Work in London, Love in Paris: Middle class mobility over the Channel Tunnel

Abstract

In Europe, an ongoing debate has taken shape about the spatialization of class beyond national categories in relation to mobility and migration and the changing scale of social structures and organizations. The paper contributes to the analysis of the transformation of middle classes by linking the issue of spatialization of class at the transnational and urban level with the question of mobility and skilled migration. We base our analysis on about one hundred interviews with British migrants in Paris and French migrants in London. We find that while the French moved to London primarily due to professional reasons, many British moved to Paris to be with their partner. A clear difference of experience is that the French feel highly regarded by the British, while the British in Paris feel that they are not held very highly in esteem or even respected. Overall, both the reasons for migration as well as the presentation of life in the two cities seem rather stereotypical. London is Europe's economic capital, a multicultural city where everyone can live in one's own community. Paris is a rather provincial city, valued mostly for its history, beauty and the way of life, but is economically far behind London. We thus argue that despite closer connections between Paris and London, London has become a centre of middle class making in Europe, while Paris remains valued for its way of life, but is criticized for its lack of professional opportunities.

Introduction

In Europe, an ongoing debate has taken shape about the spatialization of class beyond national categories in relation to international mobility and migration and the changing scale of social structures and organizations. The paper contributes to the analysis of the transformation of middle classes by linking the issue of spatialization of class at the transnational and urban level with the question of mobility and skilled migration.

Cross-border mobility contributes either to making some class boundaries more fluid or, by contrast, to renegotiate them beyond the national framing (Lamont & Molnár 2002).

Migration and cross-border mobility, particularly within the EU, are the reason that class making mechanisms are evading the frontiers of the nation state. The degree of cross-border interactions between individuals, institutions and societies has certainly increased quite significantly in the last decades, but there is consistent empirical evidence showing that those exchanges are, to a large extent, geographically and socially concentrated, and that cross-border interactions are not necessarily global in character (Mau, Mewes, and Zimmermann 2008). In Europe, several attempts have been made to identify class making mechanisms at the European scale (Favell and Guiraudon 2011; Recchi 2015; Mau 2010). For instance, in their book 'Globalising minds, roots in the city', Andreotti et al. (2015) provide good evidence of a European urban social group of managers in the making according to their values, urban location, choice for children education and labour market trajectories, and limited transnationalization. They studied upper middle classes transnational mobility from different European cities (Paris, Lyon, Milan, Madrid) after they had come back from a foreign experience in comparison with those who did not move. One major conclusion was a critique of the sociology of mobility (for instance Elliott and Urry 2010) that identified disconnection processes between mobile upper middle classes and the rest of society, including their place

of origin, their family. The results stressed the dominant logic of 'partial exit', i.e. European urban upper middle classes that would move in a foreign city for a while (job, education, experience), but not too far, not for too long and who tended to come back where they lived before leaving, i.e. 'Transnationalism under shelter'. The duration of the experience abroad they were willing to consider (between six months and a maximum of five years) was explained in terms of personal and professional networks, and was generally conceived instrumentally, as a way to improve their current job position and income level.

Beyond the migration of the poor and the migration of the rich, Smith and Favell (2006) were among the first scholars pointing to the mobilities of the 'middling group', such as nurses, young entrepreneurs, university students or second generation migrants. Various scholars have started studying skilled migration, which they no longer perceive as a phenomenon exclusive to an economic elite, but to the middle classes in general. Given the 'context of a converging European system for skilled migration' (Scott 2007: 674), there is a need for more comparative analysis of migrants where there is no a priori massive wealth unbalance between two cities.

While the transnational turn has led to considering class making mechanisms beyond the national, , , historians and sociologists have also come out with more localised, urbanised or regionalised understandings of class. To illustrate, Mike Savage, following earlier work by urban sociologists Ray Pahl or Herbert Gans, identified what he called the 'missing spatial dimension' of class analysis in the UK. In Savage's major book on elective belonging, he articulated the dynamics of globalisation, mobility and territorialisation. The notion of elective belonging, which 'articulates senses of spatial attachment, social position, and forms of connectivity to other places' (Savage, Bagnall, and Longhurst 2005: 29) also built upon a long tradition in sociology (Bagnasco and Negri 1994; Goldthorpe et al. 1969) that emphasised the

spatial dimension of class identity formation. As the authors suggest, elective belonging strategies play a very important role in the process of 'social location' for social classes, something quite significant in a context in which the cultural implications of occupational class have greatly eroded for most groups.

For upper middle classes, their status often results from both their occupation and their residential choice or trajectory. Middle classes define who they are partly by the place they choose to live in (neighbourhood, city, urban region). We are following Savage in the hypothesis that the differentiation of spaces for interaction opens the field of the possible for individuals, in terms of belonging and of negotiating their involvement in a given space. Individuals are to some extent able to choose or negotiate their belonging to one political or social space or another, and their degree of investment and interaction. Reframing this issue within our argument, this means that the higher degree of freedom in choosing where to live, to shop, or to send one's children to school, in playing life at different scales, makes 'exit' or 'partial exit' strategies easier in the different dimensions of leisure, work, sociability or education for children.

We wanted to analyse precisely the mobility between Paris and London, two prosperous world cities with strong internal inequalities attracting large waves of skilled and unskilled migrants. By contrast to most papers about migration in London, our research is not about migration from the periphery of Europe (Datta 2009; Ryan et al. 2008) or just about the crisis (King et al. 2016). Glick-Schiller and Çağlar (2009), who called for a comparative theory of locality in migration studies, have pointed to the importance of skilled migrants who are needed for the constitution of a globally competitive city. If the scale of the circulation between the two metropolises has reached high points thanks to the EU and the channel

tunnel, there is also a history of those that might be explored to understand the current characteristics of those migrations.

Comparing French migrants in London to British ones in Paris can potentially yield interesting results, considering claims that migrants within Europe tend to move to a country that is close to their home country and that they mostly migrate for only a short period of time (Andreotti et al. 2015; Smith and Favell 2006). France and Britain are neighbouring countries and going with the Eurostar from Paris to London or reverse takes less than two and a half hours. Moreover, both cities have various airports and are well-connected to the rest of their respective country. Nevertheless, despite the geographical proximity of the countries and cities, the migrants, whether skilled or not, still have to face challenges, such as being in a country where people speak a different language, have a different culture, they have to find a place to live, work in a new environment, and mak new friends[2]. Moving always comes at a cost, disproportionately higher for poor migrants but which should not be ignored for the others either (Favell 2008; Ryan and Mulholland 2013).

In this paper, we will look at two dimensions that are central for the making of the middle class. First, we will focus on the motives for migration. Why do middle class British nationals go to Paris? Why do members of the French middle class move to London? The determinants of migration are not limited to job opportunities and high wages: the search for experience, lifestyles or affective reasons may also play a role (Assirelli, Barone, and Recchi 2019; Favell and Recchi 2009). We will see that while the French respondents moved to London mostly due to professional reasons, many British nationals moved to Paris to be with their partners/spouse. We argue that despite closer connections between Paris and London,

London has become (before Brexit) a centre of middle class making in Europe through different mechanisms: young people going for a first work experience when their own labour market is closed, professionals (in particular in the finance sector or to start a firm), right wing business minded people ideologically opposed to the French state and the tax system, or members from ethnic minorities avoiding the pressure of the French racial order. Very little of this is seen in Paris: some British respondents came to work but remain critical of the professional environment. Most of them came because they found their partners in France, and they accept that they might have much better professional opportunities elsewhere, particularly in London. Second, we look at the reproduction of class through housing and lifestyle. We will demonstrate how it is much easier for the French in London to keep their French middle class life(style), than for the British in Paris, with their unsatisfying professional life and their rather low status in French society. We conclude on the strength of stereotypes about the two metropolises.

Data & Methods

The research for this paper is in part a follow up to the series of research just mentioned and in particular Favell's book 'Eurostar in Eurocities' (2008) where he studied European middle class expatriates in London, Brussels and Amsterdam. The idea was to use some parts of Favell's questions to look more precisely at the French in London, and the English in Paris. For the research we used the same questionnaire as Andreotti et al. (2015) in order to make some comparison over time. The paper is based on semi-structured interviews with 52 French nationals in London and 38 interviews with British nationals in Paris that were conducted in 2014 and 2015. The respondents were primarily contacted through organisations (churches, schools, bookshops, expatriate organisations, firms), and groups on social media such as Facebook and meetup.

The interviews were semi-structured, including open-ended questions about the motives for migration, the advantages and disadvantages about living in the respective city, about residential choice and neighbourhood use. We also systematically assessed the respondents' spatial practices, as well as personal networks.

The respondents were skilled migrants, middle or upper middle class, working in different occupations. Our sample is thus not about the elites or about a particular sector like the peculiar financial sector (see Ryan and Mulholland, 2013). Almost all respondents had a university degree and were employed. Among the few exceptions without a higher education degree were those who left their home country after high school, but who plan to start studying.

Most respondents were married or in a partnership, whereas the share was slightly higher for the British in Paris (73%) than for the French in London (63%). Nineteen British respondents had children, but only 13 had children in the same household. Among the French respondents, 26 had children and most of them (22) in the same household. For the latter group, there was a gender balance among the respondents, whereas for the British, two thirds of the respondents were female. The youngest respondent was a 21-year old French woman who was working in a café in South Kensington. The eldest respondent was a 70-year old British retiree who called herself a 'travelling wife'. Most respondents, though, were between 30 and 55, and most were working full-time, either employed or self-employed.

(Historical) Context: London, Paris and transnational mobility

Studying French nationals in London and British nationals in Paris presents a unique opportunity to capture transnational practices by taking 'global/international cities or regions as the unit of comparison into which immigrants integrate' (Favell 2015: 106).

London and Paris are the two major urban regions in Europe, comprising between 11 and 12 million inhabitants, i.e. about 20 per cent of the population, but producing nearly a third of the GDP. Within the national and European (in part global) space, London and Paris accumulate the high end of the labour market, skilled people (the young in particular) and investment. This wealth is both associated with economic activity (often concentrated in finance, services, technologies), the attraction of flows and sometimes a search for safe havens among global economic elites.

According to Favell (2008: 30), (pre Brexit) London appeared in the 2000's as the 'brightest beacon in Europe's landscape. For those in search of fame and fortune'. After decades of demographic decline (between 1939 and 1991 London lost 2.2 million inhabitants, about 25%) the population of London increased by 2 million over the last 25 years. Latest projections (before Brexit) anticipated continuous growth up to 11 million in 2050. More than 40% are black or have an ethnic minority background. The symbolic dimension of 'experiencing London' became a distinctive characteristic for young people and middle classes alike. There were objective factors to support London's attraction based upon an opened labour market and London's economic boom during the 2000, a growth reinforced by massive immigration. Foreigners were easily able to step in, from young people who could not enter their own labour markets, eastern European workers, to middle classes or bankers in the city of London. British Universities transformed and attracted scores foreign students from all over the word, including Europeans eager to get an experience outside their own national systems.

Paris shares some common features with London as a long established capital of a centralized country, where most of its elites are trained in the '*Grandes écoles*', a sort of escalator region for young people from all over the country where those who can get on have improved opportunities for upward mobility in comparison with the rest of the country. Those who move in have a good chance to find high-paying jobs, to build human capital, and to access social and cultural resources that enhance the prospects for passing their improved social prospects, and the opportunity for more, on to their children. Within France, Paris is most diverse in terms of ethnicity and nationalities, a magnet attracting and at the same time rejecting people from France and abroad, an urban region of around twelve million inhabitants, with good transportation links to the rest of France, Europe and the world. The centralization of the labour market has increased as the economy was restructured under the command of the State. Both Paris and London are the regions where upper middle classes have concentrated and developed over time (Préteceille 1995).

A long history of circulation

There is a long history of exchanges between Paris and London. Symbolically, the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 was immense: Britain was connected to the continent by a fast train. Since the opening, about 175 million travellers have gone both ways, now in 2 hours and 15 minutes. According to Mediatransport (2011)[3], about 43% of the travellers are middle or upper middle classes and 60% of the travellers live in France (vast majority in Paris Ile de France) against 28% living in the UK. Additionally, about 3 million passengers fly between Paris and London every year. Over a third of the clients are frequent travellers (5 or more trips per year). Among them, 40% travel for business, 16% visit friends and 44% come for leisure. About 90% of them have return tickets and the average duration of the stay is 2 to 3 days. Thus,

there is an intense circulation between Paris and London for touristic and business reasons. Migration or short term stays in one of them is not a big deal in terms of distance and time.

While the British have come to Paris for a long time, there are no historical movements of British coming in masses to Paris. There is a 'Rue des Anglais' in the Vth arrondissement close to La Sorbonne, a reminder of English students coming to Paris in the XIIIth century. In the XIXth century, Thomas Cook invents mass tourism and Paris is a favourite place for English tourists to visit museums and cabarets alike (Cooper-Richet 2018). However, at an early stage, the English spread in different regions of France, in the mountains, the Côte d'Azur. According to official statistics there are today about 144.000 British citizens living in France, about 20.000 in Ile de France (Paris region) and 9.000 in Paris city. In addition, 10.000 British students are registered in Ile de France Universities.

During the last two decades, pensioners were the core of the British coming to France, but rather outside Paris. In the past years, however, there was a 'transition from an elite expatriate model of communality to one based around middle-class diversity' (Scott 2007: 674). This growing diversity of British, including more middle classes, is particularly visible in Paris. While there are some websites and organisations, the 'English' or 'British' community in Paris is weakly organised. Even religious organisations comprise a large number of Australian or Commonwealth people, not British as such. There is no such thing as an obvious 'British' neighbourhood. There are a couple of bilingual schools in Paris and a famous international high school in St Germain en Laye, an aristocratic town in the rich western suburb of Paris where international managers working in La Défense Business District tend to live. There are a few pubs here and there in Paris where, on a rugby match day, serious

gathering of English takes place. Overall, the English are not a strong community in Paris, they are not organised and not very visible.

By contrast, the story of French in London is more long term with key moments of French immigration in London, for instance during the time of the Huguenots when protestants left France for London, about 65.000 between 1550 and 1789. A French wave of migrants came to London to escape the French Revolution after 1790, including a group of Catholics. Similar migration patterns emerged after the 19th century revolutions where the losers of the political turmoil often chose London for their political exile (Kelly and Cornick 2013). Historians have identified early places of French concentrations around Soho, Marylebone, St Pancras, later the West end and Leicester Square. Huguenots completely assimilated in London when those who flew from the French Revolution later came back to France. Despite the evidence of opposition between the two countries 'London was convenient, congenial and attractive to those (.) who sought exile' (ibid: 4).

Gradually, South Kensington has become the visible headquarter of the French presence in London, or at least of the French middle class in London around the Embassy. The French State has organised its institutional presence in the surroundings from the French cultural institute to the Charles de Gaulle French Lycée or the consulate. Shops and restaurants play with this idea of French influence, reflecting a rather conservative and bourgeois representation of French in London. However, beyond this classic and highly visible French influence in that neighbourhood, the great increase of French migrants in the 2000s has led to the dispersion of this population around schools (for instance the new lycée of Kentish Town) or in the eastern quarters of London which cheaper housing. Huc-Hepher and Drake's (2013) thorough qualitative analysis of French parents in Blackheath (south of Greenwich) proved that French

migrants have gone east and south in London. It also gave evidence of the variety of social profiles in London. French are everywhere in London from students to bankers, from scores of young people working in bars and restaurants and services for low wages.

There are great uncertainties regarding the actual numbers of French nationals in London. All sorts of figures have been produced because some people do not register, in particular young adults and because of the lack of data on return migration[4]. According to Philippe Guyonnet-Dupérat, financial counsellor at the French Embassy, the Office of National Statistics estimates that there are 140.000 French in London, 125.000 of those officially registered with the French Consulate. He continues that 'we reckon it is more around 300.000 French living in the UK, half in London, 60 % in the Greater London and 75% (225.000) in the South-East'. He also says that French migrants are a very diverse group that does not only include the stereotypical banker, but also 'a big floating French population in London that is not easily measured'.

Results

Why did they move?

First, we want to point out that the majority of our sample, both French and British, were not first-time movers but have lived in other foreign countries before. Whether as students for an Erasmus year, after studies to travel and work, as bankers, freelancers, or language teachers, our respondents have lived in places as diverse as New York, Tokyo, Australia, Berlin, Costa Rica, Haiti, the Middle East, and many more. One of the reasons as well as advantages of living in London and Paris, respectively, was therefore the proximity to the home country. We will now analyse in more detail the reasons for migration.

British in Paris: Romantic Francophiles 'stuck in Paris' because of their partner

It is striking that among our British respondents most have been to France before and already have some familiarity with the country. Many mention some school exchange, holidays, some visit that gave them the opportunity to speak or learn the language. In medieval Britain, speaking French was a major asset. Now about 15% of the British population speak some French, but the figures have declined over the last 15 years and even more in the past few years. French speaking British are therefore a particular group within the UK.

Second, as is always the case, a number of British respondents live in Paris because of employment opportunities. Some have come to work for international organisations: law firms, banks, OECD, consultants. A classic case is that of Tyler, a sales director in London working for a British firm that opened a branch in Paris. He spoke French and was offered a job in the new branch. The same applies for Kevin, a business investment advisor who was transferred by his employer to Paris. Another group we interviewed came to teach English in Paris, either institutionally, at the British council, business schools, universities, or firms, or more informally as private lessons. From there, several moved on to other jobs.

While a few respondents who came to Paris in the early 2000s still talk about good business opportunities, this has changed for most of the other respondents who were very critical of the labour market in Paris. They complained about the weak economy, about the tax system that is hostile to business, and the business culture in general In contrast to the French respondents in London, very few British citizens came to work as self-employed. In France, taxes have to be paid from the start which makes being self-employed very expensive and thus discourages young entrepreneurs. Most British citizens we interviewed in Paris express very strong criticisms about the French labour market as indicated by Piper, owner and

manager of an HR company: '*France is not particularly well at the moment, economically it's very harsh, Parisians always look for the bad. I also find the French administration extremely heavy, to the point of... you know, it's really quite tiresome'.*

Several of our interviewees who came to Paris to follow their partner/spouse and went for good jobs (finance, video games) have become critical because of the obstacles of moving to other jobs. 'I am stuck here' was a common expression of our interviewees. To illustrate, Elizabeth came to Paris in 1970 and is now retired. She worked in the banking sector and is happy about her retirement as the conditions are now much worse than they were when she was still active in the work force. Another example is Kevin, who worked at a bank when he came to Paris in 2000. Now employed as a Business Investment Adviser, he complains that opportunities are much worse than before. He is 'stuck' in Paris due to his family – his wife has a job she could not perform in England. For business reasons, he would have long returned to London. Most respondents are convinced that there are more job and business opportunities in London.

Third, a surprising result was the extent to which our British repsondents have come to Paris to live with their beloved one. That point did not appear in our French sample in London. A third of our British respondents have come to Paris because of love, because they had previously met a man or a woman (in France, the UK or a third country) and came to Paris to live as a couple, whether they spoke French or not[5]. We did not expect the cliché of romantic Paris to appear so bluntly in our interviews, but it did. Lucie, 33, is a freelance fashion writer in Paris. She initially came to Paris to join her husband. She had 'nothing else to do', had learned French before and 'wanted to finish what I started' during her Erasmus in France, and so she came to Paris. Amanda, 26 years old, even came to France without knowing the

language. She and her partner first lived in the South of France with his family in order to teach her French and make it easier for them to settle in Paris. Shaun and Laura have similar stories. Both are married to a French person and both came to Paris after the birth of the first child, as both French partners wanted to be closer to their families. Ethan, 47, married, with two children, has worked for years as a diplomat. His last job was in Dubai. His family stayed in London and, after a few years, he wanted to join them. As his wife was born in Paris and her parents still live in the bourgeois 16th arrondissement, they decided to reunite in Paris. Only the eldest son remained in England, to continue his education ('the English send their kids away for schooling'). Family ties are thus one of the major reasons for our British respondents to move to Paris, even though this move might impede their professional opportunities.

Thus, the British citizens living in Paris that we interviewed see their work position as second rate. While on a higher level, their professional situation can be compared to that of Italian migrants who moved to Paris after the economic crisis. For them, Dubucs et al. (2016:8) found a "poor association between educational credentials and current occupations". In contrast to Italians, our British respondents feel that they might have better job opportunities in their home country. They rate London very highly and have a sense of being away from the real economic capital of Europe. Their status as (upper) middle class would thus be much stronger in London. Family ties are the main reason they do not move to London or another ecomomic center but accept their 'second rate' position in Paris.

French in London: work, aspirations, doing business

The story is quite different for our French middle class respondents in London. Among our respondents, we have a very diverse set of interviewees. Beyond the unavoidable couple of bankers and various investors, we interviewed some professionals (doctors, lawyers, body

work therapist), artists, people working for companies on the internet, designers, wine merchants, hairdresser, various types of consultants. Our respondents are thus neither only highly skilled bankers nor only young students who work for long hours for cheap rates and live in crowded housing.

In comparative terms and in accordance with the accounts of officials we interviewed in London, economic reasons play a much more important role for the migration decision of our French than for the British respondents. A classic first set of interviewees was well identified: they are in London because of Inter Company Transfers (ICT) and/or with expatriate contracts[6] and that's much more common than UK staff sent to Paris in our sample. They are mostly male professionals who went to London with their family. Another important group are those men and women who have decided to go to London to open their own business, working in domains such as fashion, real estate, wine marketing, graphics and IT. Their discourse about London reflects classic narratives about the UK and London administration compared to the French one, as providing a much more favourable context for entrepreneurs. This echoes a classic argument among French business elites and newspapers. More precisely, the respondents argue that the legal regulations around opening one's own business are much more relaxed in the UK than in France. Taxes are lower than in France, and only deduced from actual profit, which creates a business culture that allows for trial and error. The business culture thus seems to be much more open in the UK. Marie, 36 years, freelance female legal advisor explains: '*Taxes make it easier to open one's firm….I have to be honest, I don't stay (in London) for this but that's why I do not come back to France*'. Thomas, 34 years old and entrepreneur in the web industry, points out one of the main differences between being an entrepreneur in the UK versus in France, in a classic statement about the right wing

representation of the two cities '*Success is viewed as a strength in the UK, compared to Paris where it is not so good to be successful. (…) People get jealous and as an entrepreneur people think that you are basically having slaves working for you*'.

For the French, employees in the banking sector, just as for young entrepreneurs, London is the place to be. The openness for business is also related to ethnic origin, a point also forcefully put forward by Huc-Hepher and Drake (2013) within their sample. For Madi, the only French respondent with North-African origin in our sample, being in London is seen as a liberating experience as he is not seen as the 'Arab'. Madi has been in London for 15 years and opened his own restaurant in South Kensington, close to the French school. He has grown up in a Paris *banlieue* (working class suburban high rise estate) and learned early in school that children like him will not make it far in life. '*That was too much. Because in France (…) I come from the banlieue, they made us believe that succeeding means making 800 Euros. They wanted to teach us that we should be happy with only little. But if you come here (i.e. London), if you want to make a million, you can make a million*'.

➔ *Compare to Huc-Hepher!!!*

Adding to the advantage of London is also its multicultural character and the openness of people. This stands in stark contrast to the view of Paris, which is seen by the British migrants as provincial. This is not necessarily a disadvantage, but Paris has less the feeling of an open and multicultural world city and this gets reflected in the attitudes of the Parisians, as viewed by the British respondents (see below).

Overall, our French middle class respondents in London express a strong sense of satisfaction: they are succeeding in the economic capital of Europe, they work with excellent professionals from all over the world. They express not just a sense of satisfaction but also a sense of

superiority vis à vis French middle classes. In terms of class boundaries (Lamont and Duvoux 2014), they feel part of this economically successful class of professionals in London.

Lifestyle and residential choice: enjoying the French life in Paris… and in London

In recent years, an increasing number of studies have focused on people's identification with place, often the neighbourhood. Bourdieu (1991) has claimed that people try to mirror their social status in space. Savage and colleagues (2005) argue that the neighbourhood is among the most important identifiers of who you are. In Paris, Lyon, Madrid and Milan, managers are highly rooted in their neighbourhood (Andreotti, Le Galès, and Fuentes 2015). And in Berlin, middle class Turkish-Germans display high symbolic neighbourhood use (Barwick 2016). Moreover, housing is a major dimension of inequality and where one lives and in what kind of building is major reflection of class status and membership. Both Paris and London are 'superstart cities' (Le Galès und Pierson 2019) whose high attractiveness vor international migrants is mirrored in a very tight housing market, which often constrains choice. Thus, choosing a neighbourhood where one can make oneself feel at home, can be quite difficult in the two cities.

Two major points are derived from our analysis. First, our French respondents seem rather satisfied with their life in London for two reasons: they live the Paris lifestyle (dinners, going out, seeing lots of friends and family, mostly French) and they have the feeling that the rest of the population in London rates them as a prestigious group associated with good food, culture and all the clichés related to the French.

In general, the French respondents are highly satisfied with their life in London. They characterize London as a multicultural and highly diverse city, they find people to be very open

and tolerant, and they find that Londoners have a certain mindset that involves that people do not take themselves too seriously. As already mentioned, the professional opportunities are highly valued, just as are the abundant cultural offers. While the French respondents thus highly value London, many continue to live a 'French lifestyle'. This is particularly obvious for those who came to London as expats/ITCs with their family and settled close to a French school, such as South Kensington (see below). Walking around in that neighbourhood, one hears primarily French. Ordering a coffee in French, buying a French book, or going to see a French theatre piece is no challenge in that neighbourhood. But even those French respondents who draw a clear boundary towards 'those in South Kensington' often socialize in French circles, such as the meeting for French businesspeople in London. Moreover, various comments reveal that the distance of the French respondents towards the British pub culture. While some respondents bemoaned the difficulty of making local friends, they also acknowledged that it might be their own fault as they find the pub culture very superfluous and prefer to invite friends over for dinner and wine. These, then, are mostly French friends.

The British citizens in Paris that we interviewed, by contrast mention a different combination: one the one hand, they very much enjoy their 'French lifestyle': buying food in the food market, dining out, seeing friends and family, going out, walking in the streets. They are very positive about their lifestyle. But they complain about the locals for one particular reason: they feel that the Parisians have no respect, admiration, or esteem for them. In terms of prestige, they make the point that the English in Paris are not well considered – a feeling that many foreigners share (REF). The most negative factor about Paris was therefore the Parisians, who are considered as being very rude, negative, aggressive. Asked about the disadvantages of living in Paris, '*the Parisians'* became a standard answer. Nathalie who has been in Paris since 2010 claims that '*people are the hardest thing'*. Interestingly, this is also echoed by

several of our French respondents in London, for whom the 'Parisians' were a reason to move across the channel.

For the British respondents, not only do 'the Parisians' complicate the development of a feeling of home, but the slow and complicated bureaucracy adds another layer of difficulty. The many documents that are necessary for getting an apartment is just one example of the bureaucracy in France which is seen as inefficient by the British respondents.

This leads to the issue of housing, which is a difficult issue in both cases. In Paris and even more so in London the housing market is very tight, and rent per square meter is among the highest in Europe. This limits housing and neighbourhood choice, particularly in Paris. To rent an apartment in London, only the rent and security deposit are required. In Paris, however, a potential renter needs an employment contract, the last three salary slips, and a French guarantor, who has to be either a home owner or have a salary that is at least three times the rent. For newcomers in France, it is usually very hard to come up with all these documents. They thus face difficulties in the housing market and take the first apartment that they can get.

Freddie, 55 and English teacher, came to Paris as a student. At that time, he found a 'chambre de bonne', a small room under the roof, also called shoebox room. Due to the tight housing market, he has been living there since. His plan is to finally buy his own apartment in Paris and move out of the shoebox room. Joseph faced a different problem. He is divorced, but regularly sees his daughter. Due to a court ruling, he had to find a place for himself that provided two bedrooms to have a room for his daughter when she visits him. In Paris, however, finding a two-bedroom apartment for a single person is expensive, as in most dynamic cities. He now lives in the Northern part of Paris, and calls his neighbourhood *'loud, noisy, polluted'*. For those who already knew someone in Paris or joined their partner in the city, these already existing

social networks proved to be crucial in finding an apartment. Here again, however, the idea is to find an apartment at all, not to find an apartment in a particular neighbourhood. This is a classic result about Paris (Andreotti, Le Galès and Fuentes 2015). Many foreigners and Parisians alike see Paris as Paris city council, i.e. the dense core with all the services and metro. For many of them, with differences of course, the key point is to live 'intra muros', i.e. within the city itself, something that has been found for other migrant groups as well, such as Italians (Dubucs u. a. 2016). Of course they want to avoid a couple of neighbourhoods or have preferences for some of them but what is essential is to live 'dans Paris' and not in the suburbs[7]. So the choice of neighbourhood is seen as less crucial and often our interviewees declare they are ready to live in another one.

By contrast in London where the inner core is less distinctive, even though the rent prices are even higher than in Paris, most respondents chose their neighbourhood very precisely. The younger ones within the sample and those without children mostly live in trendy inner-city neighbourhoods such as Islington or Brixton. They value these districts' centrality, the availability of cafes, bars and shops. Some others chose to move to the outer boroughs of London, mostly for financial reasons. For the same price, you get a much bigger apartment in an outer borough than in the inner city.

In both cities, school considerations were a major factor in the residential choice for those respondents with children. Meanwhile, the importance of the educational infrastructure for residential choice, particularly for middle classes, is well demonstrated (Butler and Hamnett 2011; Butler and Robson 2003). In London, Paris, Berlin and other large cities, middle class families base their housing choice on the available educational infrastructure (Oberti 2007).

Often, however, their housing preference – living in a diverse, former working class neighbourhood – clash with their educational preferences . Strategies of evasion that have been demonstrated for the middle classes, such as sending the children to private schools or to state schools outside the catchment area, are harder in a different country where one has less local knowledge about the school system. Many of our British and French respondents with children therefore chose the neighbourhood based on the presence of their school of choice. Thereby, most of the British and French respondents with school-age children wanted to keep their children in the respective own national school system, due to a combination of four factors: little knowledge about the local school system, insufficient language skills of the children, assurance of continuity for the children, and uncertainty regarding the length of stay in the other country and hence an unwillingness to change the school system.

In London, the oldest French school is the *lycée* Charles de Gaulle in South Kensington, a very French-dominated neighborhood. A new French high school has opened in 2011 in Kentish Town. This school has been partly financed by the French bank BNP, through which it saves a few places for the children of their French employees who come to London as ICTs.

For the French in London who chose the neighbourhood based on its educational infrastructure, quite a few argued that a disadvantage is the high share of other French residents. Felix lives in Clapham, close to a bi-lingual school. He is very fond of his neighbourhood but does not like the fact that there are too many French residents. Suzie says the same about South Kensington. She is one of the three travelling wives in our sample and the only one who is not so happy about living with too many other French residents. She is also the only one looking for a new job in London. For the other travelling wives, living in close proximity to other French nationals and close to typical French cafes, bistros, or a French bookshop has clear advantages, particularly for meeting new people and building a local

network (cf. Ryan und Mulholland 2014).

Overall then, living in a neighbourhood with a high share of co-nationals is seen both positively and negatively. While the French respondents know well that it may impede contact to the natives, living in a French community gives a feeling of home, away from home. This community feeling and the educational security also make up for the high rent prices particularly in South Kensington.

The British nationals we interviewed in Paris evaluate their neighbourhood in similar ways. They particularly stress the 'neighbourhood feeling'. An advantage of Paris is that the city is made up of many small neighbourhoods, all of which provide bakeries, boutiques, bars, cafes and many cultural attractions. Montmartre – the neighbourhood made famous through the film *Amélie* – is described by its British inhabitants the neighbourhood with the most authentic Paris feeling.

The big difference compared to the French in London is that, with the exception of the Western suburbs of Paris, there is no single neighbourhood with a considerable share of British nationals. While there are British pubs and British bookshops, they are not concentrated within one particular area. Even in the Western suburbs, there is rather an English-speaking than a British community, as the 'British' school is frequented by other English-speaking nationals as well,. Despite its location outside the inner ring, thr British respondents who live around the British school, still see their place of living as positive. It is quiet, has many green space, and it is still close enough to the centre of Paris. Moreover, in clear contrast to Paris intra-muros, the area around the school is characterized by detached family homes, not small and crowded apartment buildings. Thus, the British respondents living in the Western suburb are the only ones for whom the neighbourhood and their housing

status reflects the (upper) middle class status.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the migration motives and daily life experiences of middle class French nationals in London and middle class British nationals in Paris shows clear differences. Even though all our respondents belong to a broad transnational middle class, there are clear differences regarding middle class practices between the two groups and cities.

The French respondents wanted to go to London, and they are quite successful and believe in the British business model. They have the feeling of having the best of both worlds: as successful professionals they live and work in the economic capital of Europe, a competitive global cosmopolitan metropolis, which acts as a strong evidence of what they are worth, and their own qualities. On top of it, they are French in London, hence they have a strong sense of prestige and respect from other groups in London. And they feel at home, as they choose their neighbourhood and spend most of their time within French networks.

In contrast, many of the British respondents moved to Paris due to family reasons, their choice was thus more limited. While they feel at ease with the city and the daily way of life, they resent the lack of prestige and respect from the Parisians and complain about a difficult labour market and work environment. As they are also smaller in number, there is no true British community in the city.

What is true for the city is also true for the neighbourhood. While both cities have a very tight housing market, the bureaucratic effort makes finding an apartment in Paris much more difficult for foreigners than in London.

The French respondents are thus privileged in three ways: most of them truly chose to move to London, they also chose their neighbourhood according to their taste, and they find it much easier to keep their French lifestyle.

The costs of moving across the channel – despite the closeness of the two cities – thus seem to be much higher for the British in Paris than for the French in London. Thus, while Paris and London are the major European metropolitan areas, London clearly is the centre of middle class making in Europe, while Paris remains valued for its way of life, but is criticized for its lack of professional opportunities.

What we did not expect prior to the research was that both the reasons for migration as well as the presentation of life in the two cities are rather stereotypical. London is the economic capital of Europe, a multicultural city where everyone can live in one's own community. Paris is a rather provincial city, valued mostly for its history, beauty and the way of life, but is economically far behind London. These stereotypical depictions, nevertheless, clearly show the importance of the urban scale for the making of a European middle class.

Our interviews also contained a section on networks to analyse the circulations of our respondents. While they are clearly transnational, we wanted to find out the extent of their regular transnationalism, such as going back to their home country and third countries, and having a transnational family and friendship network. In our data, the circulation did not appear as very strong. Thus, the analysis of networks between Paris and London has to be developed further in order to have a clearer sense of the circulations and to identify, possibly, a sense of transnational middle class in the making.

The results may also shed some light on the trauma caused by the Brexit vote. For the British in Paris, Brexit is a disaster and it will likely make their life more difficult. For the moment, it is not even clear whether they will be able to still live and work in Paris (or any other EU

country). For the French in London, Brexit is an utter disaster that has broken their dreams and their self-esteem. Maybe, despite the London vote, parts of British society do not see them with the positive attributes they imagined, but actually resent them. Something of an ideal dream world has been broken by the Brexit vote and the never ending disastrous negotiation.

Notes

1. Not to mention Brexit (that's for the next step of the research)

2. http://www.mediatransports.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Etude-Client%C3%A8le-Eurostar.pdf, last access 18 July 2019

3. See E. Ledain 'Les oubliés de St Pancras's survey', Consulat Général de France à Londes/Centre Charles Peguy, 2010, cited by Huc Hepher and Drake (2013 : 393)

4. As part of the research, we tried to measure themes on twitter conversations between London and Paris that was done by *(name and institution to be added later, due to reasons of anonymity)*. Although our exploration was not very successful, the most common subject for tweets linking individuals in Paris and London was personal relationship and love.

5. We are working on a data base to document business exchanges between Paris and London, including in the world on banking or when a transnational firm (for instance Microsoft) organize its European activities in Europe between several European cities including London or Paris. Large service firms with offices in Paris and London will send staff in the other place for instance

6. According to ongoing research, this is probably changing as many young middle classes families have increased the long term trend of leaving to the immediate surroundings

of Paris, hence the difference between Paris and next door suburbs is in decline for the

new generation, also as the metro lines are now reaching those communes.

Bibliography

Andreotti, Alberta, Patrick Le Galès, und Francisco Javier Moreno Fuentes. 2015. *Globalised minds, roots in the city, upper middle classes in European cities*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Assirelli, Giulia, Carlo Barone, und Ettore Recchi. 2019. „"You Better Move On": Determinants and Labor Market Outcomes of Graduate Migration from Italy". *International Migration Review* 53 (1): 4–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/0197918318767930.

Bagnasco, Arnaldo, und Nicola Negri. 1994. *Classi, Ceti, Persone. Esercizi Di Analisi Sociale Localizzata*. Naples: Liguori. https://bookshop.vitaepensiero.com/scheda-libro/bagnasco-arnaldo-negri-nicola/classi-ceti-persone-esercizi-di-analisi-sociale-localizzata-9788820723392-341092.html.

Barwick, Christine. 2016. *Social Mobility and Neighbourhood Choice: Turkish-Germans in Berlin*. Routledge.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. „Physischer, sozialer und angeeigneter physischer Raum". In *Stadt-Räume*, herausgegeben von Martin Wentz, 25–34. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.

Bridge, Gary. 2006. „It's not just a question of taste: gentrification, the neighbourhood, and cultural capital". *Environment and Planning A* 38 (10): 1965 – 1978. https://doi.org/10.1068/a3853.

Butler, Tim, und Chris Hamnett. 2011. *Ethnicity, Class and Aspiration: Understanding London's New East End*. Policy Press.

Butler, Tim, und Garry Robson. 2003. „Plotting the Middle Classes: Gentrification and Circuits of Education in London". *Housing Studies* 18 (1): 5–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267303032000076812.

Cooper-Richet, Diana. 2018. *La France anglaise, de la Révolution à nos jours*. Fayard. https://www.fayard.fr/histoire/la-france-anglaise-de-la-revolution-nos-jours-9782213661919.

Datta, Ayona. 2009. „Places of everyday cosmopolitanisms: East European construction workers in London". *Environment and Planning A* 41 (2): 353 – 370. https://doi.org/10.1068/a40211.

Dubucs, Hadrien, Thomas Pfirsch, Ettore Recchi, und Camille Schmoll. 2016. „Je suis un Italien de Paris: Italian migrants' incorporation in a European capital city". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 0 (0): 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1249051.

Elliott, Anthony, und John Urry. 2010. *Mobile Lives*. Routledge.

Favell, Adrian. 2008. *Eurostars and Eurocities*. 1 edition. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

———. 2015. *Immigration, Integration and Mobility: New Agendas in Migration Studies*. Colchester: ECPR Press.

Favell, Adrian, und Virginie Guiraudon. 2011. *Sociology of the European Union*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Favell, Adrian, und Ettore Recchi. 2009. *Pioneers of European Integration: Citizenship and Mobility in the EU*. Cheltenham, UK ; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Pub.

Goldthorpe, John H., David Lockwood, Frank Bechhofer, und Jennifer Platt. 1969. *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*. CUP Archive.

Kelly, Debra, und Martyn Cornick. 2013. „A history of the French in London: Liberty, equality, opportunity". London: Institute of Historical Research / University of London. https://www.humanities-digital-library.org/index.php/hdl/catalog/book/frenchinlondon.

King, Russell, Aija Lulle, Francesca Conti, und Dorothea Mueller. 2016. „Eurocity London: A Qualitative Comparison of Graduate Migration from Germany, Italy and Latvia". *Comparative Migration Studies* 4 (Mai): a3. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-016-0023-1.

Lamont, Michèle, und Nicolas Duvoux. 2014. „How Neo-Liberalism has Transformed France's Symbolic Boundaries?" *French Politics, Culture and Society* 32 (2): 57–75.

Lamont, Michèle, und Virág Molnár. 2002. „The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences". *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (1): 167–95. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.28.110601.141107.

Le Galès, Patrick, und Paul Pierson. 2019. „"Superstar Cities" & the Generation of Durable Inequality". *Daedalus* 148 (3): 46–72. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01750.

Mau, Steffen. 2010. *Social Transnationalism: Lifeworlds Beyond The Nation-State*. Taylor & Francis.

Mau, Steffen, Jan Mewes, und Ann Zimmermann. 2008. „Cosmopolitan Attitudes through Transnational Social Practices?" *Global Networks* 8 (1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2008.00183.x.

Oberti, Marco. 2007. *L'école dans la ville*. Presses de Sciences Po. https://www.cairn.info/l-ecole-dans-la-ville--9782724610161.htm.

Préteceille, Edmond. 1995. „Division sociale de l'espace et globalisation. Le cas de la métropole parisienne". *Sociétés Contemporaines* 22 (1): 33–67. https://doi.org/10.3406/socco.1995.1530.

Recchi, Ettore. 2015. *Mobile Europe. The Theory and Practice of Free Movement in the EU*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. http://link.springer.com/10.1057/9781137316028.

Ryan, Louise, und Jon Mulholland. 2013. „Trading Places: French Highly Skilled Migrants Negotiating Mobility and Emplacement In London". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40 (4): 584–600. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2013.787514.

———. 2014. „'Wives Are the Route to Social Life': An Analysis of Family Life and Networking amongst Highly Skilled Migrants in London". *Sociology* 48 (2): 251–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038512475109.

Ryan, Louise, Rosemary Sales, Mary Tilki, und Bernadetta Siara. 2008. „Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital: The Experiences of Recent Polish Migrants in London". *Sociology* 42 (4): 672–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508091622.

Savage, Michael, Gaynor Bagnall, und Brian Longhurst. 2005. *Globalization and belonging*. SAGE.

Schiller, Prof Nina Glick, und Prof Ayse Çağlar. 2009. „Towards a Comparative Theory of Locality in Migration Studies: Migrant Incorporation and City Scale". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (2): 177–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830802586179.

Scott, Sam. 2007. „The community morphology of skilled migration: the changing role of voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in the grounding of British migrant identities in Paris (France)". *Geoforum* 38 (4): 655–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.11.015.

Smith, Michael Peter, und Adrian Favell. 2006. *The Human Face of Global Mobility: International Highly Skilled Migration In Europe, North America And The Asia-Pacific*. Transaction Publishers.