers ... people who work in Châteaufort, it is alive" – Agathe. Through these networks, parents participate in maintaining or reshaping the neighbourhood in more strategic ways (by trying to attract new shops and campaigning for new activities and associations for children; see Chapter 6). Similarly, in London, mothers living a local life is a result of a gendered division of labour within the

family and this manifests itself in women who are mothers taking part in local social activities. In Balham in particular, the combination of a gendered division of labour and relatively high level of income partially underpins the "yummy mummy" phenomenon (see Chapter 3), as ex-professional women meet up with their children in public urban spaces and take part in activities such as NCT classes.

Whether changing jobs, taking extended maternity leave or leaving the workplace, many women of all ages reflected on how their lives had become more local since having had children. This reconnection to the local was often expressed ambivalently as constraining, but as resulting in a process of discovering the neighbourhood. For example, Belinda: "If you've been working – suddenly you are forced to be at home and in your area so you . . . I think you rediscover it and you're forced to be at home and you walk, and you find places". As women's practices become more located in the neighbourhood they then form networks with other mothers they meet at school, at the different clubs (sport, arts activities) and in their local area. These forms of sociability are also a way of coping with being at home with a small child. It should also be noted that there were women who had not found it easy to make these connections whilst they had small children, and they described feeling lonely and isolated.

In England, NCT classes occupy a central role in these forms of middle-class sociability: "everything is centred around him [6-month-old child], so during the week, what do we do . . . Fridays we go swimming, Tuesdays we meet up with our NCT friends, and we go to a music class" – Alice; "the only local people we know are quite recent friends, mainly through NCT" – Jeremy. NCT classes cost money to attend and are predominantly accessed by the middle classes (see Byrne, 2006; Vincent et al., 2008). Such parenting networks, based on the NCT classes or schools, can have the effect of creating a social network of "people like us". For example, Jeremy, a Balham father originally from a working-class background, reflected on how new parents become connected with people like themselves through participating in the same activities and going to the same places:

> It's easier to meet people through your NCT classes in a new area and all of that but we . . . when we had her, and I think because of that everyone in our class was very similar to us so with a kind of really similar demographic I guess, er, in fact sickeningly so . . . it was, we're all so predictable and you know, clichéd and . . .
>
> Interviewer: [both laugh] In what way?

Jeremy: Well just . . . in the fact that I'm the only one that doesn't work in finance in the whole group and everyone was within about three years in age and er, we're all white middle class, kind of just all the clichés really, and . . . a farmer's market opened a few weeks ago and we bumped into like, two, of the other families, four out of five, just because of course we'd go there because we're all the same.

These parents share the cultural norms of going to NCT classes and the farmer's market and have enough money to take part in both activities. The example shows how a combination of shared tastes, habits and similar incomes become actualised in particular spaces and build networks of middle-class parents (these everyday meetings also provide information about schools and activities and thus have a role in social reproduction; see Chapter 6 and Byrne, 2006).

Clubs and societies: Community through joining in

Across all ten neighbourhoods, we observed that a mode of belonging through joining clubs and taking part in more organised leisure activities was most prevalent in older people – there seems to have been a generational shift away from these forms of sociability – and even, to some degree, in the more rural settings.

Amongst the residents of West Horsley, Effingham and Oak Tree Park, social life was strongly linked to membership or participation in clubs and societies. In Oak Tree Park this was more often tennis and golf clubs whereas in the two commuter-belt villages there was more of an emphasis on amateur dramatics and charitable organisations. These clubs do not always map on to the immediate village but are instead spread across a cluster of local villages and small towns.

Sport is particularly central to the leisure activities of the Oak Tree Park residents, especially tennis and golf ("I must admit every morning there"ll be tennis . . . Tuesday morning will be tennis . . . Wednesday morning will be tennis . . ." – Steve). Such tennis and golf clubs proliferate in the surrounding area. For people who do not work, retired people and non-working women, these clubs also provide a structure for the week.

In Port Sud, building a sense of community through leisure activities (especially sporting activities such as sailing, tennis and parties) is part of the project of the neighbourhood and this corresponds to the "vacation village" imaginary. During the 1970s, some residents were very invested in the community life, practising sports and cultural activities (tennis, swimming, dance, exhibitions, etc.) and sharing moments

of conviviality organised by the residents' club (through diners and parties), as one of its previous heads explains:

> We were invited to each other's places. There was a conviviality that was a direct result of the friendliness of the club or the pool. In summer, you were on the terrace, you were having a drink, you were going for a swim, you came back in the evening and you knew you had a dance to go to with an orchestra. It was the club, it was the village of our dreams.
>
> – Jacques

These practices created a collective sense of belonging – the first, and most invested, residents call themselves "Port-sudians" – that is less used by new generations. These practices have not disappeared but now bring together fewer people. In this socially homogeneous place, some people have simply closed themselves off into their private worlds. For example, some housewives prefer to meet other women of the same age and social group at home. Several residents emphasise that lifestyles have changed with the rise of "individualism", relationships with work are more pressurised, more women work away from home and family life is more self-contained. But is seems also that they are more generationally segregated:

> Activities are split by generations. There is a kind of associative club with activities for children, elders prepare Christmas, there are plays and performances. There are bridge and scrabble clubs in the middle of the afternoon. So young people can't go. Meeting people, no. It's more through neighbours.
>
> – Céline

Another explanation is that some sporting activities such as the tennis courts are currently being taken over by the city and are therefore open to all the residents of Breuillet. These practices, and underlying them the ideal of the "vacation village" way of life, are kept alive by some of the oldest generation residents, whose nostalgic discourses aim to keep (and to value) the neighbourhood memory, but seem to be fading for new generations.

This loss of communal sporting leisure activity was also expressed in Berrylands where it was striking how many respondents referred to the closure of the Surbiton Lagoon, a lido within the estate that had closed in 1980. Some 30 years after its closure, the lido occupied an important

place in the collective imagination of the residents ("It would have been nice if the lido was still there, it would have been fantastic" – Andrea). If in Port Sud access to sporting activities are key to the "vacation village", in Berrylands the much missed lido is associated with the suburb's golden age.

Joining in was judged to be particularly important in preserving a sense of community that matched the ideals of living in a rural village. In West Horsley and Effingham some felt disillusioned that the image of a country village community had not been lived up to. This was particularly the case for younger people, or those who had moved into the village more recently. Other individuals expressed the need to preserve the community through taking part, as Lesley, who had lived in the village for 40 years, explained, "you can't just sit and hope you'll have community, you've got to actually take part". Taking part was often expressed as joining in through clubs and societies – such as amateur dramatics, choir – and locally oriented voluntary work. Arguably, participation in these activities often depended on longevity of residence and age, with older, often retired people more involved than younger neighbours. There was a dissonance between how the more recent arrivals – in the terms of these villages, people who had moved in as long as 15 years ago – imaged village life (friendly neighbours) and how longstanding, older residents understood community (joining in through clubs). For example, Lee, who had lived in the village since 1996, described impersonal relations in the village and equated this with the village being a middle-class place: "it is very much a middle-class village, say good morning to people as they're walking down the street and they look the other way, things like that, it really is quite peculiar". Margaret described her experience of arriving in the village, 40 years previously, and inviting neighbours round for a drinks party – only one person came. It was through joining clubs that she and her husband started to meet people. She reflected, "You've got to get out there and join things and make a personal effort. I think my husband joined the cricket club first and somebody there said, 'Why don't you come and get involved with amateur dramatics?' Which is now his major interest".

Whilst several generations coexist in Châteaufort and take part in different activities according to their age, it is striking that different generations of residents, older as well as newly arrived middle-class people participate in the organisation of the medieval event of the Saint Simon's Day each year. However, some members of the organising committee (the association), who have lived there for a long time, complain about the lack of involvement of new arrivals in leadership and taking

responsibility for the event. They consider the survival of the association to be essential: “It has to be maintained” – Vincent. On this particular day, the history of the village is celebrated through jousting performances, traditional music and dance performances, theatre, etc. The “village” goes back to the “medieval time” and many Casterfortans wear old costumes, such as one resident who has taken on the role of the witch for more than 25 years. She considers this event a key element of the “village atmosphere”: “It is friendly, we can talk, laugh” – Jacqueline. Many residents work all year to prepare for this event, each of them contributing various skills and resources. These middle-class residents utilise their high levels of economic, social and cultural capital in order to organise this event (e.g. horses are provided by a retired horse rider) which helps create a sense of community (“There’s a very strong sense of belonging to this village” – Angèle), as well as keeping alive and valuing the history of the village. This feeds into to the imaginary of Châteaufort as a rural village and helps to keep negative representations of the suburbs (symbolised by “ville dortoir”) at bay.

In our rural commuter-belt villages we can see that joining in is considered key to preserving the village. However, these differences in practising place are partly generational and not just about the type or representation of neighbourhood. For example, in Balham, two older women also bemoaned the lack of enthusiasm for taking part, through “Neighbourhood Watch” and organised activity amongst the younger women of the area. Maria reflected: “I used to help in the school, you know, we used to do reading and library classifications, and I was on the PTA, did all these fetes and fairs and all that sort of thing, I think you really struggle now to find people doing – make a cake, or something like that”. She compared this to the lives of younger middle-class women whom she expected to socialise in a rather different way: “They meet at the gym, I suppose, or their baby massage classes – they all go to these sort of like, these smart things like baby massage, and Pilates”.

Negotiating and using the wider City: Mobilities, borders and everyday practices

Paris and London “à la carte”

Whilst so far we have focused on lived local space, such practices are embedded in more extensive personal geographies that stretch beyond neighbourhood boundaries. The following section looks at how our interviewees negotiated the wider city as well as the local area. In the case of Paris metropolis, the relationship between centrality (Paris) and

the suburbs is central to our understanding of mobilities, everyday practices and relationships to diversity. The core of the city, delimited by the "Périphérique", is variously used, depending on proximity, but more importantly, according to the lifestyles of the different middle-class groups.

Although we have already examined how in some neighbourhoods consuming locally is central to residents' sense of belonging and the upholding of "the village", there are other cases where consumption practices are less important to "being local". This is not only related to a lack of shops or to a lack of shops that are considered suitable. Middle-class people combine practices within and outside the neighbourhood (see Authier and Lévy, 2001; Launay, 2011). As we have seen in the different ways of being local outlined above, this does not necessarily mean that territorial identity is not shaped through everyday practices; but rather it is done differently, through social networks and collective activities.

In the suburbs as well as in the "protected neighbourhoods", the middle classes navigate between local shops and shops located elsewhere, making their choices "à la carte" (Chalas, 2000), through a combination of habits and opportunities (e.g. shops that are conveniently located between home and work or nearby shopping centres). In these "protected neighbourhoods", middle-class residents did not express the wish for more local shops. In places like Oak Tree Park and Le Raincy, residents are highly mobile and, moreover, they expect to go further afield for shopping. Unlike the residents of the 9th arrondissement, their practices are not confined to the geographical boundaries of the immediate neighbourhood, whether for shopping, sports, cultural or leisure pursuits. When they chose to live/to stay in this "protected place", they also considered the potential of the surrounding area to fill in the gaps, including more deprived and/or stigmatised areas. For example, in Le Raincy, respondents go to the hypermarket at Clichy-sous-Bois, Livry-Gargan, Villemonble, to the cinema in Tremblay en France, to the school of music in Gagny, the swimming pool in Bobigny and to other venues that are less than 20 minutes away by car.

There are several reasons for this use of surrounding cities and, to a lesser degree, Paris: lack of affordable shops in Le Raincy (even if they go to the market and the Monoprix during the weekend), and especially, a lack of collective and cultural amenities ("from a cultural point of view, it is a bit empty" – Caroline), which pushes people to look elsewhere.

Similarly, in Berrylands, the lack of a good pub and the decline of traditional local shops, such as the butchers, were common causes for

complaint and were used to contrast the Berrylands of today with the suburb's golden age. Despite this nostalgia, there was not the level of investment in those shops that did remain as we saw in the rural villages. As in Le Raincy, residents expected to have to travel to Kingston and Guildford for shopping and cultural activities.

A rather different situation is found in Noisy-le-Sec where the possibility of retaining a metropolitan way of life has strongly influenced the choice of middle-class residents to live there. The lack of amenities available locally drives them to navigate between Noisy and its surroundings. However, the reasons given vary between the two generations of middle-class residents (Bacqué et al., forthcoming). Middle-class people who are long-term residents and who have always lived in Noisy or other nearby cities observe a downgrading of the quality of shops that they explain by a "pauperisation" of the city:

> Roughly, for ten years, all the small shops have closed because the people are retired or for some reason, they have all been replaced by phone shops and fast food, Turkish takeaway . . . It is to the detriment of shoemakers, bookstores, traditional shops which we are more used to going to, so yes indeed it is a foreign take-over, kebabs and phone stores . . . it results in something a little less friendly.
>
> – Evelyne

The practices of these people are more spread out across the local area and are strongly etched in the habits that they have acquired over the years. Statements about change such as the above inflect fears of the businesses of ethnic "others" and how these are replacing the traditional consumption infrastructure of the neighbourhood. This is tied to fears about the loss of the "village" and the kinds of socialities this entails (see Chapter 4).

Meanwhile, as described above, the "ex-Parisians" complain about the lack of shops corresponding to their modes of consumption ("an organic food shop, a nice cafe and a nice bookshop" – Delphine) and still hope that a transformation of Noisy, which would reinforce their investment in the city and reassure them they have made a good choice in leaving Paris, will happen soon: "We want bobos' stuff [laugh] . . . The evolution of the market [with the arrival of good farmers] is striking, I think it may change" – Delphine. In the meantime, their practices remain solidly centred on Paris. Despite these generational differences, there is nevertheless a consensus on the lack of a bookstore – for the newer arrivals because they patronised them in Paris, for the longer term

older residents, because they used to go to the one, now closed, in Noisy: “The bookshop, for me it is a place where we meet, we go there, you can stroll, we can have real exchanges. There, there is not one” – Delphine. Moreover, Noisy is a suburb with cultural offerings (a contemporary arts centre, multimedia library, a theatre and a cinema in partnership with the Romainville that most middle-class people use) but this does not compete with that of Paris, which, for many, remains a major hub. The production of consumption and cultural practices must thus be understood in conjunction with mobilities across the wider metropolitan area (Rémy, 2004).

Across all of the London neighbourhoods, respondents were keen to stress their connectivity to London by public transport. As was frequently mentioned in Peckham, “We’re in Zone 2, you know”. In the London neighbourhoods, central London was drawn on as a resource for shopping and for cultural visits. Cultural visits were often occasions for meeting up with friends and featured the National Gallery, the South Bank and the Tate Modern. The differences in the respondents’ relationship to central London varied by neighbourhood, but much of this variation seemed to be related to stage of life, as much as to neighbourhood type. For example, those in Berrylands and Balham (who also often had primary school-aged children) were more focused on spending time with their family and using the local green spaces than on the cultural amenities of central London, although arguably the presence of London was still important to their sense of self. Both those who were older and those who were younger, or did not have young children, talked more about going to and making use of central London. These uses ranged from the retired man in Effingham who liked to use his senior rail pass to frequent a freemason’s lodge in the West End, to the young doctor in Peckham who socialised on the South Bank after work.

Mobilities, diversity and avoidance

As well as telling us how people get from A to B, respondents’ accounts of their everyday mobilities also show how middle-class people encounter, negotiate and attempt to control diversity as they move through urban space. Situations of encounters and ways of controlling contact with diversity differ in terms of degree and modes of transport used, depending on local context and the wider context of the two metropolises. Here, we will consider a major difference between Paris and London: central London emerges as a feared and celebrated site of

social mix whereas in Paris it is the Parisian "banlieues" which are the (stigmatised) site of social mix.

Controlling encounters with diversity through mobility

Those who live in West Horsley, Effingham and Oak Tree Park take part in activities in the nearby area (amateur dramatics, going to the supermarket), which is largely homogenous and populated by other white middle-class people. For these residents, encounters with diversity are more likely to be located in central London. Some of these residents comment on the foreign-ness of London, the different languages heard and the presence of non-white people. Whilst for some this provides a welcome contrast to their local neighbourhood (and is part of them claiming to have "the best of both worlds" in being able to access the city and the countryside), others feel less comfortable and express a feeling of London's decline and a sense of increasing unfamiliarity ("I went a couple of weeks ago to meet this friend from Bedford and I thought I was in a foreign country, there were so many foreign voices, and very few English speaking people, you almost felt a foreigner in your own capital" – Diane).

The practices of the residents of suburban cities reveal a relative acceptance, more marked in the case of Noisy-le-Sec, of encountering diversity:

> This town [Noisy] has, for me, a mystery. The first shock I had was when I went to vote. I did not recognise in my poll the city that I experience every day. The city that I experience every day is socially mixed, this is the station, the RER. When I arrived at my polling station, people were all white and grizzled [laughs].
>
> – Julie

The relationship to the RER of the residents of suburban cities offers an interesting angle to look at and understand how these residents negotiate, control and avoid such social encounters. For example, taking the EOLE line (originally referred to as the *Est Ouest Liaison Express*) of the RER train network every day for residents of Noisy and Le Raincy was an accepted part of their choice to live in the "first wing" cities; it allows them to get to Paris easily and quickly. "With the RER, you are at Saint Lazare in 20 minutes" – Pierre-Laurent. This route with the highest accessibility into Paris is used more during the day and less at night for two interconnected reasons: the longer waiting times between trains at night and the feelings of insecurity generated by the presence

of "others" on trains and at stations. The feared and avoided groups are identified by racial criteria, particularly those perceived as "youth immigrant gangs" who are associated with crime. Thus, middle-class RER users adjust their use of the RER according to certain times of the day and week and avoid taking it late in the evening, so as to not be waiting too long at the stations and to limit confrontations with others. As this 20-year-old student who lived in Le Raincy explained: "It is 25 minutes from Paris, so... No, in the day it's alright, but it is in the evening. At a certain time, there's nobody. There are people until 8 pm and after, it's still pretty empty [...] we can't take it at certain times because... It is a bit unsafe" – Rachelle. Tensions about issues of the accessibility of Paris, confrontation with diversity and the potential risk of losing the local social balance because of the arrival of people coming from the outside are prevalent in Le Raincy. Whilst people in Noisy do sometimes talk positively about social mix ("Living in a rather mixed suburb also has a meaning in relation to my education, my values??" – Laurent), those living in Le Raincy have chosen to live in a "protected place", therefore the mobilities of "others" in Le Raincy can be perceived as a threat:

> I think we avoid homeless people, we avoid having them in this city, we avoid having too many immigrants. It is true that immigrants pass through here. They go down to the station Raincy, they take the bus 601 and they go to Clichy or Montfermeil.
>
> – Adelina

> Four years ago my brother was attacked outside the school [by] young blacks who were not from Le Raincy. There is insecurity at the Thiers round about where the buses are coming, there are gangs who come to the college.
>
> – Pierre-Laurent

This avoidance is also evident in Breuillet where some residents expressed a fear of the RER and did not allow their teenage children to travel by RER in the evening. Some of the women respondents also said they preferred to drive as they did not feel safe on the RER at night. Stigmatised groups coming into the area are not perceived as a threat if their numbers are kept under control (by social housing policy) and if they are only passing through. More generally, now that these middle-class inhabitants have become used to going to more diverse surrounding areas, the negative monolithic vision of the département

that they had before settling in Seine-Saint-Denis has been eroded. They now have a more nuanced knowledge of local places, their social composition and insecurity, which is reflected in their practices and ideas about boundaries:

> When I was talking about the 93: "Olala it's heated! Olala, it's the ghetto! Olala it's delinquency, it's Los Angeles!" But living there, I saw that is not the same everywhere. (...) People are all different, neighbourhoods are all different. Yes, there are problems of crime in some places, but it is not because there are problems of crime in a place that the whole département is contaminated by crime.
>
> – Noemie

For some who work in low-income areas, such as teachers and doctors, living in Le Raincy is a way to preserve themselves from the social deprivation they are confronted with in their working life. So it is not that they are completely distant from "others", but that they seek to control the situations in and frequency at which they meet them, especially in terms of their children.

Borders: Avoided places and the fear of encroachment

In Chapter 3 we argued that forms of selective belonging and spatial distinctions are used by our respondents to place themselves in a social hierarchy. These social borders are reflected and maintained "on the ground" through forms of everyday practice and avoidance. As well as strategies of moving between the local area and the wider metropolitan vicinity in order to negotiate diversity, in the London neighbourhoods in particular, we found fears and celebrations of social and ethnic mix playing out in different ways on a local level. Although their villages are overwhelmingly homogenous ("I don't think you see a true black face" – Margaret), for those living in West Horsley and Effingham there is a fear of encroachment, that of increased suburbanisation (see Chapter 7) and a slight mistrust and fear of social others on the edges, described by one respondent as "the Irish and the gypsies and stuff" – Martin. These perceived threats on the periphery did not seem to impact on everyday practice. Instead, what we found in West Horsley and Effingham is less avoidance of "others" and more of what Nayak has described as "the silent cartography of whiteness" (2010: 2375).

In our inner London neighbourhoods of Balham and Peckham, borders were articulated in a different way with shopping streets repeatedly

named as forming the edge of the neighbourhood. In Balham, Balham High Road was considered a bit downmarket although useful for supermarkets. In Peckham, these were Rye Lane and Peckham High Street, with Rye Lane in particular rousing ambivalent feelings. Whatever their feelings about Rye Lane, our respondents referred to it in heavily racialised, rather than classed, terms: as "Africa", "Little Lagos" and "Third World". The close proximity of Rye Lane and it being the site of Peckham Rye railway station meant it was very difficult to avoid. Respondents dipped into Rye Lane, using it for the railway, to sometimes buy fruit and vegetables, but at the same time expressing bafflement, and sometimes disgust, at the shops that populated it ("I don't want to live, and a lot of people round here don't want to live, in the grime of Lagos" – Marjory; "When you arrive here, you immediately feel kind of bombarded, bombarded by people all selling things and all the vegetable stalls and the meat hanging up . . . it's noisy" – Emily). A more porous and blurred boundary was given as the border with "upmarket" East Dulwich to the south. The Peckham respondents' use of Rye Lane (for vegetables, transport links and chain stores), East Dulwich (for Pilates and independent boutiques) as well as supporting the local shops and bars of Bellenden Road (see above) helps to not only shape the neighbourhood but also their sense of themselves as a different kind of middle class who appreciate living in a multicultural area ("I love the multicultural aspect" – Linda; "I think Ian and I are one of these classic people who really do genuinely feel that life is good when there's a diverse community" – Fiona). However, these celebratory accounts and daily practices need to be taken in conjunction with some residents' efforts to stop what they regard as the spread of Rye Lane into their residential area and to "improve" Rye Lane (see Chapter 7).

In Paris, avoided places are mainly the large social housing estates that are highly stigmatised in collective representations, especially since the 2005 riots (Garbin and Millington, 2012). Representations of these places often serve as proxies to talk about social, but also racial and/or ethnic difference:

> Le Raincy is the only alternative for *cité* that still have problems, as in Montfermeil or Clichy [. . .] There, French natives were replaced progressively by immigrants. And it gives . . . There are places where you look at the population, and if you did not know that you are in France, you do not know where you are.
>
> – Pierre-Laurent

Fears of encroachment particularly crystallise around the phrase "immigrant youth gangs". For example, Pierre-Laurent (above) explains the rise in crime in these terms.

The strategies of avoiding these places and the fear of encroachment of the people associated with them vary in degree and in terms of the ways it is expressed. In suburban socially homogeneous places other than Le Raincy, the fear of encroachment does not seem to be an issue as the large social housing estates are located relatively far away. Avoidances are embedded in daily routes and trajectories. For example, some Châteaufort residents sometimes go by car to Saint-Quentin en Yvelines, a new town located not far away from Châteaufort, to take part in cultural activities such as concerts, but these places, frequented by people who have high cultural capital like them, do not make them encounter a high level of social diversity. Its shopping centre is however avoided, because of its proximity to large housing estates considered to be more insecure:

> She [his wife] went to Saint-Quentin because there is a bowling [alley], a cinema, a shopping centre. Velizy is a little better frequented because Saint-Quentin begins to decline slightly, in quotation marks. They close down the shops because there are fights . . . So, the image of Saint-Quentin has dropped [. . .] We turn to Velizy which is less modern but stays the course well since, I do not know, twenty years.
>
> – Vincent

These "à la carte" practices and mobilities thus preserve a social "bubble" (Atkinson, 2006; see also Watt, 2009), even though these people do not express negative discourses on social mixity, indeed some of them express regret about the decline of social mixity and the lack of ethnic diversity in Châteaufort.

In the 9th arrondissement, whilst social and ethnic mix are valued as part of the "village" atmosphere, as we have outlined above, middle-class residents develop a dense local sociability, following the "people like us" logic. Most of them avoid low-status and ethnically mixed neighbourhoods like Barbes, which is a five-minute walk away. The only people interviewed who go to its market and shops are the "Prolos" who like to live in mixed places. Moreover, most of the residents of the 9th also avoid crossing the "Périphérique" ("It's really those areas where I would never go to live, for me, the suburbs, it's a horror, it's anguish" – Marianne) and avoid taking the RER (most of them have no car) as much

as they possibly can, for practical reasons but also, for some of them, to limit encounters:

> I have found myself several times on the same platform and in the same train compartments with groups of young people who were not mean but who were numerous and who were very noisy and who horsed around, etc. I have not been attacked but that creates right away a feeling of insecurity.
>
> – Olivia

The fear of encroachment seems more common in the 9th than in the other neighbourhoods of our study. This finding challenges the notion of an "urbanity gradient" developed by the geographer Jacques Lévy (1999), which established a correlation between the location where people live from the centre of the metropolis and their degree of acceptance of diversity (Charmes et al., 2013), with those living most centrally being the most positive about diversity.

Conclusion

To conclude, whilst forms of opportunity and constraint, aspirations about lifestyle and desirable environments for raising children are important in middle-class narratives of *how they came to live* in certain neighbourhoods, this is only part of the story. Here, we have argued that everyday spatial practices matter in terms of the relationship between the middle classes and the places they inhabit.

We have outlined different ways of "doing" the local, from consumption, to collective activities, to parenting networks. Such practices are sometimes related to the image of the neighbourhood held by the middle-class residents, in particular in establishing or preserving a "village". Underpinning these local practices, we can highlight three ways of relating to the local neighbourhood:

1. Place as project (Peckham, Noisy): In these "urban villages" an effort is being made to reshape local space in the image of the middle classes. This is done through a combination of banding together in order to effect change (see Chapter 7) and by supporting local businesses when they exist.
2. Place as maintained: This describes a situation where the emphasis is put on keeping things in the "rural village" and "protected neighbourhood" as they are, with more or less vigilance depending

on perceived necessity (less necessary in the cases of Châteaufort, Oak Tree Park and the 9th than in Le Raincy, Port Sud, West Horsley and Effingham).

3. A less urgent sense of place (Berrylands, Balham): In these places there was a less strong discourse of “the local” and a more inward-looking family life; this was largely to do with stage of life rather than the creation or maintenance of a particular neighbourhood ideal. A sense of “place as project” was largely absent in these neighbourhoods. Rather, there is a more relaxed attitude to the local. There is a broad acceptance of Berrylands as a suburb and everything that goes with that (ordinariness, convenience, comfort) – what matters is schools and family life. Balham is characterised by more intense activity, but this is centred on the home, on getting children into a good (fee-paying) school and on being a success; there is less emphasis on the need to preserve or shape the neighbourhood.

However, neighbourhood practices vary not only by neighbourhood type but also by generation, gender and stage of life. In some of our neighbourhoods, one mode of being local prevails, for example, in Berrylands, parenting networks are the dominant form. This means that those who do not have children are excluded. However, there are also places where a variety of ways of living space overlay each other. This could be in part to do with places where there is more of a mix in terms of generations and of groups of different middle-class people (Peckham, Noisy, Port Sud).

Such ways of living the local are connected to ways of traversing and inhabiting the wider city. Understanding these practices and mobilities shows how the middle classes live in these metropolitan areas, how they use places “à la carte” according to their habits, their lifestyle and also, how relationships with diversity are mediated through movement through the city, the gravitation towards some places and the turning away from others. It shows that it is necessary to look at the practices of the middle classes as embedded in the whole metropolitan area (and not only those related to residential places) to understand their discourses, projects and relations to diversity. A key difference between London and Paris is the relationship between the centre/suburbs and social mix. Therefore, for those living in the outer neighbourhoods, London can be dipped into; part of going into town is being in a more diverse place. This is both celebrated and denigrated. However, for those living in an enclave within the wider area of Peckham, diversity is encountered almost on the doorstep. Again, this is celebrated and denigrated but

an additional dynamic here involves the efforts made, beyond everyday practices, to shape the neighbourhood in the image of the "urban village". This will be discussed in the next chapter. In Paris there is a different relationship between the centre and the suburbs. Here, it is the suburbs that are the site of difference. Whilst the "banlieues" in general have a (symbolically) bad reputation, they are very diverse, not least of which is the contrast between the affluent suburbs in the west and the poorer neighbourhoods in the east of Paris.

6
Staying Middle Class

Introduction

The analysis of strategies of class reproduction has become a key way of understanding the middle classes and different fractions of work, identity and lifestyle within them. It is the core of Bourdieu's neo-Marxist sociology but is also crucial to more liberal, Weberian approaches concerned with social mobility (or the lack of it) (Goldthorpe, 1996). Ideas and categories drawn more directly from Marx have influenced strongly conceptions of class in urban studies from Castells's *The Urban Question* (1979) onwards. These approaches have tended to see a strong mapping of class distinctions onto divisions of urban space, notably in links to the housing market. Marxist approaches suggest how, for instance, the middle class (conceived as a part of the bourgeoisie) dominates urban space. This domination is evident in the abundant research on gentrification that testifies to class division through expansion in urban space (into lower income neighbourhoods) and the resulting divisions and displacement of poorer residents. Bourdieu-inspired research also suggests this dominance of the middle classes in urban space, where their choices and affiliation determine the character and social composition of neighbourhood in forms of "elective belonging" (Savage et al., 2005).

A good deal of the research that is more oriented to the *mechanisms* of class reproduction in urban space (especially in relation to gentrification, suburbanisation and exurbanisation) tend to focus on reproduction via education and in particular class divisions in schooling in the urban context (Ball, 2003; Butler and van Zanten, 2007; Reay et al., 2011). Education, and especially schooling, is undoubtedly a central mechanism in class reproduction, as Bourdieu and Passeron

(1977) identified. However, in this study we take a wide view of social reproduction to include forms of inheritance (often a result of housing wealth), education (especially schooling) but also other forms of the actualisation of middle-class status – through housing renovation, and forms of socialisation and institutional politics, leisure and recreation and public activities in the neighbourhoods. In this study, we paid particular attention to the significance of location (and especially in the neighbourhood) in the processes of social reproduction, rather than just as an outcome of these processes. What role does location play in strategies of social reproduction? Neighbourhood might figure prominently through the neighbourhood trajectories of parents of respondents and their accumulated housing wealth and how some of that might be passed on to children to enhance their housing and neighbourhood prospects. Equally, neighbourhood is a key ingredient in the schooling strategies of the middle classes for their children (particularly in London and increasingly in Paris). Furthermore, the neighbourhood offers an arena for the actualisation of middle-class status and identity, through housing renovation for instance, or through political activity or leisure pursuits, or through it being deemed the right sort of environment to bring up children.

In this chapter, our definition of reproduction consists in examining intergenerational transfers (of economic capital via inheritance or cultural capital via education) and wider activities in the neighbourhood that help actualise middle-class status and identity. These are the two key elements of staying middle class that emerged from the research. A third key strand is, of course, labour-market position. The study captured a range of middle-class career trajectories with a diversity of occupations in each neighbourhood. Most of our respondents who were in formal employment felt relatively secure and, with the exception of a small number of cases of public-sector employees, there were few discussions of fear of losing a job or losing class status in the labour markets.

We focus on the key elements of staying middle class that are related to residence. (1) A first strand of intergenerational social reproduction concerns economic capital and the significance of inheritance of property or financial legacies usually passed from parents to children. This is captured in our study in two ways – older parents discussing passing on forms of inheritance to help their adult-aged children on the housing ladder or younger interviewees (parents and non-parents) who have been in receipt of forms of inheritance. (2) The most prominent form of social reproduction is in activities around the educational careers of

the children of middle-class parents. The transmission of cultural capital via family dynamics and schooling strategies was a major concern of middle-class parents interviewed in the study. (3) A third main element of "staying middle class" is the maintenance (or enhancement) of current social status, through forms of consumption, labour-market position, housing aesthetics and, crucially, the neighbourhood (and activities within it), its social composition and its place in wider residential trajectories – as markers of social status. There are clearly intersections between social reproduction and current status (including trade-offs between them) that are crucial to the analysis of the activities of our respondents in staying middle class. The neighbourhood is a critical arena for these forms of reproduction. However, most of the work of social reproduction is highly gendered. These strongly gendered aspects of the work of staying middle class cut across the two national, urban and contrasting neighbourhood contexts we studied.

Across the neighbourhoods there were examples of how residential choice was influenced by family formation or schooling choices. Indeed, in London West Horsley and Effingham, Balham and Berrylands, and in Paris Noisy, Châteaufort and Breuillet, the majority of respondents with children had explained that their decision to move had coincided with starting (or wanting to start) a family and to be living in the right kind of environment (social, physical, educational) to raise a child (discussed in Chapter 5). It is significant that each of these neighbourhoods was presented as a suitable place to raise (middle-class) children. Whereas within the UK, middle-class ideals of good environments for children have traditionally been associated with suburbia or the rural idyll, in the present study we see these idealisations in a range of very different landscapes (inner urban to rural) as well as in the contrasts between Paris and London. This enables us to relate the conceptions of what constitutes good locations to raise children with the actual components of what this means, in terms of types of schools, ideas of social mix, neighbourhood environment and infrastructure. Also bound up in this is the idea of what it is to be a "good" (middle-class) parent and whether that is consistent or contrasting across locations. Conceptions of, and norms around "good" parenting are explored explicitly in our study.

Social reproduction and housing: The role of inheritance

In terms of intergenerational social reproduction, housing plays an increasing role in the transfers of economic capital between generations.

Homeownership has grown significantly over the last 30 years to 64 per cent in the UK (with some recent decline) and to 58 per cent in France in 2011. Over the last 30 years, there has been an overall strong house price inflation (101 per cent in the UK; 69 per cent in France). These figures are magnified for the global cities of Paris and London (house price inflation in the last 30 years is 124 per cent for London and 88 per cent for Paris). In France and the UK there has been increasing liberalisation of access to and use of housing equity. This means the property and monetary intergenerational transfers have grown markedly and especially for the middle classes.

Of our respondents in Paris, 75 per cent are homeowner households (compared to the French average of 62 per cent, although this is higher amongst middle-class groups). Of our respondents in London, 89 per cent are homeowner households. This is also captured in our study in interviews with younger homeowners, some of whom mention inheritance (and cash gifts) as a means of getting on or advancing up the housing ladder (usually in the form of cash deposits for house purchases). Paris and London attract people from other regions and the question of the transfer of capital is important, especially for young people coming from the provinces because of the much higher house prices in Paris. Inheritance becomes a significant factor in gaining access to homeownership in Paris. This can be seen as a transfer of inequality, as it disadvantages families from poorer provincial districts (Chauvel, 2006; Piketty, 2014). This was mentioned as being important in the housing careers of many of our respondents. It has a neighbourhood aspect because the neighbourhood in which you can afford property is an outcome of the size of deposit determined by the house prices in different neighbourhoods. Inheritance was discussed as significant for house purchases or for getting into a better neighbourhood (for such things as schooling, for instance). An alternative strategy is to pay high rent levels in order to live in the central city.

The second group who discussed inheritance transfers were older interviewees who had, in the past, or who were considering how best to pass on some of the gains from their housing careers onto their children. Whilst these may not be conscious investment strategies at the time, the effects of house price inflation and of neighbourhood effects in terms of the housing sub-markets invested in over a housing career can have a marked effect on housing assets and on reinforcing, if not enhancing, social position. The differential trajectories of housing sub-markets might be a mechanism adding to the fragmentation of the middle classes.

This fragmentation can be seen in the differential impacts of inheritance in terms of neighbourhood and social trajectories. For some it means gaining access to a neighbourhood that would otherwise be out of reach, as one of the Oak Tree Park residents (in a household of two retired employees in higher education) attests:

> The reason we're here is because we bought at very opportune times our various houses, but they were inopportune for certain reasons in that both Philip's parents died when they were 50, my mother died when she was 50, so we . . . spent our inheritance, we put the money into the house, which is the only reason why somebody with our work background would be able to come into anywhere like here. The salaries of our neighbours, etc., would have far outweighed what we could have earned.
>
> – Karen

This was a changed trajectory in terms of housing and neighbourhood, but also, in this case, connects to social reproduction via children's education:

> Karen: And then they went to the "Ronalds" School in Guildford, which is also private.
> Interviewer: And they both went through that route?
> Karen: They did.
> Philip: We were using up inheritance money, and I did a bit of share dealing.

In a similar way in Paris, in the 9th arrondissement, there is the case of residents of lower middle-class status (artists) who were able to live in Paris because their parents were owners of a flat or a house with several apartments. They mentioned their status as a "familial house" but this kind of inheritance allowed them to live in Paris and reproduce their middle-class status.

At the other end of the housing market, inheritance can help gain access to the London housing market and achieve speculative gain:

> Interviewer: If you could just start by telling me a bit about the reasons why you got a flat here . . .
> Richard: Actually, the primary reason was investment purposes because, they wanted to invest some money in buying a property, money that was left to me in inheritance . . . so I was reading an

article in the Sunday Telegraph property section and it listed, in their opinion, the country's top places to invest in property for long-term equity and Peckham was number one on the list.

Mark: You've always got to work but I suppose my father helped me with my rent because my parents split up and so I lived there until I finished uni and my grandmother had died and I inherited money so I went travelling round the world for a year. And . . . came to Clapham.

There is also a discussion of the link between inheritance and the economic cycles that translates into concern for children and class trajectories:

> . . . we're the inheritance generation, but our children won't be. There's that kind of thing. Um . . . my, my parents were the first people in their generation, as was . . . to own their own houses which we will inherit. One imagines. But, we're assuming things carry on as they were. But I'll probably be too old to enjoy it, it will probably pay for my retirement I don't know. Assuming I get it. Assuming . . . but there's, that kind of the promise of the inheritance, is almost built in. But our children will have nothing, because we will have to sell this house to pay for our retirement.
>
> – Richard (Peckham)

In Paris, there are similar examples of the effects of inheritance on trajectories in the city. There are numerous examples of inheritance and some respondents being tenants of their parents. One example would be a single 60-year-old male working in the finance sector and owner of a 55m^2 flat in the 9th. His work meant that he had to work in Paris, and his parents helped him buy a property in the 1980s. Two other respondents from the 9th also received help from their parents:

> My parents told me, you buy it and we will help.
>
> – Philippe (9th arrondissement)

> I would not have been able to buy if my parents hadn't helped.
>
> – Xavier (9th arrondissement)

In the 9th especially, there are also examples of several generations living in the same neighbourhood.

> We reproduced the pattern, we all stayed there.
>
> – George (whose parents also live in the 9th arrondissement)

Maxime is also an owner through inheritance whose children are also living in the 9th arrondissement: "They were placed there."

Inheritance emerges as a significant feature of individual households' neighbourhood trajectories in Paris and London in affording access to more desirable neighbourhoods or more housing space. There is also a noticeable generational effect. Sustained increases in house prices in London and Paris, even after the 2008 crash and subsequent recession, as well as a tightening of housing finance as a result of the crash, means that the effects of inheritance are becoming less and less about individual residential and neighbourhood trajectories and more and more about issues of access to and affordability within the London and Paris housing markets for the younger generation as a whole.

Social reproduction and education

The role of the education system in reproducing class differences has been discussed extensively in academic research. Education has been understood as the core problematic in the reproduction of social class. The contemporary debate on the role of education in social reproduction began in France between those emphasising constraints on the choices of working-class parents and pupils (Boudon, 1974), and those who argued for a wider set of structuring forces which made the educational system complicit and in the conscious and unconscious transmission of class distinctions (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). This debate was taken up in the UK and the US and continues today (Ball, 2005; Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997; Butler and Hamnett, 2010; DiMaggio, 1982; Goldthorpe, 1996; van Zanten, 2013). Both these approaches are concerned with the mechanisms that reproduce class inequalities in education in the face of educational expansion (Bridge and Wilson, 2014). Various internal and external factors affect school academic selection (Berthelot, 1983; Lahire, 2004). Amongst these factors, household strategies of school choice and residential choice appear important (Berthelot, 1983; van Zanten, 2013). The issue of location is significant in terms of choices for the middle classes. Location can mean proximity to high-performing schools, but it may also mean being subject to a diversity of population and social relations. Hence, location encompasses social representations and values about school as well as life in the city more generally.

What the present study raises is a series of questions specifically about the middle classes and space in this context of social reproduction. This, of course, includes the impacts of two very different education systems

in England and France. It also includes how the middle classes in the different types of neighbourhood, with a good deal of diversity in terms of the mix of economic, social and cultural capital, view the school as an instrument of social reproduction. How do their attitudes towards school relate to their perceptions of the city and neighbourhood in which they live?

There are strong institutional contrasts in the education systems of France and England. In France, school place allocation is based on the "carte scolaire", which is a system of residence-based allocation administered by local education authorities (for secondary schools) and local municipalities for primary education. This residence-based criteria can be challenged since the introduction in 2007 of the "demande de derogation" (appeal for exemption) which allows parents' requests to be considered for allocation to a school other than the one on the basis of the carte scolaire (usually on the basis of criteria such as disability, special educational need, siblings and financial hardship). Private schools in France are much cheaper than in England and are state funded and mainly faith schools. In England, by contrast, parental choice of school has been much more strongly institutionalised (beginning in the late 1980s). England has, in principle at least, a choice-based mechanism in which residence is only used as a tiebreak device. In England, private schools are independent from the state sector, able to charge their own fees (much higher than in France) and are not subject to the same assessment or league table monitoring as state schools. League tables of school performance exist in both France and England but the prominence of these measures are much more strongly instituted in the English system. Thus, the English and French systems present broad contrasts in the role of residence in school allocation (it is of primary importance in France and the last criterion in England) and over the degree to which private education is integrated within the state system (in France) or completely separate from it (in England).

Raveaud and van Zanten (2007) have compared middle-class families in London and Paris who make a deliberate choice to send their children to the local state-funded school (see also Reay et al., 2011). They argue that national education systems have a less significant influence on choice strategies than parental values, context and resources. In this study, we were able to assess the impact of spatial context on those resources. The range of neighbourhood types encompassed in the study enabled us to assess how a diversity of contexts, mix of resources and possible parental norms intersected with the differences in national and regional education systems.

Choosing a local state school[1]

One mechanism of social reproduction via schooling as it relates to neighbourhood contexts is the reputation of local state schools. Despite the institutional differences in the French and English educational systems, residential moves were mentioned in both Paris and London as a way of getting access to "good" schools. Also observable across neighbourhood, city and country contexts is that what constitutes "good" is conditioned strongly on the perceived social mix of the school, or more particularly on being surrounded by "people like us". The choice of neighbourhoods with schools with good reputations is a key indicator that draws the spatial and social strategies together. In the 9th arrondissement, the high reputation of the state secondaries in the neighbourhood acts as a guarantor of social reproduction:

> I was living in the 10th arrondissement, my daughters were getting to the age where they were going to enter tenth and I didn't want them to go to the neighbourhood CES rubbish bin which was of bad quality. So, I said, "we're going to move" [...] it was really a flight towards areas, let's say, more... of a little higher level from a scholastic point of view [...] a pedagogic, university-oriented choice, etc., let's say.
>
> – Isabelle

There is also the choice of less reputable state schools conditioned by the difficulty of getting into the high-performing state schools but having other available state institutions that still have access to the Grandes Ecoles. These latter institutions are also rationalised as being less pressurised than the academic schools as well as giving some experience of social mix.

> I have a daughter who has much more difficulties. So she, I think she needed something like [local high school], there was less this kind of elitist pressure.
>
> – Cécile

The reputation of state schools is also clearly significant in Le Raincy. As we have seen, Le Raincy is a middle-class town in the middle of one of the poorest "départements" in France, and one with a very high proportion of ethnic minority residents. The reputation of the school is strongly inflected by the social environment of the school and the peer group in which the children of the middle-class respondents would find

themselves. In Le Raincy, the state secondaries offer a double guarantee: access to facilities deemed to be of good quality and the guarantee of a social environment protected from the rest of the surrounding département of Seine-Saint-Denis.

> ... public [state] school, it's for sure, in a social context I'm going to say correct. It's the second step [...] you wanted to protect it with regard to an unfavourable social context. Overall, yes, that's it. You would look for a certain guarantee [...] the idea in the beginning was to find in it a public structure in a relatively protected social milieu.
>
> – Sandrine

In this specific context of Seine-Saint-Denis, beyond its pedagogic role, school becomes a tool for social triage, a social filter that puts middle-class parents at ease.

The reputation of schools in the neighbourhood as a guarantor of social reproduction is clearly of significance in London also. In the commuter villages of West Horsley and Effingham, the reputation of the state schools at primary and secondary level was mentioned as a significant reason for moving into the area.

> ... so we tend to get a lot of people who arrived here, who want their kids to go to The Highlands and then they buy a house ... The Highlands is rated at about 200 out of the top 1,000 schools in the country in terms of results, big school, 1,500 pupils, but it's very attractive to a lot of people who live around here, because it's partly the catchment area, partly got a very good head.
>
> – Marion

In the suburban neighbourhood of Berrylands in London, reputation involves not just individual schools, but a schooling system of selective education divided from age 11 between grammar schools (academic) and secondary schools (aimed at more vocational education) which dominated in England prior to the move to comprehensive (non-selective) schools in the 1970s. Grammar schools were seen as a marker of quality for many of the respondents.

> People purposely move into here because either of primary schools or because they think that their offspring are gonna pass the 11+ and have a priority into Browns [school] ... which isn't necessarily the case.
>
> – Ralph

Again though, school reputation and the idea of quality is tightly bound up with the children's peer groups in the school and with being with "people like us". This is explicitly acknowledged by a number of respondents in Berrylands:

> I suppose Greville's [school] catchment doesn't actually include any Council Estates, Christchurch [school] sort of . . . a little one, but I think the vast majority are middle-class children.
>
> – Jenny

Class inequalities in educational attainment are exacerbated in a grammar school system with a grammar school largely corresponding to a middle-class environment. The system as a whole acts as form of social insulation for the middle classes.

The importance of neighbourhood in affording access to what is perceived to be a good school *system* (as well as involving the reputation of individual schools) is also demonstrated in the rural enclave settlement of Châteaufort outside Paris. Being within the enrolment zones for good schools is a key reason given by our respondents in their choice of Châteaufort as a place to live. Access to state schools with high reputations in Versailles can be obtained by living in Châteaufort. This reputation means that private schools are only used for specific reasons to do with the child's needs or due to family commitments (such as religion). The significance of the catchment area of Châteaufort lying just within the "map of Buc", giving access to good middle schools and then high schools in Versailles, was noted by an estate agent who argued that this administrative location added 20 per cent to house prices in the village.

In the neighbourhoods studied in London and Paris with the greatest amount of social mix – Peckham and Noisy-le-Sec – there were strong similarities in the schooling strategies. There was some toleration of social mix at primary school level, but at secondary level, there was a move towards private schools or "good" state schools in other neighbourhoods. This is a reverse of the reputation effects in the other neighbourhoods discussed so far and again is strongly associated with the social mix of school peer groups. Thus, the middle-class residents of Noisy-le-Sec engage in avoidance strategies (going private, or trying to gain access to state schools in Paris) in spite of their ideological support for mixed state schooling.

> We talk about it, everybody wants to talk about it because it creates such anxiety, all around us there are a lot of people on the left, most

> people are not comfortable thinking about secondary school because they don't want to engage in any kind of avoidance and yet when it's your kid and your kid's education which is at stake, well, you say to yourself okay, maybe it's time to put a bag over your ideology, you know, it's complicated for everybody.
>
> – Delphine

The same emotional intensity of the dilemmas of choice is evident in Peckham.

Residential moves are also evident as a strategy for school avoidance. This often occurs to residents who move into a neighbourhood without children, and subsequently have children or move in with small children and then seek to move away at the secondary level (where potential mix is greatest and where test results really matter).

Choosing private schools

Another way of avoiding socially mixed state schools is to pay for education in the private sector. There are four categories of reasoning shown in the London neighbourhoods (see Benson et al., 2014). Some see it as a "natural" or default choice. For others it acts as an insurance policy in case they are unable to access "good" state schools. There are, thirdly, descriptions of trade-offs being made to afford private education. A final group exhibit ideological dilemmas and misgivings over private schooling but argue that the child's perceived educational experience should come first. It is the latter situation which shows most commonalities between the use of private education in Paris and London.

Private schooling was seen as a natural choice by most of the residents interviewed in Balham but was also part of a strategy to avoid the state secondary schools in the area which were seen as having a bad reputation and poor performance. This is in spite of the fact that one of those schools was a very high-performing institution (in terms of the national measures of pupil attainment published in the league tables). At the time of the interviews, this school was the seventh highest performing in England in terms of moving pupils through achievement levels.

> I think it's [Elmlee School] improving but unless everyone around here sent their kids there it's not, it's never going to be as good as the other schools that people tend to send their kids to.
>
> – Marcia

> That's [private schools] where people like them *go*... I think if you were at that sort of level maybe it would be eccentric to go to the state schools or just sort of that world.
>
> – Hilary (original emphasis)

This last point raises the issue of the types of information used by parents in the evaluation of schools (state and private). Despite the publication of performance measures for state schools in both countries (but emphatically so in England), it is clear that word of mouth within the social networks (peer groups) of the parents was the critical factor in judging schools and that the perceived peer group of the child in the school was critical to this. In Balham, this was evident in the way that people described schools through reference to "race". A senior teacher of one local school described how she saw the situation in particularly stark terms:

> The people who live around here, what do they see through, they see big black boys, and they don't want their little girls, their little white girls to go to schools with big black boys.

Such imagery was repeated in the accounts of some residents:

> So it's not that these schools aren't good... so bright kids coming out of these schools, but the perception is that there are lots of coloured people there, so we don't send our children.
>
> – Kelly

And even where it was not explicitly named, the way that school populations were characterised were overlaid with the racialised figure of the "big black boy", as has also been noted by Reay et al. (2011: 93) in their study of white middle-class schooling.

> We've got Elmlee school at the end of the road which recently has, you know had outstanding reports. Still looks a bit um, you know... perhaps it's just because the kids are so much bigger that we're used to, they look a bit scary.
>
> – Darren

> What I can see, as far as being a resident... it's the hordes of young people who go out in gangs and who don't respect this environment.
>
> – Emilie

Networks of information, or what has been called "the hot grapevine" of knowledge (Ball and Vincent, 1998), transcends all the neighbourhood contexts in Paris and London.

> I'm basing this on absolutely no real information, this is all sort of middle-class rumours and stuff . . . it's a rough school.
>
> – Sarah

The grapevine operates in terms of the schools that actually get mentioned (positively or negatively) as well as the demonstration effects of the schools to which parents in the network have sent their children. There is also a competitive edge to many of these discussions, which interacts with social status. One family interviewed in Balham stated that they would have to leave the area if their son failed to get into a certain private school, partly to give him opportunities elsewhere but also because of the implied social stigma of not getting into the school. Similar perceived pressures were noted in Châteaufort.

In one neighbourhood, high-performing state schools are ignored because of the norm of private education, whereas in other contexts the choice of private education is experienced as a constraint in having to avoid state schools. Attitudes may even divide within a neighbourhood, such as in West Horsley and Effingham, with many of the longer term residents having sent their children to the high-performing state school and more recent residents praising this school but still choosing to send their children to private schools in the area.

> . . . some people choose to go to The Highlands, most people who can afford to, choose not to go to The Highlands.
>
> – Stephen

This was attributed to the "sheer snobbery of it" by another resident (Patricia).

This latter point starts to link concerns over intergenerational social reproduction with everyday presentation of social status as a form of social reproduction. In West Horsley and Effingham, education is a form of social status display in groups dominated by the norm of private education, even at the expense of high-performing state schools in the area. In inner city Balham, with much more neighbourhood social mix, that norm takes on an enclave aspect as residents bypass the local high-performing (socially mixed) state school for a series of private schools in south London.

The only neighbourhood in Paris where private schools are a significant issue is Noisy-le-Sec where middle-class parents seek to avoid the high social mix of the local state schools. Elsewhere, private schools tend to be a matter of religion or reflect a particular habitus.

In Noisy, some parents discussed the challenges they felt their children faced within schools with high ethnic minority populations. It was clear that underwriting these concerns was a perception that their children had trouble making friends because they had different values and cultural habitus.

> And then even to say, for example when there is an hour free, you say "hey, listen, why don't you go get a book", "well, no, I can't do that, then I would look like an intellectual, and how would that look" or okay, as if to say "no, I'm not saying I go to the conservatory, or that I play the cello or else I'll look like a bourgeois" or all sorts of stereotypes which make up a kind of reverse discrimination, okay, then it's clear, I think you can see it like that. And so she never gets to develop.
>
> – Laure and Denis

As this lays bare, they believed that their children were "good students" whilst the majority of their peer group were not. This takes on additional meaning in the following quotation, demonstrating once more the relationship between understandings of what constitutes a "good student" vis-à-vis students of ethnic minority backgrounds. For example, Jean described his choice to send his children to private school, a choice that was at odds with his political convictions:

> When you look at the secondary school and high school in Noisy, this social mix no longer really exists, the kids all come from practically the same neighbourhood, they are all from the same social background, many of the kids are the children of immigrants, very few are "Marie" and "Chantal", as they say, and that's been a heartbreak for me to have to put my kids in private school, because that is not my idea of how things should be, but it's true that once you know quite a few teachers, the situation has really gotten worse, I've talked about it with my friends who are teachers and they tell me, the choice you made was the right one . . .

There is a clear slippage here between being a "good student", being white, versus being from a migrant family and being a "bad student".

Middle-class activism and schools

As well as forms of middle-class strategy via residential moves (towards good schools or away from bad ones), there are also attempts to "work" the educational framework in the district. This includes managing and controlling the levels of social mix admitted into different institutions, organising specific classes for "good students" as well as more site-specific action in which middle-class parents coordinate or become part of the school governance to improve academic standards in a school or influence pedagogy and curriculum organisation. This form of activism seems to be more prominent in the Paris neighbourhoods and indeed, in the French case, school-based activism more often leads to other forms of political activism.

Coordinated efforts to influence the local educational field are evident from the study. In the 9th, there was a lobby of middle-class parents to the education authority to redefine the borders of the school districts to halt increasing social mix in certain schools. This is also evident in Noisy-le-Sec.

> It was complicated, because in fact, they really, really put all the children from social housing in "Chapelle" [...] They started to sectorise differently, because then it becomes a problem for our children, who could no longer progress their work... So here, then there, they realised there was a problem. Yes, you can integrate this is not a concern, but three, four in the class. Half, it is not possible. It is unmanageable.
>
> – Cécile

Other forms of activity involve school governance (getting elected to the board of governors) and through persistent activity through the playground network. In Paris, there was some evidence for school-based activism extending into wider political activism in the neighbourhood. There are two kinds of parents' associations in France based on different ideologies (left: public school, right: open to private and Catholic schools). On both sides, the participation of parents is not strong numerically, but middle-class parents are involved in the associations, organising meetings with teachers and fairs for children. It might also be an outcome of the educational system itself, still dominated by the "carte scolaire" and with more of a localist tone to education and, therefore, local involvement in education issues. Examples of activism existed in the London neighbourhoods but it was much more muted.

On the other hand, residential strategies or switching sectors (into private schooling) dominated in the London case. There is also the overall context of the difference in the welfare state models in the UK and France. In France, public services are considered very important and school is considered as a public service that should provide equality. In the UK, a more neoliberal system is being developed focusing on individual choice.

Our cross-neighbourhood comparison of the two cities suggests how the norms of social reproduction via schooling are quite tightly circumscribed by the reference groups of parents. These peer groups are sources of information on the reputation of schools (distinct from published performance criteria), most of which is determined by the perceived peer group for their children in different schools. Despite the distinct differences in the French and English education systems, residential mobility is a key strategy used by middle-class residents across the neighbourhoods of Paris and London. These tight circuits of information and comparison in education produce wider norms and expectations of what is appropriate for the children and what is expected in terms of being a good parent.

Gender and the work of social reproduction

One central aspect of social reproduction in Paris and London is the finding that it is highly gendered, and consistently so across the two cities and the different types of middle-class neighbourhoods. The particular coming together of class and gender in the gentrifying and gentrified neighbourhoods in London in the symbolic figure of the "yummy mummy" has been discussed already in Chapter 3. It is notable that across the neighbourhood types in this study, traditional gender divisions of labour in the formal labour market tend to dominate. This is true across the national and urban contexts and across the neighbourhood types themselves, from the more traditional and conservative exurban gated locations all the way through to the inner gentrifying neighbourhoods (which might be expected to involve more liberal fractions of the middle classes with more equitable household/employment divisions of labour). To some degree, this is explained by similarities in the national policy and workplace institutional cultures in France and the UK that still favour male full-time employment. Childcare is also very expensive in both countries and that means that there is a disincentive for both partners to work if one has a lower salary.

> A lot of the mums actually don't work . . . with the cost of childcare they tend to give up work and then start working again perhaps when the children go to primary schools. But it's probably mixed but it's half are not working and half are working but most people I would say 100 per cent work part time, it's quite rare that a mum nowadays works full time because it's just so much to do with the children. That's why I'm planning to come back myself just two days because it just gets so busy and it gets very expensive as well when you have five days of childcare with three children.
>
> – Melissa (Peckham)

There is the same discourse in Châteaufort:

> I stopped working because I had four children, one after the other, so it is true that it takes a lot of time, it was too complicated with the job, I had too much travel.
>
> – Marianne

As we have already indicated, one key element in class reproduction is education and schooling and women are the key actors in this. Previous research (e.g. Ball, 2005) has suggested how women manage the process of school choice and are key in the relationship between the child and the school, from helping with homework, to liaising with teachers and being key to information and influence in the school context – summed up in the UK by the term "playground mums". This evidence was certainly borne out by our study. This work had varying degrees of visibility, from the context of the commuter village where it was invisible and "naturalised", through to the conspicuous public presence of the "yummy mummy" in our two inner London neighbourhoods.

> It's an interesting dynamic because when you're involved with the school, which you have to be when you've got children, everything is done by mums, and that's what you expect, but almost to the exclusion of the dads altogether . . .
>
> – Sharlene (West Horsley)

> When we have visitors I will take them to lunch at various different places so sometimes at [local cafe], which is totally interesting set of people. Because that's the "yummy mummy" hang out. Err, you may be aware of that. Literally all day every day, it's full of these young

> middle-class women with kids. And it's very sweet, but it is hard to do business there!
>
> – Bill (Peckham)

Neo-natal and pre-school groups are significant in building the social networks in the locality across the neighbourhood types and again these mostly involve women.

> I suppose this place really changed for us when we did have children; brilliant for bringing up children, so then I started meeting lots of people in this area.
>
> – Melissa (Peckham)

> I think the school is huge in relating to others but here it quickly became incredible . . . I lost my mother in 2007, but it took only three seconds when I wanted to go see her in hospital . . . in three seconds I [had] girlfriends who took charge of my children . . . I quickly made a network of friends and there's a huge support but it really has nothing to do with being able to live in Paris.
>
> – Fanny (Châteaufort)

Women bear the brunt of lifestyle changes that come with having children, particularly breaks in careers, and having to adjust to residential changes prompted by the need for housing space or schooling to accommodate children. Whilst some men discussed the impact of having children on their social networks, for women, becoming mothers was more closely tied to spatial practices, with many describing how being at home with children (re)connected them to their neighbourhood.

This reconnection to the local was often expressed ambivalently as constraining but as resulting in a process of discovering the neighbourhood:

> If you've been working, suddenly you are forced to be at home and in your area so . . . I think you rediscover it and you're forced to be at home and you walk, and you find places.
>
> – Belinda (Balham)

> . . . so that was very difficult to manage, and also I was pregnant with my first son, and so when I came down [to the new neighbourhood] I didn't particularly know anybody, I had three young children, very isolated and lonely.
>
> – Diane (West Horsley)

Residential choice in Balham and Berrylands was predominantly and overwhelmingly based on perceived suitability for both family life and commuting. Here, local social networks centre on children, schools and National Childbirth Trust (NCT) classes (a pre- and post-natal support group – discussed in Chapter 5). Many of the distinctions in patterns of everyday activity were highly gendered in Balham. It was also typical for the women who were taking responsibility for childcare to have left high-flying careers. An attraction of Balham for those with or wanting to have children was the kind of family-oriented life it offered, including the proximity to private schools and a ready infrastructure of cafes and classes. The area thus provided opportunities to meet other "mums" in similar circumstances at what was described by many women as a potentially lonely time.

The combination of this gendered division of labour and level of income partially underpins the "yummy mummy" phenomenon (see Chapter 3), in which ex-professional women meet up with each other along with their children in public urban spaces, especially noted by respondents in Balham and Peckham. In Berrylands, there was a less heightened sense of a gender division and of the frenetic activity that is part of Balham life, but there were similarities in the ways that family life was central to local social networks, such networks often stemming from participation in NCT classes and schools.

In the 9th arrondissement of Paris, where a number of the residents work in the financial district near Opera or in La Défense, women were the most involved in child-rearing and in meeting other mothers near the school and building networks between parents. These networks tended to be organised around religious affiliation, for example, encouraging children to follow religious teaching in school and to go to scouts. These kinds of networks of cultural affinities can also be seen in Noisy but in a secular framework. In the 9th, couples were mostly both active in the labour market. However, women still took the lead role in managing the education process, even if their male partners were involved to some extent. Women were also the ones that committed time and energy to parents' associations. This was also the case for Noisy and Châteaufort. In these three cases, women were assisted by childminders. In Le Raincy, again the women were the ones who were active in the parents' associations, as well as having more local responsibilities. In Breuillet, we can observe both patterns.

In Breuillet, the 9th and Châteaufort, women were particularly strongly implicated locally in organising activities for their children and had more integrated parental networks. Several women had stopped

working when their children were born to devote time to raise the children whilst their partners still spent a lot of time at work. In the 9th and in Châteaufort, some of the women made a career change, sometimes after staying at home during the early years, then opting to work in a new sector and, at the same time, working in the neighbourhood/village.

Women's practices were more located in the neighbourhood and they created networks with other mothers they met at school, at the different clubs (sport and arts activities) and on the street. Some of them also met in private spaces such as at home (more in Breuillet and Châteaufort) or in cafes (the 9th). These everyday relationships are also resources to get information about child-rearing (schools, activities, children's socialising, etc.) and thus have a role in social reproduction. The neighbourhood is also a resource for those who make use of local amenities appropriated to their new way of life (parks, cafes for children, sport and leisure activities). When amenities are not available locally, they have to go elsewhere, further away – Paris in the case of the 9th; surrounding towns in the cases of Châteaufort and for Port Sud.

Many of the parents are active in parents' associations. The formal goals of these associations are to participate in the management of schools and, at secondary level, to monitor the direction the students are taking. This point is very important for social reproduction in Paris because of its impact on the choice of secondary school. In primary school, parents' voices are more concerned about what might be called the rhythm of the school and the interactions between children. In each of our sites, we found parents, especially mothers, who were elected representatives and who were particularly involved in the question of social and ethnic mix in the school. For some of them, being active in school associations was the starting point for a local political career, after their child/ren have gone to another school. These parents' associations have an important impact on the relations between children and parents from different origins. They also helped with the socialisation of parents into the neighbourhood, introducing them to networks and expectations in the same way. Parenting networks and practices are mainly realised in a selective sociability of "people like us".

There is some evidence of more equitable divisions of labour in the gentrifying neighbourhood of Noisy in Paris, but in London, even amongst the more liberal, hip middle classes of Peckham, childcare costs tend to override more equitable household divisions of labour. However, overall these traditional gendered divisions of labour dominate across very different types of neighbourhood (both socially and

geographically) in both cities. Professional women take on the adjustments in terms of career development as well as sharply divided experiences before and after childhood. There is some variability in the perceived desirability of these arrangements and an overall acknowledgement of some of the psychological costs that come with this contrast. The neighbourhood is a critical social and spatial arena in this experience, partly because bringing up small children focuses the carer down onto the local neighbourhood in terms of mobility but also the importance of local amenities (such as parks) for the children themselves. The locality is also a key source of sociability and advice for new mothers (through children's groups). It might also be the site of emerging social divisions (between "yummy mummies" and the rest in inner urban neighbourhoods, "pushy Surrey mums" and the rest in the commuter villages). What is abundantly clear is that the everyday work, as well as the longer term strategising of social reproduction, predominantly falls upon women as the main architects in the task of staying middle class.

Being a good parent and being in the right environment

Forms of social reproduction via education crucially intersect with social identity, especially in terms of being a "good parent" and bringing up one's children in the "right environment". This relates to expectations and norms of parenting, as well as the peer-group effects on school choice (already discussed).

For parents in the commuter villages in London, idealisations of rurality figure strongly in expressing the neighbourhood as the right location to bring up children:

> I think after you've been here a few years you really get to appreciate that, that nature that's really on your doorstep, and I think it helps having children because they like it, you can engage them in that sort of thing, and hopefully nurture them a little bit in those ways.
>
> – William

There are strong norms and expectations about how children from the locality will achieve educationally, as one respondent who came up against this relates:

> I said, "She's [her daughter] not going to uni, she wants to be a hairdresser", and there was this stunned silence that you could be

> in Horsley and have a child who wasn't going to go to university because that didn't fit the mould.
>
> – Georgia

This is also evident in Châteaufort. Here, many of the parents stressed the importance of Châteaufort in terms of access to a high-performing school system (discussed already) but also the social and physical environment of Châteaufort as an exclusive village – offering the right sort of friends who live there and the influence of the rural environment.

> Her dream is to have what we finally have, a house and to enjoy what we have. None of my children ever wanted to live in an apartment building . . . three children who love the great outdoors, fresh air, beautiful countryside . . . I said to Marius [about living in the city] it was unthinkable.
>
> – Caroline

> I wanted to raise my children in the country because I was raised in the country and I have kept great memories.
>
> – Jacqueline

> We left Paris because my daughter, the oldest, was born in 1997, and so with strollers, childcare, children's playgrounds, it wasn't great. There were syringes, pieces of broken bottles everywhere.
>
> – Vincent

In the suburb of Berrylands in London, education, as we have seen, dominated the explanations for moving to the neighbourhood in the first place and the value of the neighbourhood as a child-centred environment emerges throughout the interviews. The centrality of education and associated "improving" activities for the children are notable in this neighbourhood, as it is in Breuillet, where there was a good deal of satisfaction with the local state schools, which were compared to private schools:

> My son had been in private schools. Here he could go to public school but it was almost private anyway given that it was only the kids from Port Sud who went there. So in a certain way there was no need to be in a private school.
>
> – Frédéric

For those living in inner urban neighbourhoods the articulation was rather different but the intention the same: to have a sufficiently

protective and nurturing environment that instilled the right sort of values. For the relatively tightly defined fraction of the middle class in Balham, there was an expansion of spatial horizons as to what was the right environment, in this case beyond the immediate neighbourhood. What constituted the "local" was discussed emphatically in terms of access to highly rated public schools across south London: Balham was the right sort of neighbourhood because of its centrality to a range of public schools. Being a good parent in this context meant getting your child into the right sort of public school at secondary level. In Peckham, being a good parent and "doing the best for your kids" raised a host of dilemmas that were often quite strongly moralised in terms of doing the best for one's children in a neighbourhood environment that was endorsed in terms of diversity and centrality but the social mix of which resulted in going private or trying to find good neighbouring state schools.

An orientation away from the neighbourhood in terms of schooling is also evident in Noisy. In Paris, we did not find a discourse on "good parenting". Models existed – such as parents supporting many activities outside school (e.g. music, sport) – but they are not expressed in the same way as "good parenting".

It is in Peckham and Noisy where the trade-offs between housing and neighbourhood and schooling are most strongly registered. In both these cases, the "challenge" of social mix, especially at high school level, meant that parents were going private or strategising to gain access to good state schools in other neighbourhoods including contemplating moving out of the neighbourhood to achieve this. The experience of this mismatch is clear from the accounts of respondents.

> Peckham is a very good area, it's expensive, and despite being expensive the state schools are still not very good and that's a disappointment when you have children because you have to pay privately.
>
> – Annette

For these residents the trade-offs are also experienced as an ideological conflict in which political disapproval of private education meets the exigencies of the neighbourhood.

The significance and impacts of raising, occupying and educating children are considerable both physically/visibly in the public spaces of the neighbourhood (especially parks) but also socially in forging networks that enhance sociability and also act as reference systems for peer advice (especially over schooling), as well as expectations over good parenting.

Pre-, post-natal and pre-school groups are often critical in forming local (neighbourhood) networks of “mums” (because their advertising and recruitment is based on postcodes). In London, the groups organised by the NCT (which tend to be dominated by middle-class mothers) are especially important and this was registered in respondents’ discussions in several of the neighbourhoods.

> I’d say yeah, before, before I had [children], my friends and I were scattered all over London, and then we sort of came to a central place to meet, and I still have those friends, but I also have a new group of friends that I’ve made through having babies here. Er, a group through nursery, and then another group through school, and then one through NCT unit, that’s really, emphasised around here anyway.
>
> – Leah (Balham)

It can be concluded that in the different neighbourhoods studied, school reproduces local social relations that are more or less segmented by parents’ strategies and the emergence of mobilisations over school. These strategies can be gleaned in the interviews: including choice of public or private sector by educational level and according to religious values; avoidance of social mixing or matching with institutions at higher levels in the education system; and through parents taking on responsibilities in the school. These express attitudes to the city and society that are also rooted in family references, work cultures and educational experiences. Thus, we can argue that the schooling is influenced by inherited family cultural capital but that cultural capital is also expressed locally in neighbourhood relations.

Norms and expectations become especially evident where they are put under pressure and trade-offs have to be made between the different aspects of being and staying middle class. The significance of a trade-off between the transmission of cultural capital and displays of cultural capital has been discussed in the literature on gentrification. In a study in Bristol, England, Bridge (2003, 2006) noted how middle-class residents of a gentrifying neighbourhood gave up the class display of the gentrification aesthetic to move to housing which did not comply with their aesthetic tastes but gave them access to “good” schools in the suburbs. Trade-offs are evident in several of the Paris and London neighbourhoods. The way that the neighbourhood context frames the strategies and the dilemmas is significant. In Balham and Le Raincy, which have a comparable social milieu of respondents, protection from

social mix is secured by the social homogeneity of the municipality itself (Le Raincy) and by exiting the neighbourhood into a private circuit of schooling (in Balham). In the more middle-class neighbourhoods and the gentrifying neighbourhoods, the trade-offs are more readily apparent. In Berrylands, for example, there is some perceived trading off of housing space and of the distinctiveness and interest of the neighbourhood as a site of social status in order to secure class reproduction via the good schools to which the neighbourhood gives access. This is corroborated by the prominence of schooling (at the expense of the characteristics of the neighbourhood per se) in the residential choice to move to Berrylands in the first place and the normative weight given to education.

> I suppose there's there is a difference as to whether . . . things like education are most important for your family or whether . . . or the aspirational things such as a larger house, etc., the space is just more important. So I think there's probably a difference there in that you *know I think people who have moved here, or live here I think probably pride themselves more on you know, getting the educational side right* for their family rather than the space – as in, I'm in a larger house elsewhere . . .
>
> – Tim (Berrylands, emphasis added)

This moral discourse is a norm of valuing education to the point of making other lifestyle sacrifices and is one example of the range of rather niched normativities around good parenting and good environments across the neighbourhoods. Here, the transaction (trade-off) is between different values, but these transactions are not the same in the different neighbourhoods nor for the different fractions of the middle classes.

In Noisy, the middle-class residents have had to move out beyond the "Périphérique" to find a larger house which compensates for the possible social shift associated with moving farther out. Education appears as a stake for those classes of people who themselves have formed themselves through scholastic achievement and degrees/diplomas. Ideologically speaking, those Noisy parents whom we encountered are fervently in favour of public (state) school. However, their commitments run into the reality of Noisy in such a way that it presents them with painful dilemmas and results in them avoiding the local public (state) schools. Here the trade-off is over competing ideological and political values and personal responsibilities.

Security and the future

A sense of being downgraded or a "fear of falling" (Ehrenreich, 1989) is often presented as part of the present middle-class condition; however, our research in these two cities suggests a more complex picture.

In France, the class relations described above do not seem to be accompanied by any sort of overall household tension in the middle classes or jealousy towards the upper social levels (highly significant, as shown in Chapter 7), nor by a sense of downgrading. Instead, the middle classes demonstrate a certain societal assurance and they are not afraid of the future, neither for themselves nor for their children. From their point of view, they go all out to assure a social continuity and even a rise in social status for their children by their choices of where to live and where to send their children to school (controlled diversity). Most of those who are upwardly mobile see themselves as "privileged" no matter what social position they ascribe to themselves. If they live in direct contact with households (much) richer than they themselves are, as in Le Raincy, this way of looking towards the upper ends of the social ladder does not seem to lead to a sense of inferiority. They seem to profit from the bourgeois symbolism that is attached to the city. Conversely, to live in a lower class municipality, like Noisy, allows them to experience being in a position of social supremacy, which offsets the possible downgrading which might be tied to their being forced to live away from Paris and to their having to live with working-class people.

The findings of this research, which are not in line with other French analyses of the middle classes, can be explained by several factors. First of all, because of the priority given to the neighbourhood typologies, our study involves the upper middle classes more than it does the lower middle classes, and the latter may be more sensitive to a feeling of downgrading than the people we questioned. Next, where these households position themselves socially is also largely a function of their possibilities as consumers: they do not feel frustrated and they recognise that they "live well", even if they are aware that other social categories have more economic capital than they do. The most modest households in our study, even as they point out that they have to pay to their finances "close attention" or "count pennies", also consider themselves to be "protected from major difficulties". In a context of increasing social uncertainty for part of the population, it seems that a levelling towards the down side is at work and that simply not being in real danger is sometimes enough to assure a sense of being in the middle. Moreover,

for some households, the fact that they grant a greater legitimacy to cultural capital than to economic capital similarly converges with a sense of social well-being. Some of the people we questioned emphasise access to legitimate culture, the assurance of understanding its codes, using its resources, to ensure them a social position higher than that which their economic capital alone would have allowed them to claim. The recourse to the "qualitative", "post materialist" criteria of social success (Inglehart, 1977) allows the people we interviewed to judge their lives not only by the yardstick of economic capital but also with an eye towards other areas of socialisation. The fact of having chosen one's job and the ability to develop oneself in it comes up often, or the fact of having created a satisfying family life, as well as having achieved a certain balance between one's private family life and one's professional life.

The degree to which the middle classes in London expressed insecurity varied across neighbourhoods, generations and different fractions of the middle classes. However, as in Paris, we did not find evidence of a widespread "fear of falling" (Ehrenreich, 1989). In Balham, West Horsley and Effingham and Oak Tree Park there was an overwhelming sense of middle-class insulation with the value accrued in houses – and for the older people, secure pensions – protecting most of its inhabitants from the recession. There were, however, a few cracks in this sense of well-being. In Balham, people talked of neighbours having lost their jobs (albeit usually temporarily), children having left private schooling and house improvements being put on hold, whereas in West Horsley and Effingham worries about the financial downturn were more directed towards children. In Berrylands and Peckham, where there was a higher proportion of public-sector workers, there were fears that insecurities in the job market resulting from the recession and subsequent cuts by the government might have an impact on their lives if they had not already done so; they feared for their jobs and for their future employment in difficult economic times.

In addition to differences in public/private sectors and across neighbourhoods, there was a strong generational aspect in the way that insecurity was articulated in the London neighbourhoods. Older middle-class people were more likely to have more capital in their homes, having benefitted from the rising housing market, but were also more likely to be concerned about the next generation. Amongst those with teenage or adult children, concentrated in the neighbourhoods of West Horsley and Effingham and Berrylands, anxiety is focused on children, their employment prospects and their difficulties in getting on the

housing ladder. In the less affluent Berrylands, households were adapting to the idea of children returning home after university. Some had adult children living at home.

Alongside talk of financial trade-offs and compromises, there was a moral dimension to class identification in the UK neighbourhoods with a strong discourse emerging about sharing "middle-class values" of prudence, fairness and a commitment to education. This was in stark comparison to France where there was virtually no discourse about "middle-class values". There was only one instance of this kind of discussion in Noisy where upper middle-class people spoke of cultural values and a certain way of life.

Conclusion

Overall this chapter has addressed the question of what, in the eyes of our middle-class respondents, is a good neighbourhood for social reproduction. For parents of young children one central element of this is access to "good" schools. "Good" here refers to both academic success and good socialisation. The process of ensuring this plays out in the different strategies across the neighbourhood types in terms of different degrees of social selection and avoidance depending on the school level (primary or secondary), the local context (social mix and range of schools) and values. There is a good deal of activism across the neighbourhoods (mostly involving women and especially in Paris) as a form of vigilance to establish or maintain that investment. Secondly, the neighbourhood has to be a safe bet in terms of economic investment through the housing market. This interest and concern is registered across the neighbourhoods but especially so in the gentrifying contexts with high social mix. It is reproduced in the different context through forms of defensive place maintenance or more proactive place-making (Benson and Jackson, 2013). The security of investment increasingly has an intergenerational impact in forms of inheritance affecting the nature of that investment and the neighbourhoods in which it is made. Neighbourhood trajectories themselves have an ongoing impact on social and spatial paths and trajectories through the city. So a good neighbourhood has to offer security of real estate and educational investment. In the work that goes on over economic and educational investments there are developed localised networks of norms and expectations that are institutionalised and diffused more widely across the neighbourhoods in different clubs and associations (including sporting and leisure ones) or in public spaces in the neighbourhood (such as

the pubs in Peckham). Much of this place-making/maintenance is fairly niched and carefully positioned using the neighbourhood to give a distinctive narrative of a desirable and acceptable middle-class life amongst the different fractions of the middle classes. These normative narratives become obvious in conditions of change, either through people's own neighbourhood trajectories or through the changing nature of the neighbourhoods themselves, and this is the topic of the next chapter.

7
Changing Places

Introduction

Places constantly change. The changes that occur may be sudden or gradual. They may please some inhabitants, but not others, who may even find them disturbing. This chapter focuses on the various ways in which the middle classes in Paris and London experience and intervene in the shaping of their places of residence, with an eye to influencing the direction of change. The success of these interventions in bringing about the desired change varies depending on a range of factors, which includes the relative social and economic power of the middle-class residents seeking to bring about change (in other words, their position within the local social field), the extent to which these changes match onto wider political agendas for the neighbourhood and the tools and resources that local actors draw on in order to effect change.

The chapter explicitly focuses not on mundane processes of place-making (as in Chapter 5), but rather on the efforts of middle-class residents to gain and maintain some control over the places that they live in through the appropriation and deployment of formal mechanisms (e.g. zoning, planning regulations). Drawing on data from across the neighbourhoods, it examines (1) what drives the middle classes to intervene in changing places; (2) the role of local governing systems within middle-class efforts to control space; (3) the tools and resources middle-class residents have at their disposal to facilitate interventions of this kind; (4) what structures their access to these tools and resources, and how, in turn, place-making processes vary according to differences in settings; and (5) local politics and the ways in which this might help or hinder middle-class interventions.

In continuity with the preceding chapters, we recognise that space is socially produced, and in turn affects spatial practices and perceptions.

In this respect, it builds on the analysis of the relationship between the spatial and the social initiated in chapters 4 and 5, developing the argument into the discussion of how space is practised, to recognise the processes at work in how these middle-class actors lay claim to their places of residence (see also Benson and Jackson, 2013). In this respect, it develops the discussion of representations of place (Chapter 4) and the relationship of these to everyday practices (Chapter 5) to focus on the relationship between imaginings, regulatory processes and local politics.

It should be noted here that there is no guarantee that interventions made by middle-class residents will be successful. Indeed, as demonstrated later in this chapter, success might depend on whether a consensus about what should be done can be reached, and relates to the size of the population governed, the extent to which the middle-class valuation of their place of residence is supported at an infrastructural level as well as institutional visions of future development and land use. The outcome depends on the local context and may be stratified by class relations. Tensions can also appear within the middle classes, a reflection of the diverse practices and value systems that characterise the middle-class archipelago. As a result, it becomes clear that local settings frame middle-class efforts to control space, to make it in their image; the position of groups of middle-class residents within the neighbourhood – understood in Bourdieu's (1984) terms as a social field – and thus their relative position of power, influences their ability to control the direction of change in their places of residence.

Understanding middle-class place-making

Across the neighbourhoods in both Paris and London, interventions may aim at overturning prior conceptualisations of the same space or at maintaining the status quo (see Chapter 5). The middle classes may intervene firstly when they perceive that the neighbourhood does not live up to their imaginings of it, and secondly when they feel that their sensibilities about place are threatened. This first type of intervention can be illustrated by the efforts of respondents in Peckham who actively try to make their place of residence in their image, with many of the residents presenting themselves as agents of change (self-)tasked with the responsibility of "improving" the neighbourhood and the wider area. Through the interviews it became clear that the bulk of their energy was focused on generating and sustaining their neighbourhood, through, for example, the support of local independent shops. One rendering of this is that some of these middle-class residents appear to be working

at generating and sustaining a neighbourhood that is markedly middle class, a stark contrast to the bordering multi-ethnic high street. The activity that is necessary for this type of intervention makes it highly visible.

The second type of intervention is a response to a perceived threat to the character of place, and can be expressed as efforts directed towards place maintenance (Benson and Jackson, 2013). These efforts are particularly evident in West Horsley, Effingham or Châteaufort, where the residential model of the rural village is under threat of being dissolved into the suburbs; a perception that without the constant awareness of residents, the threat may turn into the actual destruction of the character of the place.

> I certainly don't want street lighting just to protect me from my fears of people jumping out of the hedges . . . it won't be a rural area anymore . . . it will always be the incomers, that is the more recent people to the village who want the street lighting. You come to a rural place, please enjoy it as a rural place, that's why you should be here because it is still rural. We've still got a wonderful field opposite where the old rectory keeps those highland cattle. How stunning is that? *Let's keep it as rural as we can and not try and make us into a suburb.*
>
> – Margaret (emphasis added, West Horsley)

Efforts towards place maintenance are also evident in Le Raincy, where the model of the "belle banlieue" is threatened by its incorporation into the département of Seine-Saint-Denis (a "département" understood as working class) and by the neighbouring poor municipalities of Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil.

> I think that there is an erosion [. . .] and there are lots of people, I think wealthy people, who do not want to have an address in the 93rd. This will eventually play out against Le Raincy, against what it is. The image of the past will be abandoned, and it will no longer be a prestigious address. Also, it wasn't long ago that Le Raincy was a prestigious address, "Ah, you live in Le Raincy". I think that that is in the process of passing [. . .] Me, I see it a little like that. Because Le Raincy, it has nothing attractive; if it is not to be an address, then at least have pleasant streets . . . There is not a street that is called a street, these are called lanes, especially here. Because, it was a park, from Napoleon III.
>
> – Bertrand (Le Raincy)

Across the neighbourhoods in the study, it became clear that interventions either aimed at place-making or place maintenance were often justified on the grounds of aesthetics and taste. Following Bourdieu (1984), this indicates the potential role that place can play within processes of status discrimination and social distinction. Respondents often stressed that their concerns were directed at what was appropriate to the local context, what “fitted” to the place of residence:

> I often wonder how some of these ghastly houses appear. There’s two in the village; there’s one right up in the hills, and there’s a very similar one down Ripley Lane . . . and it’s the most awful . . . they just don’t fit in, that sort of property looks so . . . and actually the footballer that did live in Shere Road, that was a frightful great big mansion that they built there in that plot of land . . . well, he’s been trying to sell it for ages . . . that would be more at home in St George’s Hill, something like that, that type of property didn’t look right.
>
> – Beatrice (West Horsley)

> After the floods, they had to redo the top of my road up there, and they wanted to redo all the asphalt and the cement curbs. We said “no, you do everything badly and we don’t want concrete curbs. We want sandstone curbs, with a central gutter, with paving so that it stays beautiful”, because if we had said otherwise, they would have put in concrete curbs, and things like that, and the village would have lost its attraction, the whole point is just to keep the old spirit, and so we fight for that.
>
> – Jacqueline and Jean-Baptiste (Châteaufort)

These quotations demonstrate that concerns about how a neighbourhood looked and whether this reflected their visions of the neighbourhood were a central feature of respondents’ discourses about their place of residence. Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot (2006) stress that judgements made on the grounds of taste contain moral dimensions, revealing the moral value systems of those in the position to judge (see also Lawler, 2005; Sayer, 2005; Skeggs, 2004). Recognising that place of residence may be mobilised within systems of classification demonstrates their role within moral value systems.

These moral value systems translate themselves into judgements and tastes about place through long-held understandings and imaginings of what the neighbourhood should be, how it should look; such imaginings bear an unsurprising resemblance to the ideal types (described in

Chapter 4). Respondents draw precisely upon representations of place to contest undesirable change, whilst also using these as models to frame their images of what undesirable neighbourhoods could become in the future and as a result of their efforts to improve them. In this respect, middle-class residents purposefully draw on common and shared values in their efforts to effect change. The importance of place of residence to middle-class identities (Savage et al., 2005), and in particular how these become symbolic of social positions and status, demonstrates that place-making and class reproduction are thoroughly intertwined. This largely explains why the middle classes, as we show throughout this book, devote significant energy into the management of their residential environment.

Efforts to change place are not only made on the grounds of the possible improved social status resulting from living in a neighbourhood more positively valued by other middle-class actors, in the words of Lefebvre (1991), its status as representational space. The middle classes also strive to match their place of residence to their needs and values. Obviously the two types of efforts can converge, but it is not always the case. For instance, in a low-density residential area, the development of services (like public transportation, shops, sport facilities) may be favoured by households, but, at the same time, the provision of such services and facilities may increase the pressure on urban development, or the number of passers-by, which in turn may jeopardise the residential status of the place. In Breuillet for example, there is local controversy about the possibility of building a "collège" (for children aged 10 to 15). The "commune" is big enough to support this, and many inhabitants favour the construction of such a school, but others, who have been able to make their view prevail, are reluctant since this would bring teenagers into the area, which they fear would disturb the tranquillity of the area.

In any case, the combined efforts of the middle classes to maintain the value of a place as representational space, and to maintain a place according to the representations they have of it, often influences the materiality of place, most notably in the case of changing places, but also in the reinforcement of certain material attributes (in effect, the stabilisation or maintenance of place). Indeed, this latter point should not be overlooked; places do not "keep" themselves, they are made and remade, produced and reproduced by the various actors who consume them. This chapter thus examines the trajectories of neighbourhoods, in the eyes of their middle-class residents, and how these change (or not) to conceptualise further middle-class interventions in place-making.

Local governing system, the middle classes and space

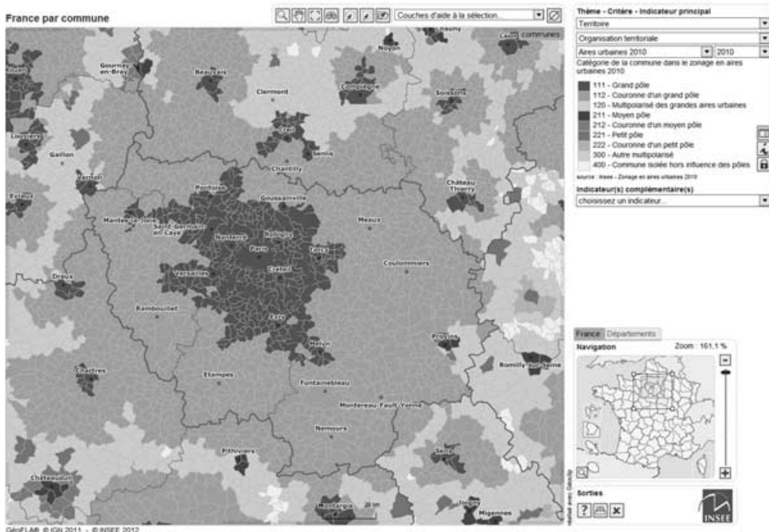
Beyond this, however, middle-class place-making takes place within the wider context of local governing systems, as this in part influences the shape of middle-class interventions in place, as they draw on the tools and resources that are available to them within these systems of governance. We start here by outlining the different systems of local governance in the two countries to give a sense of the similarities and differences.

The main specificity of the Paris case is the extreme fragmentation of the municipal fabric. Each of the Paris neighbourhoods in the study is a "commune" (a small administrative division) with the exception of the 9th arrondissement, which is a municipal arrondissement (a subdivision of the Paris "commune"). Each "commune" has its own mayor and municipal council. The responsibility for local planning has been delegated to local authorities, yet the size of the "communes" makes an important difference. The "communes" in the study vary considerably in size, from 2.2 million in Paris to 1,400 residents in Châteaufort. More generally, whilst the agglomeration of Paris is made of 411 communes with an average population of 25,200 inhabitants within the peri-urban ring of Paris, which consists of 1,385 communes, 85 per cent of these "communes" are former rural villages that have less that 2,000 inhabitants. Brueillet is one of the 15 per cent of these peri-urban "communes" that have more than 2,000 inhabitants (Table 7.1).[1]

Table 7.1 Paris: Administrative units

Administrative units	Main attributions	Number of units
Ile-de-France Region	Regional planning, transportation, economic development, "lycées" (14–17)	1 (11.8 million inhabitants)
"Départements"	Social assistance, "collèges" (10–14)	8 (including Paris)
"Intercommunalités"[2] (groups of communes)	By delegation from the communes	115 (covering 64% of Ile-de-France region)
"Communes"	Land use, zoning codes, housing policy, business parks, schools (3–10)	1,281

Source: Institut d'aménagement et d'urbanisme d'Ile-de-France.



Map 7.1 Communes of the Paris region

Source: INSEE administrative units and commune categories according to INSEE, as established in 2010. The region's limits (with region lle-de-France at the centre) appear as dark grey lines, the "départements" ' limits as medium grey lines, and the "communes" ' limits in very pale grey lines. The 411 "communes" that are part of the Paris agglomeration appear in dark grey at the centre of the map. The peri-urban "communes" appear in medium grey.

This context results in very different access to land-use regulations and zoning codes by the middle classes. Size is a determining factor, even if it is far from being the only factor that matters: social characteristics of population, local context and history must also be taken into account. For example, in the biggest "commune" of our sample, Paris, the middle-class living in the 9th arrondissement seem quite well represented at the municipal level, and many policies respond to their expectations. For instance, the reduction of through traffic within so-called quiet neighbourhoods fits well with the general preference for walking.

Within the 1,220 communes of Paris' peri-urban ring that have less than 2,000 inhabitants (in 2009), population size makes a difference. Particularly, many peri-urban municipalities act in ways similar to those of residential clubs (Charmes, 2009). Since most peri-urban municipalities are almost exclusively residential and are the size of a private residential development, their municipal councils tend to act in ways that are very similar to a homeowners' association. In Ile-de-France,

Châteaufort is one of the most eloquent manifestations of this process of "clubbisation". A period of growth associated with the arrival of peri-urban populations has been followed by a local planning and development strategy that limits the possibilities of construction through the installation of systems designed to protect and preserve undeveloped areas. As one Châteaufort resident explains:

> ... the local urbanisation plan, it is for the protection of the rural village, to keep it exactly as it is. Then in the transformation of the village it will stay like this, protected as much as possible. This will become harder and harder because of the urbanisation around Paris ... Unfortunately already, there is a fight to keep the 2,300 hectares of the Saclay plateau that falls in the frame of the Operation of National Interest ["Operation d'intérêt national", OIN][3] ... We have kept this area a bit agricultural ... It's still a village ... We haven't come to the point where there are no big construction projects ... No, the protection is still holding out, I mean the walls of Châteaufort, because it's a little "Gallic village" [a reference to Asterix's village which was threatened by the Roman invasion], they are holding up. It's not moving, it's managing to keep itself up, there hasn't been any specific construction, there is the ONI which is coming, we are fighting so that Châteaufort stays in the [regional natural] park and doesn't fall outside the park.
>
> – Jean-Marc

Planning and land-use regulations are designed very differently in London. The Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations (1999) controls the development of land in England. This currently aims for a balance of economic development and environmental quality (Cullingsworth and Nadin, 2008). However, due to the absence of the constitutional constraints that exist in other countries – in other words, the planning system is not enshrined in law – principal local authorities are able to exercise discretion in making their judgement about land use (Cullingsworth and Nadin, 2008) (Table 7.2).

As the table above outlines, local governance in the London neighbourhoods is conducted by different administrative bodies depending on the location. The neighbourhoods in the study are therefore subject to two different tiers of local governance. The Peckham, Balham and Berrylands neighbourhoods are subject to the jurisdiction of the Greater London Authority when it came to land-use planning, development and strategic planning, but were also under the authority

Table 7.2 London: Administrative units

Administrative unit		Areas of administration	Activities	Number of units
Inner London	Greater London Authority	Land-use planning; development and strategic planning		1; made up of 32 London Boroughs
	London Borough Councils	Education; housing; social services; local planning		32
Outside London	Principal Local Authorities	Education; strategic planning		27 "Shire" Counties; 36 Metropolitan Districts; 55 Unitary Authorities
	Borough Council	Housing; local planning		
	Administrative Parish	N/A	Consultation in planning	10,578 Civil Parishes

of London Borough Councils – respectively, the London Borough of Southwark, Wandsworth Borough Council and Kingston-upon-Thames London Borough Council. These borough councils are responsible for education, housing, social services and local planning. The remaining neighbourhoods are under the authority of county councils (principal local authorities) in relation to education and strategic planning, whilst borough councils – Oak Tree Park, Elmbridge Borough Council; Berrylands, Royal Borough of Kingston; West Horsley, Guildford Borough Council; Effingham, Mole Valley Borough Council – are responsible for local planning, social services and housing.

Although it is clear that administration and governance of different neighbourhoods takes place at different levels, it is also the case that local authorities in London are by no means as localised as in Châteaufort and other peri-urban areas of Paris. This is in part the result of the relative population size; for example, West Horsley is located in Guildford Borough Council, with a population of over 130,000, whilst London boroughs have populations ranging from 150,000–300,000. Local councillors do not have the same power as their counterparts in French "communes" as they cannot make decisions about strategic

development and land use, planning decisions which are made instead by principal local authorities (in London, the Greater London Authority). Local planning remains in the hands of the borough councils. Whether residents' hopes for their neighbourhoods are met or not would perhaps relate to how closely these mapped onto wider priorities. Since 2011, the Localism bill has given new powers of neighbourhood planning to community groups, such as town or parish councils. Nevertheless, the research took place before this change, and hence within a different planning landscape.

As we have seen, concerns raised by residents about planning are often highly localised. Such concerns are often framed using recognisable discourses, for example, through the focus on environmental damage or preservation or opposing urbanisation. In Châteaufort, as in West Horsley or Effingham, defensive politics is most openly expressed in environmental arguments, since those arguments are easier to defend to the general public. This being the case, defensive politics is often closely associated with social issues. The quality of the local social structure and, in particular, the social environment for middle-class children is at stake. Faced with growing demand, the restrictions on new construction also promote an increase in property prices and reduce the presence of working-class populations. Residents thus adopt exclusionist strategies within residential choice and in their relationships to the environment. In the Paris region, these strategies may be assimilated into a kind of exclusionary zoning operated by municipalities (Clingermayer, 2004). In London, the principle vector of their behaviour is "NIMBYism", an acronym of "Not in my back yard". On the outskirts of London, and notably in the Surrey commuter belt, the NIMBY movement is politically powerful, drawing its strength from the discourse of maintaining environmental quality that is a feature of The Town and Country Planning (England) Regulations (1999). This is reflected in some locations in the fight against any further subdivision of land for housing development, thus effectively limiting the growth of these peri-urban communities.

Tools and resources

In order to realise their neighbourhoods in the image of the ideal types identified in Chapter 4, residents resort to their knowledge and understanding of supporting infrastructures and governance of space, mobilising these with the hope of changing or maintaining residential space at the level of the neighbourhood. Thus, beyond the recourse

to shared representations of place, respondents put a number of tools and resources to work. Drawing on available mechanisms for controlling space, such as planning permission consultations and land-use regulations, they attempt to intervene in the changing materiality of place. On a more personal level, they might manipulate local aesthetics through the renovation of their private homes. In this process of place-making, local planning regulations, governance mechanisms or material dispositions are mobilised by residents.

The tools and resources that middle-class residents employ within their interventions in place are varied. School is a case in point. As seen in Chapter 6, middle-class families invest a lot of effort into finding the best school for their children (see Benson et al., forthcoming). And in many cases, especially within the French public school system, this access depends on the distribution of catchment areas. This distribution is usually out of the direct reach of the residents of a particular place, but in some cases it is not. For example, in Châteaufort, the choice of the group of "communes" or the "intercommunalité" it was requested to join was strategically driven by the will to preserve a favourable sectorisation that gives access to a well-reputed "collège" close to Châteaufort and attractive "lycées" in Versailles (in the 2000s and 2010s, all "communes" had first been invited, then forced to join an "intercommunalité" in order to cooperate in different policy fields). More commonly, many parent and teachers' associations closely monitor the school management. If they feel something is not right, they pressure the head of the school to find a solution. Whilst many parents opt to exit a school district (through relocation, through private education) if their evaluation of the local school is bad, this option has costs and many parents try first to change the school. They may even organise and, in some cases, request their children to be grouped in the same class, thus limiting the interaction with children from less privileged backgrounds. This is a tactic that Agnès van Zanten (2001) argues should be recognised as a form of middle-class colonisation. Such interventions can be seen in Noisy-le-Sec (Bacqué et al., forthcoming).

Land-use regulations, zoning codes and urban plans are also key issues. On a very basic level, it becomes clear that respondents draw on planning regimes and zoning regulations to consolidate their claims despite very clear differences in how the control of space is managed and regulated at local and national levels.

> And then there is the fact that you need at least 800m^2 to be able to divide [a plot by keeping it constructible], so that gives you a pretty big choice in terms of what you can do! So Le Raincy continues to

> be attractive in this respect. We do try to preserve Raincy, and [...] saying that we just divide it up willy-nilly, that's not true. "Bâtiments de France" [France's national heritage supervisor] concerns itself with every single new building. So you see, there are a lot of restrictions.
>
> – Havercamp (real estate agent, Le Raincy)

> There is no social housing because the town opposed it. Because here, the people say [...], "We do not want social housing because it will bring us back to the scum", on the whole it is that [...] So, opposition to social housing. We prefer to pay the fines.[4] So now there is some accommodation, but it is not even really social housing any more, it should be rental intermediaries or I don't know what. Briefly, there are occasions, it's clear, where we try, it seems, to have a bit of social mix but I haven't heard say yet that there will really be any social housing.
>
> – Bertrand (Le Raincy)

> ... you know where the paddock is that you came in, well, the other side there's another, there's a paddock that belongs to the first bungalow on the left as you come up the hill, that little hill, and the people who owned it before they wanted to build, I don't know whether it's three or four houses ... we objected to that mainly because it's green belt, it was outside the village ... They have like a boundary that's within the village then you're less restricted and this was outside so, plus it was green belt, there were traffic issues and drainage issues as well really because that dip in the bottom fills up with water, they didn't get permission.
>
> – Andrew (Effingham)

In this latter case, planning regulations clearly support the residents' visions of the rural. The green-belt policy is aimed at restricting urban growth and sprawl, and maintaining open land. West Horsley and Effingham are within the green belt around London. This demonstrates that the outcomes of some regulatory processes governing land, even if the motivations behind these are not intended in the same way, are adopted by middle-class residents to support their own claims to how the neighbourhood should be. This might mean that even in the absence of the middle classes exercising their power, their visions of the rural would be upheld precisely by the regulatory frameworks that govern space. It was also the case that there were other official bodies that respondents might turn to in support of their concerns (e.g. the Council for Rural England), these official bodies once again holding comparable visions of the neighbourhood.

Whilst respondents in the commuter belt continued to actively intervene in the shaping of place, another response can be seen in the case of Balham, where respondents did not appear to intervene in changing place. As we argue, Wandsworth Council, who respondents repeatedly praised, had an agenda that matched to that of many of the respondents. This situation is quite similar to that of the 9th arrondissement. In this neighbourhood, the middle classes can see their living space and residential environment conforms to their ideal, without them having to make too much effort. The forces of the real estate market and the advanced state of gentrification in the neighbourhood work together to push through the changes that residents also desire. That said, vigilance remains necessary and mobilisation of residents is possible in the face of possible (undesirable) change. For example, when Carrefour, a large supermarket chain, wanted to establish a store in the 9th arrondissement, the middle-class residents were quick to mobilise against it, coming together as an association whose primary purpose was to block the development of the supermarket.

As can be seen in the case of Peckham, in some cases the recourse to planning was a more active part of the process through which middle-class residents intervened in place. Similarly to respondents in the commuter belt, respondents in Peckham objected to some of the planning decisions that had been made by the Southwark Council – especially relating to food shops and restaurants – as well as issues to do with noise. This did not mean that they were always happy with the outcome, and it became very clear that they did not have a lot of faith in the council to act on their behalf or in their interests; in other words, they believed that the council could do more to regulate and monitor the space.

> The council are pretty awful actually . . . We don't see much of them . . . there's some *hideous* buildings here . . . Absolutely hideous buildings are going up . . . they pretend they're doing good works, but they let dreadful things happen.
>
> – Peter (Peckham, original emphasis)

With a focus on improving the surrounding area, the built environment of Rye Lane and Peckham Rye Station, there were two active societies in Peckham, both of which have some interest in the conservation (of buildings) in the area. As Emily explained,

> "There's the campaigners, Peckham Society, who are like this group of very sort of, middle-aged, middle-class people who are sort of the

> Peckham Preservation Society so they are always looking for things to preserve and improve".

A member of the Peckham Society described their interest in the area as being about "a general interest in the history of the area and its enhancement for the future". Many other respondents were aware of the efforts towards the conservation of the area, mentioning, in passing, projects such as the debate over the restoration of the old waiting room at the station, the ongoing discussion about the square at the front of Peckham Rye Station alongside more general commentary on the middle-class history of Peckham.

This example of Peckham shows that the vision that these middle-class residents have of the area guides their interventions (although it should be stressed that there was not unanimous support for these changes). Importantly, they see their efforts as improving the area for everyone, and quite naively overlook other possible futures for the area. This is not just talk either, it becomes clear that through the networks facilitated by the various community organisations, residents are given the information necessary to contest planning applications, provided with information about campaigns in the area, and it is also clear that they have the connections which mean that their visions of how the area should be are given space in the local press. In this respect, unlike their peers in more established middle-class neighbourhoods, they use different resources to try to further influence the trajectory of their neighbourhood because the stakes are different. However, in the different neighbourhoods, strategies to preserve heritage, be it natural or environmental in the commuter villages, or architectural heritage in the case of Peckham, are used similarly as forms of social preservation.

The role of infrastructures, and the active manipulation and mobilisation of these by middle-class residents demonstrate the need to consider not only the representation of places per se, but the dynamics by which places are produced and reproduced by the middle classes, and by which ownership over place is negotiated. Place-making or maintenance is not only a result, it is also a hybrid process, bringing together the social and the political, in the sense that it mobilises non-human agents that include local by-laws, conservation plans and school catchment areas.

When control of space escapes the middle classes

It may also be the case however, that the trajectory of the neighbourhood can result in the neglect of some visions of place.

As seen in Chapter 4, this was most clear in Oak Tree Park, a gated community just outside London. Through our discussions with long-term residents, it became clear that how the Park had changed over time and the market that the estate's management currently targeted was completely out of line with their imaginings of how the Park should be, and what they had moved into the Park for. In many ways, within the field of the neighbourhood, these middle-class residents appeared unable to intervene in a meaningful way in the trajectory of their place of residence.

The history of the development of the Park is particularly important here. Initially, plots had been sold to individual households; there were certain covenants dictating what type of development could take place on these plots, and indeed, insisting on a time frame within which they had to be developed. There was a sense amongst long-term residents of the Park that in the early days of their residence, the covenants had reflected their vision of the Park as a wooded residential estate and had maintained the semi-rural feel of the neighbourhood. However, in recent years, more plots, including those that had already been developed (the original houses would then be demolished), were being sold to developers, who then marketed them to third parties. The result was that there were an increasing number of large houses that filled the majority of individual plots, woodland was cleared to make way for these, and an increasing number of houses were surrounded by fences and electric entry gates. Many respondents argued that the covenants that they had upheld, and which had controlled the Park as a space were no longer being honoured nor were they being enforced by the estate's management. Around them, the Park was changing in ways over which they had no control, and which they did not like. Whilst once these residents had been excited about the idea of what the Park offered, increasingly, they felt that it was starting to become unrecognisable.

> They have changed all the ground rules of living in a happy, environmentally friendly Park, and has now become an estate of luxury pads . . . Yeah, the Park's gone out of the window.
>
> – Edward

> . . . the fact of the matter is that developers are going to build whatever they make the most money out of. So *we get no control over it*.
>
> – Irene (original emphasis)

This example demonstrates that it is not simply the case that the middle-class residents have unfettered control over the definition and trajectory

of place. Instead, it becomes clear that it is necessary to account for their location within the power relations that structure the neighbourhood as a field (see Bourdieu, 1984).

If Oak Tree Park as a social field is changing with the aim of attracting those with higher levels of economic capital, this is not always the case. In Port Sud and Berrylands, it seems that in the eyes of some residents the status of the place is slowly drifting downwards. The model of the vacation village upon which Port Sud had been built and sold at the beginning of the 1970s is increasingly losing its appeal to the middle classes, as is the suburban ideal that Berrylands represents.

In Port Sud, some households stressed that they were trying hard to maintain the original value of the neighbourhood but were finding it difficult. The value of the vacation village model seems to have diminished, at least for permanent residents; as the neighbourhood had derived its attractiveness precisely from this model, the housing prices have decreased relative to the wider housing market in the area. Moreover, the houses are very similar and look standardised. They are also very close to each other. This architectural landscape is now slightly out of fashion amongst the peri-urban middle class.

Another problem was outlined: it was difficult to recruit volunteers to manage the two residents' associations, one for the housing estate, the other one for the local facilities. The facilities were neglected and used by fewer and fewer residents. Some of the facilities that were originally popular have now disappeared, for example, water sports on the lake have not operated for a long time. Parties are much less frequent and more conventional.

> There was a euphoria in our era because we were all pretty much the same age and because it was such an important new creation. So we were all about the same age . . . And the people were very supportive of one another. It was club Mediterranean in fact. So we had parties, over the years we had some enormous parties here, there would be 120 dinner places set, we had little shows and everything and when someone had these dinners everybody would come with oysters and stuff . . . [But now] look at the clubhouse, it's empty, it's generally empty. There is a small team that takes care of it . . . there are no more volunteers, that's all gone now. You know, volunteerism no longer exists in our time. Young people now have other things to worry about. They are more attached to their families; they take care of their children more.
>
> – Marielle

In fact, the original significant social engagement amongst residents went against the norm of moral minimalism prevalent in relations between neighbours within subdivision neighbourhoods (Baumgartner, 1988; Charmes, 2005). It relied also on a gendered division of tasks and on the fact that a lot of women did not go out to work. Today in almost every household interviewed, women work outside the home and the relationship to time has become more tension-filled.

Nowadays, residents generally prefer to pay for their services than to provide the services themselves. Moreover, they are reluctant to tie specific practices to their places of residence. They are all the more reticent if the management and the maintenance of the facilities require a heavy time investment. They prefer instead to rely on specialised service providers, which are in some cases provided by the municipality. This is how the tennis courts became "municipalised" – even if they remain attached to the club in Port Sud, they are run with the benefit of support from the municipality and are no longer reserved exclusively for residents of Port Sud.

In this context, the central issues of the production of space shift towards more conventional issues which are specific to the subdivision neighbourhoods around Paris, which is to say, maintaining a low population density, the nearness of green spaces, the "human" scale of the community and respect for the norms of usage and acquisition. And most of these questions are not dealt with at the scale of the homeowners' associations, but above all at the municipal level (with the Mayor of Breuillet incidentally being a resident of Port Sud since 1977).

In Berrylands, recent incomers presented the affordability, convenience and proximity to good schools as important elements of residential choice, revealing the compromises that they had had to make. In contrast, longer term residents presented their decision to move to the area more in terms of the aspiration to live in the suburbs. The juxtaposition of these different views of the neighbourhood maps onto changing perceptions of the suburb as a site of middle-class living and the perceived decline of the suburbs. For recent incomers, the safety of the neighbourhood was pitted against the sense of boredom and ordinariness in their accounts. This was captured well by Joy, a Berrylands resident,

> "I suppose there is a trade-off because it can be a bit of a soulless place as well though. It can be a pretty dead feeling, as much as being safe . . . Nothing ever happens".

Such sentiments about place went hand-in-hand with a latent lack of concern about the future of the neighbourhood. Whilst residents continued to bemoan the closing of the Surbiton Lagoon, a lido located in Berrylands that had closed in the late 1970s, there seemed to be no communal effort to bring about change, to make this into a place that more closely represented the type of place that they would take pride in living in.

The case of Noisy-le-Sec is equally interesting. In Noisy-le-Sec, more than in the other Paris neighbourhoods of the study, the future is uncertain, and the neighbourhood rests unevenly between social decline and some signs of gentrification (Bacqué et al., forthcoming). These latter signs remain limited, relying upon the arrival of households from Paris who have a social profile similar to that of households who gentrified some Parisian inner suburbs; especially those served by the métro (see Chapter 2). In any case, in contrast to their counterparts in Peckham – the gentrifying neighbourhood studied in London – middle-class households in Noisy-le-Sec are not engaged in a process of social transformation that actively encourages further gentrification, despite their hopes and expectations for the upward social trajectory of the neighbourhood. Gentrification is a process that these residents await, seeing it as part of a wider social transformation and dynamic taking place on a metropolitan level (see Bidou, 1984). Households feel that they are part of this social transformation, a groundswell that will in time transform the local community, but they are not active in pushing this agenda further themselves. Without ever being fully certain that this transformation is underway, and with some of them still emphasising that it is difficult to "live in a poor district", they expect the advent of services, facilities and new businesses which will better correspond to their needs and desires, and which would also symbolically indicate a "work of gentrification" in progress (see also Chapter 5).

> Samuel (Noisy-le-Sec): There is potential and this means that huge numbers of people arrive from Paris – young couples with kids, etc. [...] So it's true, we do hope that it will change and that things will start happening all over. These young couples you see arriving... It's true that when you stroll through Noisy market on a Saturday morning these days, there are entire groups of people that you never saw ten years ago [...] But having said that, there's still quite a way to go! There's still a way to go before... before Noisy becomes like we would really like it to be. You know, there's still work to be done.

> Interviewer: So what exactly do you think the area is missing?
>
> Samuel: Oh! Like I said, you know, nice little bookshops, a little ... a little bar or some little place [...] She [his girlfriend] often takes the girls to school in the morning and when she runs into a few friends and they want to go somewhere for a coffee, the choices are not great at all. In fact, there's absolutely nowhere to go!

The dynamics by which places are produced and reproduced by the middle classes necessarily involves other actors and other structures, which may help or hinder this process. Whilst it is clear that for the large part infrastructures and governance support mainstream middle-class interests, it is also possible that the success of claims to ownership over place is relational. In other words, it appears to depend on the structure of the neighbourhood as a local social field: who holds the power and whose interests are served. To make sense of differences between Paris and London, other factors may additionally have to be taken into consideration. As the comparison of the cases of Peckham and Noisy-le-Sec suggests, there is a need to take into account different political cultures. For example, across the UK there are several Community Organising Groups (including the London Citizens network) made up of citizens mobilised to actively intervene in public life. No equivalent movements exist in Paris. As the case of Noisy-le-Sec demonstrates, whilst there is a hope that the area will continue to attract gentrification, this is not a process that they see themselves as actively part of, a stark contrast to the active participation of their counterparts in Peckham.

Local politics

This chapter has so far made clear the conditions under which middle-class residents can inscribe their own understandings onto their neighbourhoods, appropriating space to their own ends (Benson and Jackson, 2013; Jackson and Benson, 2014). It presents a nuanced understanding of how the middle classes dominate space – by moving into a particular neighbourhood they take ownership of it and gain the power to define it – whilst also recognising that they are aided within this by certain tools, resources and mechanisms. What has become clear is that whilst the middle classes have significant agency, their access to such resources is not a given. Power relations structure access to these resources, tools and mechanisms and the success in deploying these,

even for the middle classes. What this means is that although the middle classes can exercise power in making claims to place – shoring up their position within local social fields through their possession of cultural, economic and social capital – there are often other processes at work at a local level which facilitate, ease, and in some cases, hinder their claims, reflecting the stratification of residents, not only between classes but also within the middle classes.

A good example of this is Breuillet. Port Sud stands out within the municipality, and local politics is structured by the confrontation of the interests of those living within Port Sud and those living in other neighbourhoods of Breuillet, even if the social and economic characteristics of the concerned population are not that different. Debates concern access to resources and facilities (particularly the recreational facilities of Port Sud), the location of municipal services and equipment. For the most part, the resolution of these debates favours the residents of Port Sud, as since 1977, the Mayor of Breuillet has always been an inhabitant of Port Sud. Whilst the 2,000 inhabitants of Port Sud are a minority of the 8,300 inhabitants of Breuillet, this is an organised minority through the homeowners' association. And, as this case illustrates, such organisation translates into power.

Local politics is not always a strictly local matter however. In several Parisian neighbourhoods, the middle classes were fractured along political lines, with neighbourhood politics often refracting the position of local political actors on the national stage. In all neighbourhoods, local debates were of more interest to people surveyed than national political debates were, yet national debates can generate interest when they are rooted in local issues. The Mayor of Le Raincy, Eric Raoult, is a national figure and former minister; he represents the popular right with its call for firm action on issues like immigration and security. Inside the "commune", there is major opposition to Eric Raoult and his policies from middle-class, left-leaning people, and although such people are in the minority in Le Raincy, they still make up a significant proportion of the electorate. They would like, for example, less strident opposition to social housing and, in particular, they are embarrassed by the image that the Mayor projects of the area. As one left-leaning senior manager puts it:

> Some things really bug me like when the Mayor of Le Raincy was the first in the region [during the riots] in 2005 to implement a curfew . . . I thought he had a bit of a nerve! It was like saying "it's a pity we couldn't just put a wall around Le Raincy, then all we'd have to do

> would be to close the gates for a bit of peace". This type of thing tends to make me uneasy and to think that a curfew might not necessarily be the best solution.
>
> – Olivier

However, there is also opposition to municipal policy amongst people on the right. Some people would prefer a mayor with a lower profile who, whilst possibly pursuing the same policies, does not make Le Raincy a national symbol of opposition to social housing. Others would simply prefer another type of politics, especially relatively well-off people adhering to humanist Catholic principles. Whilst such people are relatively comfortable, they are also concerned by the plight of their fellow humans and frequently act upon such concerns. They prefer to live in Le Raincy and enjoy the comfort the area has to offer but they are adverse neither to relations nor to solidarity with their neighbours.

Local politics is not always as heavily politicised as it is in Le Raincy (or in Noisy-le-Sec). In London, the local politics of place was rarely so politicised, nor did it show the same overt intensity. The question of who within the middle classes was represented by local politicians and councillors was rarely a topic of conversation. The result was that local politics seemed less fraught. The main issues that recurred within respondents' accounts were to do with planning (e.g. whether particular developments in the area should or should not be allowed) and, for the inner London neighbourhoods, parking (e.g. the problems that people had with finding onstreet parking and the traffic problems that this caused). The distinction between middle-class residents was perhaps most apparent in Balham. Many of the longer term residents who had moved to Balham in the 1970s and 1980s, and were now not typical of the neighbourhood in that they did not work in financial services, found that their appeals to the council against residential development – which in this part of London often included the extension of homes to include basements – were not being heard. Ania recalled a recent complaint she had registered with the council about an extension,

> [T]here was a massive roof extension going to go up there, and I rang up the council about it and said, "Is there any way of stopping it", and the reply was, "No, we can't, because they could take us to court and we would end up having to pay the costs because we would almost certainly lose".

What is remarkable in comparison to Paris is that there is no account of the role of the council's politics within this. It is clear that the concerns of local residents revolve around individualised disruptions to the normal conduct of everyday life; Ania was particularly concerned about the disruption and inconvenience – the noise, dirt and traffic – caused by the seemingly endless renovation projects happening in her street. In contrast to the case of social housing in Le Raincy, these are not seen as political concerns. But beyond this, it is clear that the size of English boroughs and districts means that it would be very difficult for local government representatives to so evidently represent one section of the (middle-class) population to the exclusion of another.

Similarly, in Paris, it is not always the case that local politics is heavily politicised. In many cases, local political debate focuses less on the framework than on the "modus operandi", especially in areas where the middle classes are relatively homogeneous and help set the tone. Châteaufort is a particularly good illustration of this. As is often the case in small "communes" (Châteaufort has less than 2,000 residents), the municipal council is "without a label", which is to say that it is without any affiliation to a national political party, and according to the revered formula, "all good wishes are welcomed". There is generally an agreement on what the issues are and on what the appropriate action is to take. Opposition comes more as the result from differences in management styles (which become increasingly "professionalised", it seems) or in conflicts between people. Local politics is presented by residents of Châteaufort as a largely technical affair, barely politicised at all, which means that it is not so polarised as a matter of a confrontation of different visions of the world or how one political party or the other makes sense of the world. Some persons will certainly have had disagreements about municipal politics, but with very little virulence and with positions which are more questions of nuance than frontal attacks.

> In a nutshell, a list was assembled for the preceding elections with a very broad consensus containing lots of younger people, I mean young executives with real expertise and working methods in all types of communications and they worked as a team and did not face any real opposition list. This has worked very well since then because there is no strong political affiliation at municipal level and these are people with real know-how – managers and the like – who know each other, so things do get done. Files have already been vetted and agreed upon before they come before the municipal council. So there are no problems now whereas there used to be a lot of confrontation

> in the municipal council and this decided whether things got done or not. It was a real problem [...] It was a problem of petty squabbling so it wasn't even a question of whether it was a good thing or not, but rather he says one thing and I say something else so things went nowhere!
>
> – Jean-Marc (Châteaufort)

Although the governing framework is very different in London, similar sentiments about elected officials can be noted in Effingham (one of the two villages in the commuter belt), Balham and Berrylands. As many of our respondents in Effingham were keen to point out, they were very happy with their local councillor and continued to re-elect her irrespective of their own party politics because she very actively campaigned on topics that were in their interests, reflecting a local position removed from wider party politics. In Berrylands, many respondents stressed that they had been particularly impressed with their local MP (of the Liberal Democrat Party), who not only took the concerns of his constituents seriously, but was also a visible presence in the neighbourhood. In Balham, as previously mentioned, there was widescale support for Wandsworth Council (rather than any one individual), whose actions seemed largely to match the expectations and interests of middle-class residents who lived there.

However, according to Albert Hirschman's (1970) famous distinction, when we are dealing with a particular area of a city, using your voice to register your opposition is not the only way of proceeding and people may also choose to exit the debate altogether. So in Châteaufort, when faced with changes in the environment, many residents adopt the logic of voice to confront undesirable changes, but the logic of exit can also be observed. For example, there are some residents who stress that they cannot tolerate the Toussus aerodrome, and others also raise the possibility of leaving if the tendency towards urbanisation becomes too strong.

> OIN could be a trigger and property may have increased in value due to "Grand Paris" [a building project], and if so, we'll see when the time comes. This could be a factor. Because we were talking with some older residents of Châteaufort, and [...] when they saw the project, they thought: "Well, we don't need to go any further into the Valley". And you don't need to go very far. Chevreuse or Saint-Rémy also have very good transport links to Paris.
>
> – Bruno

Conclusion

Throughout the book and within this chapter, we have seen how respondents mobilise residential ideal types not only in their explanations for their choice of residence, but also to guide their ambitions for the shape of the neighbourhood, thus informing their place-making practices. It is in large part in reference to these ideal types that the middle classes evaluate neighbourhood change. Middle-class spaces are therefore forged primarily via the mediation of formalised conceptions of space. Such conceptions are not just the concern of urbanists, planners and professionals in general; they are also taken up by the middle classes themselves. Yet, the arguments used to justify actions or judgements do not only refer to residential models. Other repertories of justification may be mobilised, like historic conservation or environmental protection.

Many of these justifications are exclusive despite the claims to inclusiveness (e.g. changes will improve life for the population at large). Beyond this, they often demonstrate a blindness to other points of view and almost certainly to the potential consequences for the wider population. Blocking the development of supermarkets, registering complaints over the use of space and responding to planning permission applications, the middle classes make place in their image (see Benson and Jackson, 2013). Whether intentionally or not, these actions are part of the transformation of neighbourhoods that can lead to changes in populations and to the diversity of these populations; in other words, there are social consequences that are not often considered by these middle-class residents. It is also notable that respondents never mentioned urban growth and development, nor referenced progressive planning ideals.

The middle classes move from desires and intentions to action in different ways. Moving beyond the everyday practices discussed in Chapter 5, this chapter has focused rather on concerted, organised and conscious initiatives taken up by the middle classes. These vary according to local contexts and political cultures. Indeed, as the comparison of Noisy-le-Sec and Peckham demonstrates, the willingness of inhabitants to take the transformation of their neighbourhood into their own hands may depend on traditions of collective action and the relationship with local authorities.

Middle-class actions and their outcomes may also be influenced by available resources and institutional contexts. Urban planning regulations may prove to be highly effective tools for impacting a landscape

or social environment, however they must be accessible. In the case of Paris, where spatial planning power may be devolved to a very local level, defending or promoting a residential model may be a matter for the local council. In the case of London, inhabitants would find it hard to subvert strategic planning (which takes place at the level of the principal local authority), but might have greater success in their complaints over the development of individual properties, which is in the hands of the borough councils.

What becomes clear is that the extent to which middle-class interventions in place are possible and successful relies heavily on the local context, both in terms of who is living there, but also in terms of infrastructure, regulation and governance. The availability and accessibility of institutionally available mechanisms vary depending on the metropolitan context of each neighbourhood, with the result that these mechanisms are used in very different ways. In this respect, whilst actions undertaken by middle-class residents may appear similar, the meanings of these and, indeed, the impacts vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, city to city.

One final point to bear in mind is that the different groups formed by the middle classes may be in disagreement locally and in some cases this may stem from representations of space and residential models. However, as we have seen, where the neighbourhood situation is relatively stable both in terms of image and social composition, debates generally appear as technical debates focused on how to act rather than on what to do. This relative consensus about the ends which should be pursued must be related to the sorting of households operated through residential choices. Indeed, as we already noted, a way of engaging in politics in a given area is to choose to live or leave there.

8
Rethinking Class and Space

Introduction

In this concluding chapter, we will review what we have learned with regard to our research into urban space and what urban lifestyles, habits and the residential strategies of the middle classes have to tell us about contemporary cities, and the workings of segregation and social mix. As we indicated in Chapter 1, we took advantage of an empirical and yet multi-circumstantial approach in an effort to understand the relationship between the middle classes and their urban spaces. This has allowed us to analyse a range of socio-urban situations.

This empirical approach allows us to re-engage with theoretical questions about the coherence or fragmentation of the middle classes. This chapter will discuss temporal questions of economic and social change and also the relationship between class, space and politics. Based on a comparative cross-national study, it offers a conceptual re-evaluation of the intertwined social and spatial trajectories of the middle classes as well as the changing nature of Paris and London in the contemporary era. To what extent do these neighbourhoods represent an archipelago of middle-class factions in the contemporary city? To what extent do they register the different trajectories of the middle classes throughout the city – in processes of acceleration and accumulation or deviation and constraint – as effects of global urban systems? The chapter offers a theoretical contribution that emphasises the importance of processes of urban space in social and economic trajectories through the city, as well as the role of space in the everyday "work" of class on and in neighbourhoods and the degree to which classed practices are contested or stabilised through social mix and social difference, or in opposition or exclusion from them.

What do the middle classes do to the city? How do they contribute to transforming the socio-spatial environment? And conversely, how does urban space contribute to transforming the middle classes (by helping to classify and construct their identities)?

Middle-class archipelagos

The idea of the middle class or classes, whether singular or plural, has been widely treated in academic work, media discussions and in public policy in France and in the UK. However, as we have seen, this category remains hard to pin down and is the subject of disagreement across these fields. Our approach has been to look at the middle class as an "amalgamating idea" which takes into account a certain empirical reality. This concept allows us to describe "an arrangement of social groups which seem distinct but which in reality are linked by the similarities of their positions in the social space and by the similarities of the questions which they evoke" (Bouffartigue et al., 2011: 23).

Whether we are talking about the ways households classify themselves or are categorised by the social sciences, the term "middle classes" in fact describes a large segment of society in terms of socio-professional occupations and incomes. Much work has already drawn on the heterogeneity of this class – which has often been described as a "constellation", "archipelago" or a "nebula". Our study suggests that these middle-class archipelagos can be further distinguished by the particular intersectionalities of gender, ethnicity and generational dynamics. These archipelagos of middle-class life are also constituted in terms of the contexts in which they are located in the urban system and their relations to other neighbourhoods. Practices of distinction and differentiation in which middle-class residents engage, vis-à-vis other classes but also in nuanced distinctions between middle-class fractions (Jackson and Benson, 2014), reveal clustering and differentiation in ways that echo Butler and Robson's (2003) concept of the mini-habitus.

The heterogeneity of the middle classes is accentuated by generational differences and by differences in ethnic identity and gender, as well as in transaction with urban space. Generational dynamics are significant in terms of labour- and housing-market dynamics. There are notable distinctions between the baby boomer generation who enjoyed expanding labour markets and rising housing equity and the younger generation (often revealed by our respondents in discussions of their children or in the accounts of younger interviewees themselves) that faces greater competition for jobs and a much tighter housing market. Our study

indicates the extent to which inheritance also plays an important role for this generation – in terms of access to home ownership and the range of residential choice in these two very expensive cities. In France, to live in the 9th arrondissement or in Châteaufort would not be possible for these younger generations without family property or without family assistance. The significance of inheritance is a recurring theme across the neighbourhood types in London. In France, as in the UK, the question of familial property represents a major factor in rising social inequities (Piketty, 2013).

The heterogeneity of the middle classes is also accentuated by gender inequalities. What can be seen, for example, are inequalities in professional status within couples, generally in favour of the male partner. Women most often put their careers on hold once they have children, especially in London where childcare is particularly expensive. Alternatively, they go through a kind of professional re-conversion that keeps them more heavily involved in the local arena, which is what we see in Breuillet or in Châteaufort where women have set up professional activities at home. Women most often develop a residential anchorage and social networks that revolve around the education of their children. What we can also observe are tensions and forms of domination between genders with regard to how their roles are decided, and at the same time, we note household solidarity and mobilisation around the issue of social reproduction, especially in relation to education. We have seen how gender and class are configured differently in the different neighbourhoods, from the normed expectations of women over raising their children in the commuter villages to the construction of the public figure of the "yummy mummy" in the neighbourhood subject to gentrification in London. We have also seen strong continuities across all the neighbourhood types in terms of the overall divisions of domestic labour.

The middle classes we looked at are largely white. This homogeneity implies that social relationships have been, by and large, racialised implicitly according to "a silent cartography of whiteness" (Nayak, 2010: 2375). Diversity or mixing on public transport or in schools, for example, is therefore often described in terms which are as racial as they are social.

Our work confirms trajectories of fragmentation for the middle classes rather than consistency of status over time (Bouffartigue et al., 2011). It has often been assumed that globalisation would lead to a convergence of lifestyles and outlooks, especially for the professional and managerial middle classes whose employment was often strongly

interconnected with these global forces. If so, middle-class lifestyles and outlooks are most likely to be similar in those global cities, such as Paris and London, where the forces of globalisation are strongest. What we found in this study was that, rather than convergence, we see divergence of different fractions of the middle classes. Furthermore, the impacts of globalisation are actually intensifying this divergence because of the effects on housing and labour markets. This divergence is strongly marked in the range of settlement types of the middle classes in Paris and London, including (but also beyond) the traditional patterns of suburbanisation and gentrification. This fragmentation is further marked by a contrast between public sector and private sector career paths and outlooks. Despite this, different segments of the middle classes come together in various ways (despite the fact that they might have different school choices or contrasting political engagements for example). They recognise each other in their representations of place as well as in their urban practices. We note the example of the 9th arrondissement where different groups of the middle classes socialise: the group of academics who call themselves the "Group of Place Blanche", the group of young professionals who work in the banking sector, groups of traditional petit-bourgeois families or, still further, a group of the middle classes who are less well-off economically but who nonetheless have at their disposal a certain cultural capital; they identify themselves as the "Prolos of the 9th". These different groups have different school choices and contrasting political engagements, but they join together in the defence of their "neighbourhood village". Fragmentation can lead to shifting alliances between middle-class groups depending on context and activity.

Despite this diversity, these middle-class categories are distinguished from the working classes in that they are less affected by unemployment and by social insecurity, even if they are not always completely sheltered from them. We nevertheless encountered a few individuals who have had to deal with difficulties of employment but who still found the resources to reposition themselves in the labour market.

This heterogeneity does not imply that there are no longer class motivations or a sense of social belonging. This still exists and is apparent in different ways in France and in the UK. In France it is seen in the feeling of not being amongst the poorest but at the same having the feeling of also not being amongst the richest, the dominant class. In the UK, we picked up a stronger feeling of identification (in occupational, cultural and normative terms) with being middle class, which to some extent contradicts earlier research (see Devine, 2004, 2011; Savage et al., 2005).

This archipelago of the middle classes consists of a variety of social, cultural and urban practices which share a common corps – which is the motive of reproduction and of distinction – and it can be put to use in different forms depending on context. In particular, for families, the choice between encounters and avoidance seem to a large degree to be guided by issues involving the education (in the broadest sense) of their children.

The relationship to space testifies to and at the same time contributes to this heterogeneity not only by way of the residential choices put into practice by the various households, but also by the urban practices of the neighbourhood, of the city and of the metropolitan area. Putting these practices into perspective by starting with specific neighbourhoods with different socio-urban dynamics allowed us to approach the relationship that the middle classes have to territory in a multi-dimensional way, combining scales, spaces and temporalities.

What does space do to the middle classes?

We tried to understand space in all its dimensions whilst re-interpreting the three inter-related dimensions set out by Henri Lefebvre: perceived space, conceived space and spaces of representation (discussed in more detail below). Our work also shows that taking into account the temporal dynamics (residential dynamics, demographic change, the dynamics of urban transformation and the temporality of practices) and the different scales of urban spaces (both at the level of the neighbourhood and the scale of the metropolitan area) was crucial for our understanding of the relationships various social groups, in all their complexity, have to urban space. The intersection of scales, spaces and temporalities is a critical context for how we understand the attitudes and activities of the middle classes in the city.

Our research confirms how space contributes to the classification game and to the construction of social frontiers which are constructed symbolically through practice and physically in space – classification games which may be between neighbourhoods and districts in the metropolitan area and even within neighbourhoods between sub-areas that are more or less valued. The effects of this classification and declassification are linked to real estate activity and sometimes to the effects of public policy. They result from active mobilities with residential trajectories responding to the needs of social reproduction or from passive mobilities that affect households that, without moving, see the social status of the neighbourhood either go up or go down. The relationship

to space is built as a function of the place of residence, which situates individuals in a socio-spatial metropolitan hierarchy. It is not only a question of the effect of an address: the effects of residential choices influence lifestyles, everyday practices, the insertion of individuals into more or less open social networks and the motivations of collective action.

Residential choices are more or less constrained according to the income and the inheritance status of the individuals. They depend on residential habitus, which lead the individuals towards well-known and familiar surroundings (the diversity of which in terms of urban models we have highlighted) but which evolve as a function of personal and family trajectories and household strategies. At the end of this study, we can suggest that the feeling of belonging for the middle classes is built partly on the possibility of residential choice. The middle classes have a margin of manoeuvrability in their residential choices, but they are also constrained. They cannot always live exactly where, ideally, they would like to live (Benson, 2014). Their position in the socio-spatial hierarchy is neither established nor stable, even less so for the segments of the middle classes who are less privileged. A middle-class person can submit to the effect of an accentuated gentrification or she can choose to trade off and move to a peri-urban house to raise her children in an environment considered more beneficial to their development, whilst being less desirable in terms of aesthetics or lifestyle (Bridge, 2003).

The relationship to space inscribes individuals into local communities within which their relationships get constructed with others, whether they belong to other segments of the middle class or to other social groups. These local configurations influence the image that the middle classes have of themselves and the awareness they have of the social world. Thus, individuals who have similar social profiles and trajectories may situate themselves differently in social space depending on whether they live in very wealthy neighbourhoods or in areas that are relatively diversified, socially speaking. The middle classes of the 9th arrondissement are more likely to brood over what separates them from the upper classes and especially to pay attention to the limits of their access to luxury consumption, whereas those who live in Noisy-le-Sec, with the same economic capital, consider themselves very well off in comparison to deprived people that they are forced to run into everyday in public spaces or whilst using public transportation (Bacqué et al., 2014). Here again the question of scale comes into play, as does the location of the neighbourhood or the municipality itself within the metropolitan mosaic. The municipality of Le Raincy therefore represents an island within a department characterised by its poverty and its sizeable migrant

population. It is with regard to neighbourhoods and nearby less well-off areas that the inhabitants of the middle classes construct their social image.

The workings of space and scale are further compounded by the urban structures of Paris and London as cities. Both have highly professionalised labour markets and super-heated housing markets. These have an impact on neighbourhood trajectories in terms of initial access to the city, as well as the routes of onward mobility through neighbourhoods. It is especially evident in respondents' concerns that their children will not be able to live in the sorts of neighbourhoods they themselves inhabit. The transport networks also have significant impacts in terms of access to work, the relative proximity of other types of neighbourhood as well as in the experience of social mix in travelling through public transit systems themselves. London tends to be more unpredictable in terms of social mix and in its mosaic of different neighbourhoods. In Paris, the social geography operates at a bigger scale, especially in the divisions between wealthy central Paris and the poorer suburbs ("banlieue"). Spatial perceptions are also influenced by administrative principles and in particular the effects of "cité" and "commune". This shapes perceptions at the municipal scale in Paris. Furthermore, central Paris (the 20 arrondissements within the inner ring road, the "Périphérique") has a symbolic hold on the middle classes. Thus the middle-class incomers to Noisy-le-Sec are still oriented to central Paris (culturally and educationally, as well as for work) and away from the neighbourhood. In contrast, some middle-class incomer households in Peckham are more concerned with making a middle-class village enclave. Across both Paris and London, the impacts of diversifying housing sub-markets, education markets and transport systems further distinguish the different fractions of the middle classes.

This game of space and scale helps to construct the nature of the relationships that are maintained with other social groups, which goes from complete ignorance to the occasional encounter and all the way to co-habitation. Like residential choices, the practices of sociability and other urban practices of the middle classes are not cohesive and most of the time these practices do not refer to withdrawal alone nor to social goodwill alone, nor to the search for diversity. They are defined rather by a totality of choices for engagement or for avoidance, which can change depending on the issues or the scale. Residential proximity, and sometimes involvement with the same political networks, can go hand in hand with diverse leisure practices or a logic of cultural or intellectual avoidance. Individuals modulate openness and closed ranks according to the private spheres of their lives and all along the trajectory of their

lives. The typology of individual reactions to the discontent elaborated by Albert Hirschman (1970) which shows that individuals have three choices at their disposal – exit, voice or loyalty – seem to us heuristically fruitful for understanding these practices and the range of possible attitudes and their constraints (organisationally and structurally). This constant tinkering allows members of the middle classes to work on their social identity, to readjust it when it does not quite correspond to their social ideals and to make several social anchorages co-exist whilst specifically mobilising different scales of the metropolitan area and a chosen form of urban mobility.

Space and scale are also used actively by middle-class residents as a device of distinction and differentiation. Peckham residents use scale to reiterate claims that they are in transport zone two to indicate they are close to the centre of London to counter the images of the neighbourhood, often perceived by their peers as geographically and socially distant. These same residents make distinctions against Rye Lane (perceived as African and poor) (Benson and Jackson, 2013) but also make finely graded intra-class distinctions that set them apart from the more "conventional", less "edgy" middle-class groups in neighbouring East Dulwich (Jackson and Benson, 2014). These intra-class distinctions and positionings again point to middle-class settlement as a series of archipelagos. These archipelagos comprise forms of middle-class habitus or rather mini-habitus (Butler and Robson, 2003). However, these are mini-habituses that are suspended in a larger web of fields of social struggle (especially over education) that operate at larger spatial scales, sometimes across the entire metropolitan area.

In sum, these middle-class archipelagos are comprised, and distinguished by, the particular intersectionalities of class, gender, ethnicity and generation; the social and geographical "context" of the neighbourhood in the urban system as well as the perceptions and practices of the middle classes in the neighbourhood. The relationship to space contributes to the diversification of the middle classes and at the same time contributes to the way they distinguish themselves in relation to other social groups. It also marks and accentuates gender and generational differences in the choice of where to live, in the practice of proximity and involvement, in social or political networks.

What do the middle classes do to metropolitan space?

It is important to consider the relationship between the dynamics of middle-class archipelagos (their heterogeneity, spatial-temporal

trajectories and the mini-habituses of class distinction) in relation to understandings of urban segregation and social mix. The relationship of the middle classes to urban space in Paris and London has essentially been analysed from two focal points (which reflects the urban literature on cities of the global North more broadly):

- The suburbanisation of the middle classes and increasing impoverishment of central districts was evident in London over the 19th and 20th centuries. By contrast, the bourgeoisie remained in the centre of Paris with a departure of an increasing number of middle-class households to peri-urban areas. In the Anglo-Saxon literature, specifically in the works of the Chicago School, this migration has been analysed from an ecological perspective. In France, during the 1980s, peri-urban environments were analysed as areas of an "adventure land" for the new middle classes (Bidou, 1984). More recent work has been focused on forms of exclusivity ("residential clubs") or on the closing off of middle-class neighbourhoods in peri-urban areas. In France, as in the UK, the departure for peri-urban areas or the suburbs has always been understood as seeking distance from the social and urban nuisances of the city.
- Over the last few years, the urban literature has been particularly interested in the gentrification of the old city centres, analysed both culturally and economically. The proliferation of work on gentrification in very different international urban contexts has contributed to making it one of the major angles for analysing the relationship of the middle classes to urban space.

In our study, other processes and other situations and socio-urban dynamics appeared which are neither limited to closing off within peri-urban enclaves, nor to gentrification and which also illustrate situations of social mixing in various configurations, such as:

- situations where the middle classes arrive in a working-class area but do not engage in extensive social transformation (e.g. the gentrifying Noisy-le-Sec). They remain in the minority in a working-class district which is characterised by socio-residential diversity and which is affected by a process of both impoverishment and "embourgeoisement". This contrasts with active place-making in the cultivation of an urban village in the gentrifying area of Peckham;
- situations where one fraction of the middle classes becomes dominant over another one: in the 9th arrondissement, young

professionals vis-à-vis the traditional petit bourgeoisie or intermediate middle classes;
- situations of decline brought on by the departure of the upper middle classes, where the intermediate middle classes then become the majority (Breuillet);
- situations in which a traditional middle-class neighbourhood is subject to some influx of skilled working-class residents (the suburb of Berrylands);
- situations where there are distinctive cultural practices associated with the middle classes (such as extensive house renovations in gentrified Balham) alongside neighbourhoods deemed ordinary and not distinctive by their residents (Berrylands) but where, in both cases, the neighbourhood serves more as a centre of operations of wider urban networks and access to services (especially schools) rather than as a place in itself; and
- enclave (or gated) neighbourhoods in which there is a good deal of consensus about the preservation of the neighbourhood (Châteaufort) or where there are disputes and differences about the nature of gating (Oak Tree Park).

In other ways, our analysis of the residential choices of households converges with earlier works to conclude that it is impossible to reduce the interpretational graph of choices to a simple opposition between social openness and enclosure and that it is impossible to infer practices, or even ways of seeing the world, by starting with territorial choices. Relationships to space cannot be understood by residential choices alone. Broader urban practices are also fundamental. The juxtaposition of very different socio-spatial areas allows the middle classes to have an "à la carte" (Chalas, 2000; Vermeersch, 2011) approach to space: they take what works for them in the spaces around their places of residence or in the metropolitan area. They can be both locally anchored as well as being just as attached to mobile practices that allow them to participate in other types of spaces and have other types of social identity.

This comes from the fact that the middle classes are both agents of urban segregation and at the same time agents of mixing, depending on which urban spaces, temporalities and levels are looked at. But they are not exactly the same middle classes who make the same choices. Socio-economic distinctions also play a role here as well as the differing generations and trajectories. The middle classes thus contribute to the construction of a socio-urban hierarchy that creates a mosaic in which each piece depends on its relationship to the totality.

The middle classes also intervene in a direct way on the urban fabric. They know how to organise and mobilise around class interests when it comes to issues of social, property and environmental protection (as described in Chapter 7). They are engaged in practices of "place-making" as well as "place maintenance" (Benson and Jackson, 2013). Indeed, we have seen in this study how similar practices can be evident in seemingly very different neighbourhoods, for example over the idea of the "village" (be it urban or rural) that results in similar practices in inner urban gentrifying Peckham as in exurban West Horsley and Effingham. We have also noted how explicit interventions in neighbourhood are often informed by what is best for the neighbourhood in particular class terms, resulting in what we call "selective neighbourhood advocacy".

Expectations about the significance of social mix result, in part, from very different theoretical traditions in urban analysis, all of which, nevertheless, emphasise the significance of social and spatial segregation in cities (especially in the US and French traditions), including discussions of social polarisation in cities in the US and UK (Hamnett, 2003; Preteceille, 2006; Sassen, 2001). Chicago School analysis, including contemporary work in that tradition (Sampson, 2012), points to enduring frameworks of inter-neighbourhood social segregation across the city. Marxist-informed analysis has focused on class divisions in divided or quartered cities (Lorrain, 2001; Marcuse, 1989) and the sharp edges of neighbourhood change and displacement (Atkinson, 2000; Smith, 1996). Los Angeles School research suggested an urban future of social fragmentation as a reality of future urban governance in the postmetropolis (Soja, 2000, also Davis 2006). Much of this work has been focused on social and spatial segregation of poorer or richer residents in socially enclosed neighbourhoods. Starting, as we do in this study, with an investigation of middle-class groups living in different types of neighbourhood (in terms of degrees of social mix) across the metropolitan area of two global cities points to another set of socio-spatial processes that must be taken into account.

The dynamics of metropolitanisation may not just produce in forms of overall stability and division in social-spatial relations. When we apply an analytic lens to the middle-class groups in the class structure, and how class intersects with gender and ethnicity, intergenerational dynamics and neighbourhood trajectories, certain neighbourhoods might more resemble continuous forms of what Burgess (1925) described as social and spatial "disorganisation", in which the dynamics are not linear. The linearity of upward social and outward spatial

trajectories (and associated normativities) is evident through the life-course experiences of some of our respondents living in "destination locations" – the commuter villages and gated communities especially (see also Bacqué and Vermeersch, 2013; Benson, 2014). But these contrast with more mixed trajectories (involving social-spatial competition, trade-offs and compromises) across all neighbourhoods. For younger middle-class urban dwellers there are contrasts between, for example, the more socially homogeneous and spatially normed trajectories into and out of Balham compared to the more diffuse trajectories of Peckham or Berrylands. There is greater consistency in the social make-up and spatial trajectories of residents of the protected neighbourhood of Châteaufort than the more socially diverse backgrounds and neighbourhood trajectories of the gated community of Oak Tree Park. This state of "disorganisation" is compounded by threats to intergenerational social mobility for the middle classes, which makes for more diverse trajectories through the city (in social and spatial terms).

Our study, focused on middle-class groups who, in the context of the Los Angeles School approach, might be seen as key spatial secessionists, suggests how the particular structure of the city as well as the national welfare context are still critical in understanding forms of urban social integration and fragmentation. The London–Paris comparison reveals how the infrastructure of the city (especially public transport), the symbolic significance of the city (the 20 arrondissements of Paris) and different attitudes towards the role of the state in the UK and France (commitment to public services, the impact of administrative organisation on people's perceptions in Paris) still have significant impacts on attitudes towards and practices of social mix or avoidance. We have seen how the liberalisation of the education system in England and its centralisation in France impacts on the choices and urban practices of individuals and groups. The physical aspects of the city and the neighbourhood, its housing stock, historic buildings and street systems also shape social relations and are acted upon by social practices. The physical ingredients of the neighbourhood shape and are shaped by ongoing social practices. Rather than looking for the iconic status of certain cities in capturing future social trends, it is worth looking in more detail at particular metropolitan structures and how they shape and are shaped by ongoing social-spatial processes (in a way analogous to Robinson's 2006 call for an the analytics of "ordinary cities"). We suggest that this further recommends the benefits of comparative urban analysis. It also suggests how space is an active ingredient in ongoing social relations.

Rethinking urban class and space

Our concern with trajectories and neighbourhood activity reflects a wider view of space as process, as transactional (Bridge, 2013), in which certain modalities of social relations are reproduced but which are also rhythmic and developing in everyday transactions with the urban environment. Space as process aligns with Lefebvre's ideas of space as the result of ongoing social relations of production (Lefebvre, 1974). There is a multiplicity of spaces that are socially produced, but then these spaces further animate spatial practices. In the social production of space, there are important distinctions between perceived, conceived and lived space (Lefebvre's famous triad). The production of space is conflictual and contradictory. Perceived space is physical space, the space of conventional spatial practice and social norms. Conceived space is that of expert representations of space, through logic, mathematics and spatial planning. Lived space is that of everyday life, how space is modified through use, combining the real and the imagined in different spaces of representation. For Lefebvre, this conflict in the social production of space was ultimately between a hegemonic class and the rest of society. That hegemonic class was able to dominate the logics and definitions of conceived space, especially the logic of capital accumulation (abstract space) in the way that it dominated the domains of perceived and lived space. In some ways, this conception of class eliminates consideration of the more detailed terrain of conflict or contestation in the social relations of the production of space. Savage (2011) makes this point in highlighting the importance of Bourdieu's ideas of field relations in mapping social contestation and in recognising the significance of space.

Our study occupies a particular conjuncture in questions of the social production of space and the field relations of class in a number of ways. First it concerns a section of the class structure that raises critical questions of the relationship to the dominant class, from different interpretations of this in France and the UK, through to discussions of the distinctiveness (or otherwise) of a service class or a professional-managerial class who manage the social relations of production. This study investigates the middle classes in different spatial positions in the city and in differently configured fields of social struggle, especially in relation to degrees of social mix. Through its comparative analysis, it explores the degree to which these fields are configured by national conditions or by the metropolitan context of each city or whether they capture field relations that indicate they are more global in scope. The comparative approach also raises questions about the various mix of

capitals (economic, social, cultural) amongst these middle-class fractions and how these different mixes intersect with particular fields (in housing and education markets especially). This is especially significant in the trade-offs between capitals in the response of class habitus to changing fields, and how space is both a constraint (the particular mix of neighbourhoods available – the specific metropolitan "offer" as it were) and a resolution/accommodation of those trade-offs.

Comparing certain middle-class fractions in different neighbourhood locations, between cities and within them, allows us to reveal social "fields" much more clearly, rather than naturalising them in terms of the immediate social context of the neighbourhood. We note how fields are negotiated via the use of different spatial scales across the city (e.g. in the management of education markets) or in how diversity is controlled through spatial retreat or through mobility in urban space. We see how even the most privileged sections of the middle classes can lose control of space (losing the park in Oak Tree Park). We can see how lack of mobility can confer privilege (walking the 9th arrondissement) as well as being symptomatic of disadvantage (as Bourdieu so well conveys for low-income residents in *The Weight of the World* [1999b]). Looking at trajectories through the city also helps identify the ongoing co-constitutive effects of space as process on fields of social relations, such as the intergenerational effects we trace through inheritance, and the impacts of changing housing sub-markets and neighbourhood trajectories. We can use comparative urban analysis to help analyse fields in which, Bourdieu argued, conflictual social relations were obscured and ordinary, and accepted by physical space. Our study, in revealing the different scales and mobilities of social reproduction and trade-offs of capitals across a range of fields suggests that social conflicts, rather than being naturalised by mundane physical environments, do in fact generate struggles and reflexive forms of practice. The Paris–London comparison reveals this struggle even within the middle classes as well as between classes. We suggest a greater degree of reflexivity and recognition of the tensions of field relations than Bourdieu typically allows for, both within the middle classes and between classes. This more fragmented relationship between habitus and field is captured by the idea of mini-habituses in the middle-class urban archipelago. It might also be applied within working-class groups who, rather than being confined by forms of misrecognition (as Bourdieu suggests), are reflexively working with the very recognised constraints they face. This has been noted in the field of education (e.g. Bridge and Wilson, 2014; Goldthorpe, 1996) as well as in the critique of Bourdieu's understanding of rationality more generally

(e.g. Bridge, 2001b). This opens up an analogous set of questions about Bourdieu's idea of culture and how forms of habitus mapping (Savage et al., 2005) over-emphasise the "cultural" aspects of middle-class pursuits at the expense of working-class cultural activities; even allowed-for forms of legitimation.

The role of space in the trade-off between capitals also relates to what we might call the trade-offs between perceived and lived space in a Lefebvrian sense. We have seen how normative spatial practices (or urban models, idealisations of place) inform lived space, or trajectories towards the ideal through neighbourhoods. We have traced the different degrees to which normative idealisations of place are realised through neighbourhood trajectories and in place, as well as how the same physical space can embody different normative idealisations, even amongst the middle classes. We have seen examples of engagement (place-making) and disengagement (retreat, spatial diversification) in order to deal with the gap between perceived and lived space. We have also seen how spatial practices reflecting social/class norms mutate through everyday activity in lived space to produce particular localisations or what we have called "niched normativities". These in turn act back on spatial practices and perceived space through changing mobility patterns, degrees of activity in neighbourhood and degrees of investment in housing.

All this points to greater contingency in the social production of space and more differentiated effects of the way that the process of urban space acts back: what the middle classes do to the city and what the city does to the middle classes. This has implications for thinking more broadly about issues of spatial justice and the right to the city. Fainstein (2010) argues that any just city will have to involve the middle class, but what sense can we make of the diversifying trajectories and commitments of the middle classes in this context? What is spatial justice in a European metropolitan area? Our findings suggest that spatial justice cannot be discussed only as a question of where to live and of this revolving around a residential model alone. Spatial justice involves, above all, access to the city in all its dimensions; access to a metropolitan area which offers various types of environments all of which have value with regard to different criteria. Looking at neighbourhood structure and social identity captures both individual social interaction and the background conditions that are the two key levels of moral evaluation according to Iris Marion Young (2006). Young puts the emphasis on the background conditions in the ways that actors are implicated in structural processes. Lefebvre sees this background structure as part

of what he calls the socialisation of society and generalised segregation that comes with the capitalist city (Lefebvre, 1996; see also Soja 2010). From a different theoretical perspective and involving comprehensive empirical analysis, Sampson has shown how the background structure of the US city is still strongly framed by segregation and relatively unchanging relationships between neighbourhoods. Part of our working assumption in this study was Bourdieu's idea of habitus as a logic of social class positions that are reproduced, which again could be seen as a background condition. In the course of this reproduction, the structure of the city and the different spaces and scales are accessed unequally with unequal distributions of resources. That structure is also the framework of social interaction (Young's second arena of moral evaluation). For Bourdieu, social interaction is conditioned not by respect for difference and forms of recognition, but by disrespect and forms of misrecognition based on class habitus and forms of distinction. Others look to arenas of social interaction or "publics" in which that interaction counts in considerations of justice in terms of "learning to be affected" by others (Latour, 2004), and the situated urban contexts that might foster more social recognition and solidarity through what Benhabib has called "democratic iterations" (Benhabib, 2006) or the more transactional and situated practice of public rationality (Bridge, 2005). Young also suggests that ensuring justice as recognition might require different combinations of social mix and segregation depending on the circumstance and the social group involved (Young, 2002, 1990).

Looking at the middle classes in the city points towards the intersections between urban structure as background conditions and social interaction as an urban strategy ("à la carte" or otherwise) that enables this group to gather resources and manage their labour and social reproduction as well as their cultural and classed identities and relationship to other social groups. Urban policy has focused on the idea of social mix as a prominent solution to urban inequalities. That in part has been driven by the arguments and evidence for the compounding neighbourhood effects of concentrations of lowincome families on access to resources. It has also been built on the assumption of social mix and exposure to the diversity of the city as having a positive effect on tolerance and social solidarity. More specifically, the assumption has been that middle-class advocacy or "voice" in socially mixed neighbourhoods will improve the lot of all residents. In this study we have found that middle-class investment in neighbourhood varies in different contexts and, thus, potentially middle-class voice with it. Furthermore, where there is notable investment (for instance in place-making strategies), this tends to be a form of what we have called "selective neighbourhood

advocacy". This usually represents middle-class interests or is through articulations of what is best for the neighbourhood (again, selectively middle class). The arenas of social mix also matter. Social mix tends to be a more sensitive issue in the classroom than in the neighbourhood for instance. The children's school peer group is of paramount concern for middle-class parents in Paris and London, despite very different national education systems and ideas of public education. At the same time, there is variation in the degree to which protecting the peer group means opting out of (socially mixed) state education (or indeed never seeing it as acceptable) and subscribing to public/state services. Indeed, the normativities about what constitutes an acceptable school are quite localised. Finally, education offers an interesting case in questions of social and spatial justice in relation to social mix. Whereas much of the literature on schooling has focused on middle-class strategising over school choice and has emphasised the motivations of middle-class parents in this regard, the more significant impact is in fact in relation to the poorer choice of schools remaining in the urban context for equally motivated working-class parents. The question of social mix in schools is a citywide issue, rather than one confined to access of individual neighbourhoods.

The experiences and attitudes of the middle classes in managing social mix and social reproduction in the city suggests that considerations of spatial justice should be focused at the citywide level rather than on specific poor neighbourhoods for instance. The particular context of the city will matter here. This suggests that when conceptualising ideas of spatial justice, we should look at mobilities, access and the mix of scales across the city, and be more contextualised, relational and comparative (Sen, 2010) rather than absolute. The range of world views and attitudes to social mix revealed in this study would also suggest a more pluralist model of spatial justice in which the trajectories and modes of social reproduction through the city are brought much more into productive confrontation.

Conclusion: Rethinking neighbourhood effects

The debates on neighbourhood effects over the past two decades have made a valuable contribution to the work on segregation. These works have set out to describe the "effects of the neighbourhood", supposing that the territorial concentration of "poor" households would have the effect of exacerbating the consequences of poverty in terms of access to jobs, academic performance or behaviours considered as deviant. Even if they spoke of the neighbourhood in its entirety, these works were nonetheless focused on individuals, measuring their behaviour

and their "performances" in terms of the state of their health, the level of their children's "development" and success in school, access to jobs and delinquent behaviours. Sampson rightly argues that one cannot analyse poor neighbourhoods in and of themselves. He makes the case for looking at the effects of neighbourhood in relation to other types of neighbourhoods across the city. He redefines the effects of neighbourhood in a way that is both broader and more precise: "It is the intersection of practices and perceptions in a spatial context that is at the root of neighbourhood effects" (Sampson, 2012: 57). Discussing neighbourhood effects by looking at the middle classes allows us to develop this discussion.

First, we can argue that for the middle classes, the neighbourhood has not disappeared with globalisation. It remains the location of, and a means of, social reproduction. But it takes on different values depending on the type of neighbourhood and its generational and gender make-up. Our intersectional approach here has been very fruitful, allowing us to elaborate the analysis beyond socio-economic criteria. The neighbourhood can, depending on the case, represent a social and identity resource, a set of nearby amenities, a vector of social reproduction and even economic reproduction (in the case of the middle classes who carry on their economic activities within the neighbourhood). Even if the middle classes are better able to choose their place of residence and to move about within the city, local space can still create for them too (and not only for the working classes) an environment offering multiple resources.

Second, our study illustrates the limits of an analysis which would lock itself inside the territory of the neighbourhood without understanding it in the larger socio-urban space of the metropolitan area. Taking into account metropolitan mobility, whether we are discussing residential mobility or everyday practices, allows us to understand the relationship to the neighbourhood in all its complexity, to articulate the neighbourhood and metropolitan effects and to think about anchorage and mobility together. This would seem to us essential in an effort to understand the relationship of social groups to space. Thus, local anchorage, the daily non-mobility in urban practices (such as the prestige of being able to walk to many cultural amenities in the 9th), becomes a luxury for the middle classes whilst it is often analysed as a closing off for the "poor" residents who live in low-income neighbourhoods. Anchorage and mobility do not necessarily constitute oppositional ways of living, but on the contrary, they can go hand in hand (Authier, 2001; Lévy & Dureau, 2002; Remy, 1996). There is

everyday anchorage, that is to say, to carry on a large part of one's activities in one's neighbourhood, but similarly, long-term anchorage, in which the neighbourhood or the community becomes a space of attachment and an essential reference point that one no longer wants to leave. However, this form of anchorage does not mean that one does everything there. In the case of the middle classes, anchorage and mobility accumulate as two modalities of access and practices in the city, as two forms of complementary capital resource.

Third, although most of the work on neighbourhood effects refers to an abstract space which is first of all defined by the social characteristics of the people who live there, a generic neighbourhood without specific urban properties, we have, on the contrary, put forth the urban constituents of neighbourhoods in their situations within the metropolitan area, in their architectural characteristics and urban typologies and morphologies. These properties refer both to concrete issues in the urban fabric over which the middle classes mobilise, and to representations and imaginings brought on by these spaces, whether we are talking about old patrimonial neighbourhoods, gentrifying districts or "villages in the countryside".

Finally, space is a process, or a set of relational processes (in place and as a trajectory) and not an outcome. We were able to observe neighbourhood trajectories which, once again, become meaningful in the context of the development of the metropolitan area. This process is the result both of structural effects, associated with the history of cities, and of the structuring of socio-spatial hierarchies within cities. The comparison between Paris and London has allowed us to point out the importance of two urban histories and to highlight local variations associated with the structures of two metropolitan areas and in particular with regard to its relationship to centrality. It is built around the articulation of economic, urban and social logics. At the same time, we have seen how space is "worked" by the middle classes in practices that involve trade-offs and compromises (Bacqué et al., 2014), as well as more assertive "place-making" (Benson and Jackson, 2013), and in terms of temporalities and shifts of spatial scale that reflect the diversifying trajectories as well as common practices of distinction amongst the middle classes in these two global cities.

Appendix 1: Socio-demographic Profiles of the London Neighbourhoods

Table A1.1 Age structure: London neighbourhoods (census 2011, ONS)

	Peckham	**Balham**	**Berrylands**	**Oak Tree Park**	**Horsley/ Effingham**	**London**	**England**
0–15	14.4	20.3	22.5	20.7	17.8	19.8	18.9
16–24	10.6	8.1	8.9	7.9	8.1	12.3	11.9
25–44	45.4	37.8	20.6	25	19.9	35.5	27.5
45–64	19.6	15.8	29.3	27.6	31.4	21.2	25.4
65+	10	18	18.7	18.8	22.8	11.1	16.4

Table A1.2 Social class: London neighbourhoods (2011 census, ONS)

NS-Sec	Peckham	Balham	Berrylands	Oak Tree Park	Horsley and Effingham[1]	London	England
1.1 Higher managerial/admin	17.9	31.6	25.5	28.9	22.7	15.7	12.8
1.2 Higher professional	13.6	22	17.5	17.1	14.7	10.7	8
2. Lower managerial/ admin/professional	30.3	32.1	32.1	28.4	27.9	23.1	20.9
3. Intermediate occupations	10.1	7.9	15.8	13.8	14.6	11.8	12.8
4. Small employers/own account work	8.9	8.5	9.2	13.2	14.3	9.4	9.4
5. Lower supervisory technical	4.4	2.4	2.7	3.4	8.9	5	6.9
6. Semi-routine occupations	7.4	5.7	5.5	6.3	8.5	10.4	14
7. Routine occupations	7.1	4.5	2.1	2.6	4.6	7.4	11

Table A1.3 Housing tenure: London neighbourhoods (census 2011, ONS)

Tenure (%)	**Peckham**	**Balham**	**Berrylands**	**Oak Tree Park**	**Horsley/Effingham**	**London**	**England**
Owned outright	16.9	20.2	47.7	46.3	47.1	21.1	30.6
Owned/ mortgage	27.2	25.4	44.3	38.6	36.6	27.1	32.8
Social rented	31.3	26.5	1.1	0.8	6.2	24.1	17.7
Private rented	22.8	25.7	6.5	12.4	8.4	25	16.8

Table A1.4 Summary ethnic categories: London neighbourhoods (2011 census, ONS)

Ethnic categories	Peckham	Balham	Berrylands	Oak Tree Park	West Horsley/Effingham	London	England
White – all categories	60.4	77.2	86.2	83.9	97.5	59.8	85.5
Mixed race – all categories	6.2	5.9	3.7	2.1	1	5	2.2
Asian/British Asian – all categories	4.8	5.4	7.5	2.8	1	18.4	7.7
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – all categories	26.6	9.1	1.1	0.4	0.3	13.3	3.4
Other ethnic group	2.1	2.5	1.5	0.7	0.3	3.4	1

Appendix 2: Socio-demographic Profiles of the Paris Neighbourhoods

Table A2.1 Age structure: Paris neighbourhoods (census 2010, INSEE)

Ages (%)	Paris (9e ardt)		Noisy-le-Sec		Le Raincy		Breuillet		Châteaufort		Ile de France		France	
Gender	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
0–14	15.7	13.4	24.2	21.7	19.6	16.4	24.2	22.0	20.7	23.5	20.7	18.5	19.6	17.5
15–29	23.5	25.5	20.5	20.4	19.5	18.3	17.1	16.2	20.6	14.6	21.1	20.5	19.2	17.9
30–44	28.4	24.9	23.9	22.9	21.6	21.4	22.6	23.3	17.6	21.8	22.8	21.8	20.5	19.6
45–59	17.8	18.1	18.0	18.6	20.6	20.3	18.6	19.0	28.0	25.5	19.4	19.4	20.3	20.0
60+	14.6	18.2	13.5	16.5	18.4	23.6	17.5	19.5	13.1	14.4	16	19.7	20.4	25

Table A2.2 Social class: Paris neighbourhoods (2010 census, INSEE)

Professions et categories sociales (%) Population of 15 years old or more	**Paris (9e ardt)**	**Noisy-le-Sec**	**Le Raincy**	**Breuillet**	**Chateaufort**	**Ile de France**	**France**
Agriculteurs exploitants	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	–	0.1	0.9
Artisans, commerçants, chefs d'entreprise	4.2	2.4	4.7	2.4	–	2.9	3.3
Cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures	35.6	7.2	17.8	12.7	–	17.0	8.7
Professions intermédiaires	15.0	14.9	19.6	16.2	–	16.5	13.9
Employés	11.6	23.8	14.2	19.4	–	17.4	16.6
Ouvriers	3.8	15.4	5.8	9.1	–	9.4	13.4
Retraités	14.3	17.5	22.1	23.5	–	19.3	26.2
Autres personnes sans activités professionnelles	15.3	18.9	15.8	16.6	–	17.4	16.9

Table A2.3 Housing tenure: Paris neighbourhoods (census 2010, INSEE)

Tenure (%)	**Paris (9e ardt)**	**Noisy-le-Sec**	**Le Raincy**	**Breuillet**	**Chateaufort**	**Ile de France**	**France**
Owned	39.9	34.5	64.6	72.4	84.8	47.6	57.7
Rented	53.9	63.7	32.6	25.6	12.2	49.3	39.7
(% Socially rented)	3.9	43.2	4.7	17.0	0.0	22.0	14.5
Living rent or mortgage fee	6.2	1.8	2.7	2.0	3.0	3.2	2.6

NB: Ethnic data is not collected in France.

Appendix 3: Summary Profiles of Respondents – London and Paris

Table A3.1 Age and gender of respondents: London (%)

Male	Female	70+	60–69	50–59	40–49	30–39	20–29
30.7	69.3	23.5	22.9	16.3	17	19.6	0.7

Table A3.2 Age and gender of respondents: Paris (%)

Male	Female	70+	60–69	50–59	40–49	30–39	20–29
44.8	55.2	12.7	16	24.8	23.9	15.7	6.9

Appendix 4: Indicative List of Occupations for Two Neighbourhoods in Paris and London

Table A4.1 Indicative list of occupations for two neighbourhoods: Interviewees – inner urban and exurban, London

Peckham	**West Horsley and Effingham**
Psychotherapist (semi-retired)	Business consultant
Architect	University researcher
Retired administrator	Fuel distribution manager
Not working	Army officer; business manager
Retired doctor	Occupational therapist
Lawyer	Hospital manager
TEFAL teacher	Civil servant
Designer (unemployed)	FE teacher
IT sales	General manager
University lecturer	Care home manager
Retired orthoptist	Musical instrument manufacturer
Civil servant middle management	Estate manager
Artist	Teacher; civil servant; housewife
Architect	Teacher
Transport officer for local council	Accountant
Part-time clerical/artist (F)	Yoga teacher/secretary
Government economist	Curtain maker
Project officer for international charity	Engineer
Lawyer	Engineer
Journalist	Operations manager at local church
Psychotherapist	Metallurgist
Nurse	Studio manager
Sales manager	Engineer
Teacher	Secretary
Doctor	Self-employed business owner
Theatre	Medical secretary
Midwife	Lawyer

Teacher (made redundant)	Self-employed; network marketing (previously Foreign Office)
Credit manager (banking)	Management consultant
Valuation expert (auctioneers)	Physiotherapist (maternity leave)
Diplomatic service	Environment Agency
Artist/retired art lecturer	Health visitor
University administrator	Nanny/Nursery worker
Researcher (self-employed)	Advertising
Full-time carer for mother	Teaching assistant
Unassigned	Tour guide
Data analyst/full-time mother	Rector
Unassigned	Designer/Delivery driver
Primary school teacher	
Ex-housing manager for private company	

Table A4.2 Indicative Occupations – Inner Urban and Exurban Neighbourhoods: Paris

Noisy-le-Sec
Cadre secteur public
Chercheur
Professeur (lycée)
Documentaliste
Chimiste
Cadre dans l'édition
Informaticien
Contrôleur aérien
Livreur
Professeur (collège)
Ingénieur (informatique)
Comptable
Commercial
Responsable de projet (industrie)
Chargée de formation
Informaticien
Directrice de centre social
Institutrice
Architecte
Ingénieur électronique
Éducatrice
Musicien
Manager en informatique
Psychologue indépendante
Directrice école
Sculpteur
Scénariste

Table A4.2 (Continued)

Chargé de mission (immobilier)
Cadre moyen (municipalité)
Au chômage
Kinésithérapeute
Directeur de crèche (retraitée)
Assistante de direction
Directeur dans l'assurance
Comédien
Gérant d'un commerce
Infirmière
Enseignant (collège)
Éducateur spécialisé
Médecin (à l'hôpital)
Châteaufort
Cadre EDF
Responsable logistique (retraité)
Ingénieur (aérospatial)
Hôtesse de l'air (retraitée)
Directeur d'une agence immobilière
Comédien
Édition
Designer
Décoratrice d'intérieure
Technicien en qualité environnement
Assistante maternelle (retraitée)
Électricien (retraité)
Employé
Gérant d'un commerce
Cadre bancaire
Chef d'entreprise
Bibliothécaire
Ingénieur
Investisseur immobilier
Infographiste
Directeur commercial indépendant
Ouvrier
Cadre supérieur (banque)
Professeur (collège)
Gérant d'un restaurant

Notes

2 Locating the Middle Classes in London and Paris

1. The rest of society was made up of the poor (7 per cent of the population) and of the traditional middle class made up of independent workers (25 per cent of the population).
2. It should be noted that whilst Bourdieu – like Goldthorpe – associates a nebulous conservatism with this middle class, Mendras (1988) reveals them as possessing an innovative approach or avant-gardism in terms of space and their modes of life, political positions and particularly their participation in the "new social movements".
3. http://www.apur.org/observatoires_apur/familles/obs/3_3revenus/revenus_fic.htm
4. see: http://www.apur.org/note/chiffres-logement-social-paris-2011
5. There are huge problems in comparing the data and it should be noted that the UK data is from a large survey and refers to individual and not household earnings. The two sources are also different, as the DWP data is for a running average of three years, but the two sets of data are in the same ball park and indicate the large discrepancy between the mean and median values.
6. To upload a database with the classification of the French "communes" see: http://www.insee.fr/fr/methodes/default.asp?page=zonages/aires_urbaines.htm
7. Regarding the distribution of incomes, there are some good maps in this note (in French): http://www.iau-idf.fr/fileadmin/Etudes/etude_827/NR_551_web.pdf (p. 3–4)
8. In the London study, the procedures were scrutinised by the Social Science Faculty Ethics Committee of Bristol University, which required that the usual protocols for anonymity and confidentiality and for the management and protection of data were observed.
9. Socio-demographic profiles from the censuses of the neighbourhoods are given in appendices 1 and 2.
10. Oak Tree Park is anonymised because of its small scale.

3 Being Middle Class

1. The estate agent label for the area in Balham where the research took place.

4 Residential Choice and Representation of Place

1. Until 1998, Noisy was linked to Paris by train from Gare de l'Est. RER line E put Noisy a mere ten minutes from the centre of Paris and a key transportation hub; i.e. the Haussmann Saint Lazare train station.

2. The phrase "Neuilly in the 93" brings together popular representations of Neuilly-sur-Seine – a suburb to the west of Paris, made up of residential neighbourhoods popular with the wealthy, considered as the richest in France, with the highest average income per person – and Seine-Saint-Denis – a département to the northeast, commonly denoted by its département code (93), where Le Raincy is located, a suburb that is home to large immigrant populations with high levels of poverty. This description thus captures the sense of Le Raincy as an upper middle-class island surrounded by ethnically mixed and socially deprived Parisian suburbs.
3. The Home Counties is a generic reference to the counties of southeast and eastern England that encircle London.

5 Lived Space

1. Montmartre à la Une, N° 29 December 2010.
2. Some of them have precarious employment status and earn incomes at the level of the average for France. Their social profiles correspond to the "pioneer" gentrifiers (Bidou-Zachariasen and Poltorak, 2008), as they have high cultural capital and a weaker economic capital.

6 Staying Middle Class

1. The school names given in this chapter are pseudonyms to preserve anonymity.

7 Changing Places

1. Figures from INSEE (2010 "zonage en aires urbaines" and 2008 census).
2. An "intercommunalité" is an administrative body created by a group of "communes". Its competences are delegated from "communes". There are three types of "intercommunalité: the communauté urbaine" (for a large metropolis), the "communauté d'agglomération" (for medium-size cities) and the "communauté de communes" (for rural and peri-urban areas).
3. The "Operation d'intérêt National" on the Saclay plateau is part of a wider national urban planning policy.
4. French law insists that "communes" located in large urban areas meet the minimum amount of social housing for the area as outlined by the state, otherwise the "commune" is liable to pay a penalty.

Appendix 1: Socio-demographic Profiles of the London Neighbourhoods

1. These are averaged figures of the two core super output areas for West Horsley and Effingham.

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