

# SciencesPo

Laboratoire interdisciplinaire d'évaluation des politiques publiques

Observatoire sociologique du changement

## THE MIDDLE CLASSES, HOUSING AND SCHOOLING IN THE CITY COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES FROM EUROPE, SOUTH AMERICA AND ASIA

ABSTRACTS BOOKLET

Workshop LIEPP & OSC – June 28th, 2019



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Comparative Perspectives from Europe, South America and Asia.  
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***Social Reproduction and the Remaking of the Gentrified Inner City***

**Tim Butler & Chris Hamnett**

Manuel Castells pointed to the key role of the post WW2 state in mediating relations of collective social consumption in areas such as health, education and housing. The extent of state control and finance ensured its role in mediating and absorbing class conflict. In this presentation, we outline some of some of the consequences of this in relation to education and schooling. In this presentation, our focus is on the ways in which the middle class has changed since the passing of the 1944 Education Act, in which the structure of schooling broadly reflected social class differences, to the 1988 Education Act which enshrined the principle of school choice. In looking at the 1988 Act and its consequences, we focus on the ways in which the new middle classes negotiated the new educational landscape to maintain their relative social, cultural and education advantage in relation to changed housing, labour and educational markets associated with an emerging neo liberalism. Importantly we argue that there is not a single, homogeneous, middle class, but a variety of middle classes, whose members articulate different values and attitudes towards the reproduction of social advantage. At one end of the spectrum there are egalitarians unwilling to unfairly advantage their children, whilst at the other end are those relentlessly focused in their search to maximize advantage. For most middle class parents however there are uneasy negotiations between the sociological and geographical factors which reflect their aspirations and the everyday constraints they face.

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***Middle Classes Nomenclatures and Measurement: Comparative Perspectives between  
Europe and Latin America***

**Emmanuelle Barozet**

This presentation aims to analyze the multiplicity of categories and measurement tools available regarding middle classes in Europe and Latin America. We will focus on both external and internal boundaries that define these groups and the challenges they pose to sociology. There is much debate over this topic, where economics and international institutions dedicated to measuring growth and consumption (World Bank, 2015) compete on the ground with sociological definitions and instruments (Grusky, 2001). We establish a comparison between Europe (with its weakened middle classes but also growing wealthy middle classes) and Latin America (with various cases of consolidation and impoverishment, Del Campo, Güemes and Paramio, 2017). Next, we will show how the multitude of tools available (median income, occupational groups, PPP income or consumption segments, EGP, Erik Olin Wright, Treiman, CASMIN, Great British Class Survey, among others) shows that social spaces are changing, depending on the regions and variables used. We will take into account new territorial and urban approaches, which reveal the limits of previous instruments. Thirdly, we will show that the presence of heterogeneous social protection schemes (Esping Andersen, 1999, Hall & Soskice, 2001) within the two continents, which impact on housing and education policies, allows to enrich the debate. This is all the more crucial at a time when many predict that the 21st century will be that of the middle classes at the global level (Kharas, 2017), while from the sociological point of view, these groups constitute a "moving target" (Chauvel, 2006) in stratification studies, as has been shown by various studies in Europe and Latin America (Penissat et al, 2016).

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***The Middle Classes in the Metropolises. A North-South Comparison***

**Adalberto Cardoso & Edmond Préteceille**

Contrary to the dualization hypothesis derived from the global city model, middle classes have continued to grow in the Paris metropolis, as is many large metropolises where the data allows to identify them properly. In contrast, metropolises of developing countries, such as Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, have been traditionally considered as divided cities – divided between the upper class and the poor. But there has been an increasing interest for emerging middle classes in those countries and cities in recent years. The discussion of comparative trends and their relation to economic and policy changes presupposes common explicit and detailed definitions of the different parts of the middle classes.

Regarding the situation of the middle classes in the city, their contribution to urban change and their relation to the other classes, the major contribution has been the literature on gentrification, insisting on the major role of middle classes as agents of urban social transformation and shifting - but in the end increasing - segregation. Analyzing the urban social structures of Paris, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and their change over the first decade of the XXIst century, tells a different story. In the three cities, the middle-middle classes and the lower-middle ones are the less segregated from all other classes, and this de facto social mix is stable over the decade, even slightly decreasing. Beyond these similar trends and features, there are however significant differences in the intensity of the social and urban hierarchy between the upper class, the middle classes, and the white collar and blue collar working classes.

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***Searching for excellence: the Middle classes, Education and Housing in Beijing***

**Chris Hamnett & Xiaoling Zhang**

This paper examines the process of Chinese middle-class families buying into privileged school catchments districts (*xueyufang*) to gain places for their children in inner city areas of Beijing. We view *jiaoyufication* as a transitional form of gentrification linked to the inherent mechanism of unequal access to urban education. This paper examines both *jiaoyufication* and *xuequfang* based on a critical exploration of socio-spatial dynamics in inner Beijing's Xicheng District with multi-source data on spatial development, demographic patterns and the differentiated education-housing market. Through semi-structured interviews conducted in three typical school districts, we describe the limited 'education market' for the middle class among multiple educational channels, and the roles of the government, developers/ real estate agents and native house owners in promoting limited quality public education resources. The educational strategies of the middle class are found to be flexibly inter-twined with residential types and policy moves. It is concluded that, despite obtaining places in quality schools *xuequfang*, it is not the time yet to term the surrounding areas as *jiaoyufied*, at least in the Beijing case.

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***Socio-spatial Trajectories of Upper Middle Class Reproduction in the Neoliberal City***

**María Luisa Méndez & Modesto Gayo**

In this presentation, we examine the ways in which Santiago's barrio alto (the most privileged area in the city) has grown over the past decades, leading to high levels of social segregation of the most privileged. The offer of housing and private schooling for the upper middle classes, as well as the upwards occupational mobility trajectories, have raised high and disputed expectations of belonging to this class. Social and spatial mobility into and within the barrio alto is not, however, random happenstance. It is structured along lines delineating less and more privileged places, trajectories and most importantly typologies of upper middle class subjectivities: the inheritors, the achievers, the incomers and the settlers. In this paper, we unpack the imbricated relationships between intergenerational occupational mobility, residential trajectories and cultural-political repertoires.

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***The Relocation of Middle-Class Groups in Athens (1991-2011) and its Relation to the  
Spatially Uneven Distribution of School Quality***

**Thomas Maloutas**

The paper will examine two questions: The first is whether specific groups within the middle-classes—ranging from upper to lower middle-class positions (e.g. teachers, engineers' technical assistants, actors, shopkeepers, nurses, cashiers, policepersons, cooks and waiters, salespersons)—have been converging or diverging in terms of spatial distribution patterns and housing conditions from the early 1990s to the early 2010s. The second is whether the changing spatial pattern of each of the aforementioned groups is becoming more or less correlated with the uneven distribution of schools' quality, depicted for the mid 2000s and presumed rather stable for the considered period.

The relocation patterns will be drawn from the comparison of the spatial distribution pattern of each group in 1991 and in 2011, controlled by the location pattern of their members that moved to their last recorded residence up to 10 years before 2011. Categories belonging to the upper and lower part of the occupational hierarchy (e.g. high-end professionals and unskilled workers in industry and building) will be used as control groups.

***Social Rent: Causing or Reducing School Segregation?***

**Willem Boterman & Sako Musterd**

Tenure restructuring is a widely used policy tool to engineer the composition of neighborhoods. Social mix policies have not been demonstrated to be highly successful in achieving the officially stated goals of helping mitigating social problems facing lower SES groups. Often social mix policies have been stealthy ways of facilitating gentrification and the gradual loss of sense of belonging of original residents. Nonetheless, social mix induced by housing policies such as developing new mixed communities or restructuring of existing tenure can have desegregating effects. The desegregation of neighborhoods may have little meaning in general for improving the lives of people living there, nor lead to more social contact between different social and ethnic groups, yet there may be some exceptions. Schools, especially primary schools, are largely local institutions that are typically strongly connected to local populations. Although school systems differ in their degree to which geography is implicated in school choice and enrolment, across the board there are strong connections between residential and school segregation. Surprisingly, social mix policies have only to a limited degree zoomed into the potential effects on those institutions within the neighborhood that may be foci of social interaction between different social groups. There is a broad literature on school avoidance and strategizing of the middle classes in diverse neighborhoods. There is however less research on the more structural role of housing policies on school segregation and educational inequality. This paper will draw on the case of Amsterdam to study how housing policies are related to neighborhood mix in respect to the school aged population. Amsterdam is an interesting case because of 1) the historically large social rental sector (about 50%) and its current housing liberalization; and 2) it's almost fully publically funded free school choice context. Using geocoded, longitudinal, individual level register data, the paper will assess 1) how the extensive social rental sector of Amsterdam and its restructuring affect patterns of residential segregation and 2) how these patterns are related to school segregation.

***Middle classes Residential Status and School Patterns in the Paris Metropolis***

**Marco Oberti & Quentin Ramond**

In French cities, given the strong correlation between the distribution of school provision, the social hierarchy of urban spaces and the prices on the housing market, most of the middle classes are likely to face complex trade-offs between residential status and access to attractive educational resources. In this context, this paper examines the relationships between middle-class residential status and school patterns and how they contribute to shaping socio-spatial divisions within this group in the Paris metropolis. The Paris metropolis provides an apt setting for this study: real estate prices have sharply increased, the large public housing stock is increasingly aimed at middle-income households, and the local school market combines a highly differentiated public sector based on the school catchment area policy with a selective private sector, supported or financed by the state, which is not concerned by this rule. Using individual census data, we first investigate the effects of housing tenure on middle-class residential segregation and its relationship with inequalities in school provision. The results show that proximity to attractive public schools in privileged urban locations is associated with higher representation in the private and public rental sectors, whereas access to homeownership mostly unfolds in working-class municipalities displaying less diversified and more segregated educational contexts. Second, we provide a comparative examination of how these processes play out among middle-class school choices, focusing on homeowners in outer suburbs and social tenants in privileged close outskirts of Paris. School choices show high degree of variation according to housing tenure, to the characteristics of the available schooling opportunities at different spatial scales and to the level of residential segregation. Therefore, the interplay between housing tenure and the persistent unequal geography of education appears crucial to developing a complete theoretical model and empirical picture of social stratification and mobility in large cities as well as for improving public policy aimed at tackling the effects of place in the (re)production of inequalities.

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