



**HAL**  
open science

# Is gentrification a useful paradigm to analyse social changes in the Paris metropolis?

Edmond Préteceille

► **To cite this version:**

Edmond Préteceille. Is gentrification a useful paradigm to analyse social changes in the Paris metropolis?. *Environment and Planning A*, 2007, 39 (1), pp.10-31. 10.1068/a3970 . hal-03461994

**HAL Id: hal-03461994**

**<https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-03461994>**

Submitted on 1 Dec 2021

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial - NoDerivatives 4.0 International License

**IS GENTRIFICATION A USEFUL PARADIGM  
TO ANALYSE SOCIAL CHANGES IN THE PARIS METROPOLIS ?**

Edmond Préteceille  
Observatoire Sociologique du Changement  
FNSP – CNRS  
27 rue Saint-Guillaume  
75007 PARIS  
FRANCE

Email: [edmond.preteceille@sciencespo.fr](mailto:edmond.preteceille@sciencespo.fr)

**ABSTRACT:**

The category of gentrification has only recently begun to be used for the study of French cities. The process through which working class neighbourhoods became areas of upper middle class residence was earlier discussed as *embourgeoisement*, largely referred to state intervention, and seen as the effect of the permanent preference for central locations of higher categories. The detailed empirical examination of the Paris metropolis shows that such changes have indeed been occurring steadily over the last decades, but that the largest number of neighbourhoods experiencing that change of social profile are to be found in the first ring of *banlieues* and not in the central city. The analysis of the social profile of gentrifiers shows that it differs substantially between areas. Three main types of processes are identified: the first is the expansion of upper class areas into adjacent working class neighbourhoods, with an influx mainly of private sector professionals, managers and engineers; the second is upward social mobility of working class areas, spatially and socially distinct from upper class ones; and the third, which is found in a minority of cases only, resembles more the dominant model of gentrification, with a substantial contribution of professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations.

Since the pioneer work of Ruth Glass, social scientists have produced an abundant literature about gentrification, but contributions on French cities are quite scarce. The word itself has no translation, and the English word has only been used in the last ten years, often with accompanying health warnings and sandwiched between quotation marks.

This does not mean that the issue of upper and middle classes replacing the working class in various neighbourhoods of large cities has not been discussed and studied. Indeed, during the last forty years, many researchers have stressed the significant social change that was under way with the constantly increasing weight of upper class categories in the population of central Paris, and the decrease of that of blue collar workers. The first work of reference on the subject has been that of Coing (1966), which plays a similar landmark role as that of Glass (1964) for London, although it is a monograph of one neighbourhood only. Subsequently, various other sociologists have analysed the process of social restructuring of the Paris metropolis as characterized by an *embourgeoisement* of the central part of the city; social movements in 1968 and after protested against the *rénovation-déportation* (urban renewal – deportation) of the working class, and Henri Lefebvre captured that spirit in his advocacy for the “right to the city” (1968).

It is the case, however, that the detailed analysis of social change and practices in formerly working class neighbourhoods has not been developed as widely as for the British and North American cities. The most often cited book, after Coing’s, is Chalvon-Demersey’s (1984) on the neighbourhood around rue Daguerre, in the XIVth arrondissement of Paris. But it is Bidou, reflecting on her own similar work on the Aligre neighbourhood in the XIIth arrondissement, then on the old centre of Amiens, who first explicitly took up the themes and vocabulary of gentrification from the anglo-american literature, translating a piece by N. Smith in her edited book on *retours en ville* (Bidou 2003).

Is this more limited attention paid to the issue of gentrification in French urban research a sign of its underestimation, as Donzelot (2004) has argued, or of a different way of dealing with it? Are the schemas of analysis of gentrification developed in the UK, USA or Canada relevant for the understanding of social changes in the Paris metropolis? What is the scope of processes corresponding to gentrification, what are the significant differences? The answers to these questions are discussed in this paper based on the results of a detailed empirical analysis of urban social changes in the Paris metropolis during the 1990s<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> The complete presentation of this work can be found in Préteceille, 2003.

## 1. The State, *embourgeoisement* and gentrification

The processes through which upper and upper-middle classes have come to live in formerly working class areas of Paris have been analyzed since the 1960s mostly in relation with State-driven programmes. In urban renewal programmes particularly, public authorities invested heavy resources – juridical, financial, technical – to demolish large decaying housing areas, some of them designated as slums to be cleared since the beginning of the XXth century, and replace them with modern housing neighbourhoods with good infrastructure, and then let private developers take advantage of those dramatic changes to offer housing for middle and upper class customers (cf. Coing, 1966, Duclos 1973; Godard et al. 1973; Lojkine 1972, 1974, Topalov 1973, 1974, 1984). These analyses predate the rent gap theory developed by N. Smith (1996), with a key difference being the more central role played by the State. The cases of urban improvement programmes – whether they focused on historical areas like Marais or were simply housing improvement<sup>2</sup> - were analyzed in a similar perspective.

Here is a first significant difference: French researchers have given a key role to the State when English or American ones saw first of all a market dynamic, whether they favoured a supply-side approach like N. Smith or a demand side one, based on cultural transformations, like S. Zukin (1982) or D. Ley (1996). It has to be noted however that there was a significant difference of period and conjuncture: the aforementioned works on Paris were part of the neo-marxist wave of urban research which developed in the late 1960s, at a time when the State was seen as the key actor in capitalist urban policies<sup>3</sup>. Anglo-American research on gentrification developed more in the 1980s, at a time when neoliberal policies took the lead in the USA with Reagan and the UK with Thatcher, and the market was promoted as the central process. At the same time France had elected a Socialist President, and the rise of neoliberalism was delayed and slower, although it was significant, and particularly in Paris – which had a right wing mayor and was the hottest location for private firms and upper class clients - the role of the private sector, banks and developers, in urban development became more prominent. But this was not reflected in urban research, for various reasons: the anti-marxist revanchist ideology which expanded from the late 1970s disqualified the urban political economy perspective that could have dealt with it; the urban research policies had severe discontinuities which weakened and fragmented the urban research community which had developed; new research perspectives emerged which were closely associated with the narrower orientation of the new *politique de la ville* focused on social problem areas, like poverty, urban exclusion, crises in social housing estates. The few works cited above that looked at gentrification areas came from researchers interested in the new ways of life of the middle classes, and were therefore closer to the demand-side perspective.

A second significant difference can be found in the frequent use of the word *embourgeoisement* to point out the cases of neighbourhoods where upper middle class areas

---

<sup>2</sup> *Sauvegarde du Patrimoine Historique*, for the first, and *opérations programmées d'amélioration de l'habitat* for the second.

<sup>3</sup> For a historical overview in English, see E. Lebas, 1982.

were replacing working class residents. Compared to the use of the word gentrification, it represents a clear difference in the characterization of the social categories active in the process. *Embourgeoisement* means that these categories are considered either to be part of the dominant capitalist class or are aspiring to be part of it; gentrification, through the metaphorical reference to the “gentry”, designates a class which is distinct from the upper class (nobility) and dominated by it, but is also distinct and distant from the lower ones.

Most French authors using the word *embourgeoisement* to describe social changes in central urban areas from the 1960s onwards have been conscious of this and often noted that it was not a satisfactory notion, since a large part of the categories which were engaged in the process could not be considered simply to be part of the capitalist class. The growth of these categories, empirically described in the INSEE’s (official statistical institute) nomenclature as *cadres supérieurs* and later *cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures* (the closest equivalent of these statistical occupation categories would be professionals – we will discuss this later), most of them salaried workers, was the subject of intense sociological debates during the 1970s and 1980s, which stressed their distinctiveness from the upper class<sup>4</sup>.

Could the use of the word gentrification solve the problem, as Bidou (2003) argues? Many are doubtful, because of the implicit categorization which also looks backwards in time, although differently, and because of the fuzziness which can be seen by the many variations in sociological meaning which can be identified in the literature. Instead of answering *a priori*, we will try here a more inductive approach, by looking in detail at the contribution of the diverse upper and upper-middle categories to social change in different working class neighbourhoods. The identification of the significant social structures emerging – new social mixes, new residential distances – counterposed to more general sociological results about changes in status and relation between these categories, should lead to a more informed answer to the question.

A third difference, which may have produced also some reluctance to import the gentrification model, is the recognition that French upper and upper-middle classes, contrary to the Anglo American ones<sup>5</sup>, have always favoured central neighbourhoods for their residence. Therefore the idea of a movement “back to the city” seems inadequate for social categories that never left it. And the process of *embourgeoisement* of working class areas can be traced back to the Haussmann reform which already combined a strong public intervention with that of banks and developers. Although this is not to say that present day processes would be just the continuation of that; *embourgeoisement* was clearly an adequate categorization for those times, it is questionable for the present; recent changes in areas like the Faubourg Saint-Antoine or the canal Saint-Martin cannot be seen as an extension of the traditional upper class areas, *beaux quartiers*, even less as a reprise of *Haussmanisation*.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. for example Grunberg and Mouriaux (1979), Boltanski (1982), Bidou et al. (1983), Bidou (1984), Mendras (1988). For a presentation and discussion of the various perspectives of analysis of the relations between the middle classes and the city in French sociology, see Oberti and Prêteceille (2004).

<sup>5</sup> Although this is not entirely the case, the west/south west of London and parts of Manhattan having long been traditional places of upper class residence.

For all these reasons, it seems useful to understand what is the intensity of the recent changes designated as gentrification, how far they represent continuity or discontinuity from former trends, how spatially specific they are. Having in mind that during the last decades the overall social structure of large metropolises like Paris or London has been characterized by a strong growth of upper and middle categories and a strong decline of blue collar workers, partly compensated by the increase of a new tertiary proletariat<sup>6</sup>.

In the following part of the paper, and before coming back in the conclusion to discussing the relevance of the category, we shall use the word gentrification to designate processes of strong growth of higher social categories in working class neighbourhoods. We shall retain and test three elements of the process which seem to be common to most analyses of gentrification. The first one is the hypothesis of a change in the residential choices of a substantial part of the upper and upper-middles classes, from a preference for suburban locations to a taste for denser urban areas. The second is that those new preferences are mainly focused on central areas. The third is the rapid pace of the subsequent changes, dramatically modifying the social profile of the neighbourhoods from working class to upper-middle class dominance.

## **2. The overall dynamic of residential change of upper and upper-middle classes.**

The INSEE nomenclature of *categories socioprofessionnelles* (CS) is the empirical description of socio-economic categories most widely used in France. It is based on occupation, and classifies the active population in 6 main CS, 31 detailed ones, 540 individual occupations, according to the type of work relations (salaried vs independent), the skills and position in the hierarchy, and the sector of activity. It is the result of a mix of theoretical considerations about classes and hierarchies and institutionalized labour classifications, which has been improved through a dialogue between sociologists and statisticians<sup>7</sup>, and has the advantage of allowing cumulative data because of its systematic use in public statistics but also in many private ones and surveys.

In the present definition of this nomenclature, upper and upper-middle categories belong mainly to the CS3 of *cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures*, to *cadres supérieurs et professions libérales* in the definition prior to 1982. The six sub-categories are the liberal professions (CS31), managers in the civil service (*cadres de la fonction publique*, CS33), professors and literary professions (CS34), professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities (CS35), managers and executives in private firms (*cadres et professions administratives et commerciales des entreprises*, CS37) and engineers and technical professionals in private firms (CS38)<sup>8</sup>. Using CS3 is an evaluation of the total of

---

<sup>6</sup> This has been documented by our work on Paris (Préteceille, 1995, 2003, 2006) as well as C. Hamnett's on London (Hamnett, 1994, 2003) and is quite different from the widespread view of social dualisation strengthened by the "global city" model proposed by S. Sassen (1991).

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed historical presentation, see Desrosières et Thévenot, 1988.

<sup>8</sup> The category of professionals is used here in the French sense, which does not imply the same degree of organisation and control of access it has in the anglo-american meaning ; *cadres* is the typical French category,

upper and upper-middle categories slightly by default because some belong to the CS2 of *indépendants* (non salaried, most of them the *petite bourgeoisie* of very small business owners), namely the minority of large business owners who do not have a salaried status - the majority of large firms top managers do have it. It is also, more widely, an evaluation by excess since a significant part of some categories, like civil servant professionals, professors and scientific and literary professionals, professionals of the media, arts and entertainment, do not belong to the upper or upper-middle class but to the middle-middle ones at best, like secondary school teachers, most young journalists, many people working in the cinema, television, theatre, music activities, all with very precarious work contracts and mediocre wages.

Such an extension into the middle-middle class is acceptable however, at least in the first instance, since the literature often points out that such categories, with high cultural resources and interests but middle or low incomes, are actors in the “first wave” of gentrification (‘pioneers’).

The top line in Figure 1 shows the evolution of the total number of this CS3, in its two successive definitions<sup>9</sup>, in the City of Paris, taken as the central part of the Paris metropolis.

Upper and upper-middle categories have increased their numbers continuously over the period, with only a slight acceleration in the 1980s, when the total active population decreased until 1982, then remained stable. Therefore the hypothesis of their “return to the city” can be excluded without any doubt.

This does not mean however that all upper and upper-middle categories have their residence in the central part of the metropolis. The limited size and the density of occupation of the central space have been such that the growth of these categories has inevitably also taken place outside the central city, in the *banlieue*, where they are today more numerous than in the City of Paris (66% of *cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures* of the metropolis<sup>10</sup> lived outside of Paris in 1999, against 52% of *cadres supérieurs* in 1962).

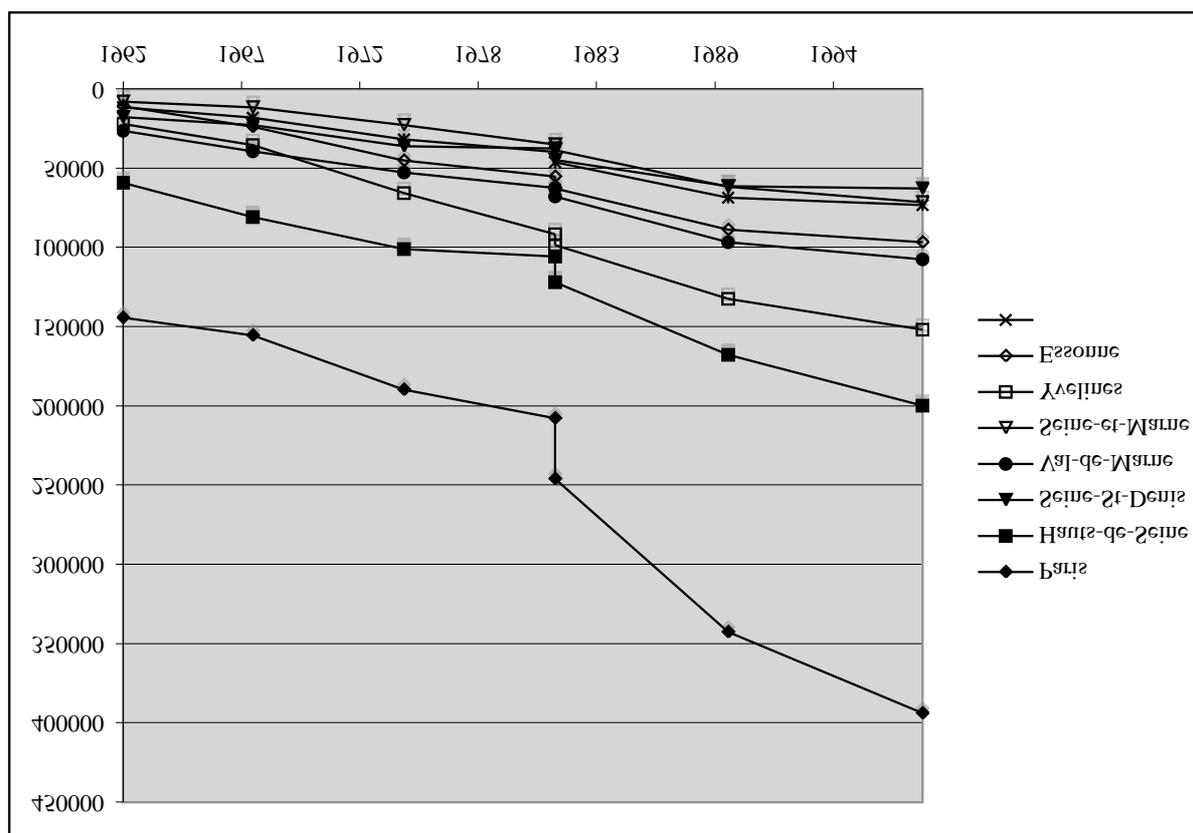
---

which designates a position of authority in the work hierarchy, but is an institutional definition difficult to translate, see Boltanski (1982) for the historical and sociological analysis of that social group.

<sup>9</sup> The small discontinuity in 1982 is mainly due to the addition of the professions in the arts and entertainment, who before were classified in a category of “Others” with the police, the military, the clergy...

<sup>10</sup> The administrative region of *Ile-de-France* is used here as a proxy for the Paris metropolis. The region is divided in 8 *départements* - 3 in the first ring around Paris (Hauts-de-Seine, Seine-Saint-Denis, Val-de-Marne) and 4 in the second ring (Essonne, Seine-et-Marne, Val d’Oise, Yvelines) -, and about 1300 municipalities, the *Ville de Paris* being both a municipality and a *département*.

**Figure 1 : Trends in the distribution of upper and upper-middle categories by *département* of Ile-de-France**



Source : INSEE, recensements de la population, CS3

The discontinuity in 1982 corresponds to a small revision of the nomenclature, cf. supra.

The growth of upper and upper-middle categories has been moderate although continuous in three *départements* of the second ring of suburbs (Essonne, Val d'Oise, Seine-et-Marne) and two of the first ring (Val-de-Marne et Seine-Saint-Denis – the last period showing a stagnation of CS3 for this last *département*).

The growth has been quite intense and also continuous in the two *départements* of Hauts-de-Seine (first ring, west of Paris) and Yvelines (second ring, west of Hauts-de-Seine). But in spite of that, upper and upper-middle categories have constantly grown more rapidly in the central city. Thus the increasingly suburban residence of these categories does not undermine the steady preference for a central residence. It confirms the absence of a “return to the city”, the constantly increased presence of upper and upper-middle categories in central Paris going with an outspread of these categories in the *banlieues*, in the two *départements* west of Paris particularly.

The first component of the gentrification model – the idea of a change of residential preferences of upper and upper-middle categories in favour of central locations – is therefore invalid.

### 3. Gentrification : a specific change in central working class neighbourhoods?

To explore the validity of this second component of the model, we shall rely on the statistical analysis of the transformation of socioeconomic profiles of neighbourhoods of the Paris metropolis between 1990 et 1999 (Préteceille, 2003). This was done in two steps. The first was a cluster analysis of neighbourhoods<sup>11</sup> in 1990 using the detailed *catégories socioprofessionnelles* crossed with labour situation (employed or not) and job stability<sup>12</sup>. It produced a set of 18 clusters divided in three groups: upper types, middle-mixed types, working class types; it has to be noted that most of the 18 clusters are mixed to some extent, except the four extreme ones which are strongly polarized - the two most exclusively upper-class, and the two most working-class. The second was a cluster analysis of social profile changes of those neighbourhoods between the last two censuses of 1990 and 1999, which produced a set of 11 cluster divided in four groups: strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories ( $\Delta S$ ), moderate growth of middle categories and casual jobs ( $\Delta M$ ), decrease of private firm professionals, stability of blue collar workers and increase of casual jobs ( $\Delta O$ ), increase of unemployment, casual jobs and personal service workers and decrease of all other stable occupations ( $\Delta C$ ).<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1 : Profile changes in 1990 socioeconomic clusters of IRIS Ile-de-France  
% of total active population**

Type 1990\ Type of change 1990-99	$\Delta S$	$\Delta M$	$\Delta O$	$\Delta C$	Total
Upper types	6,2%	2,1%	4,5%	0,5%	13,3%
Middle-mixed types	11,2%	6,0%	6,0%	3,0%	26,3%
Working-class types	<b>10,7%</b>	17,2%	10,9%	21,5%	60,4%
Total	28,2%	25,3%	21,5%	25,0%	100,0%

To characterize the changes in a more synthetic way, we will use the aggregate version of the two cluster analyses, which are crossed in table 1.

The case which best corresponds to the general idea of gentrification is that of initially working-class types (3<sup>rd</sup> line) having experienced a strong influx of upper and upper-middle categories (1<sup>st</sup> column). There are 500 neighbourhoods (IRIS) in that case (out of 2636 in the working-class types in 1990, and a total of 4390) representing 18%, almost 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the active population of working-class neighbourhoods, and 11% of the total active population. This case therefore represents a minority of the trajectory of working-class neighbourhoods, but a significant one.

<sup>11</sup> We used as a definition of neighbourhoods the division of urban space into IRIS (*îlots regroupés pour l'information statistique* – areas of 2000 inhabitants on average) introduced by INSEE for the 1999 census. These areas, being smaller than municipalities and more homogenous in size, are more adequate to study the issues of segregation and gentrification. Only the IRIS with more than 400 active persons have been used, the socioeconomic data for the census being computed on a 1/4th sample.

<sup>12</sup> These additional variables were introduced because casualisation of labour – *précarité in French* – and long term unemployment are two major changes in the labour market affecting the quality of the CS categorization to describe the social structure. Since 1990, census data includes a variable describing the stability/casualisation of the job.

<sup>13</sup> Detailed presentation of the clusters and methods in Préteceille (2003).

It also represent a significant contribution to the spatial distribution of the growth of upper and upper-middle categories, since 35,2%, more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of its total, has taken place in this group of 500 working class neighbourhoods experiencing the most rapid and contrasted change, as can be seen in table 2.

**Table 2 : Profile changes in 1990 socioeconomic clusters of IRIS Ile-de-France  
% of the growth of *cadres et professions intellectuelles supérieures***

Type 1990\Type of change 1990-99	$\Delta S$	$\Delta M$	$\Delta O$	$\Delta C$	Total
Upper types	15,2%	1,4%	-2,2%	0,0%	14,3%
Middle-mixed types	37,0%	5,6%	-0,3%	0,2%	42,4%
Working-class types	<b>35,2%</b>	13,2%	-0,5%	-4,5%	43,3%
Total	87,3%	20,1%	-3,1%	-4,4%	100,0%

There is a smaller but not negligible share of the growth of upper and upper-middle categories (13,2%) in another set of working class neighbourhoods, those which have experienced a moderate growth of middle categories and casual jobs (2<sup>nd</sup> column). But the largest part of the growth however has taken place in other modalities: 14% in the group of upper types, and 42% in that of middle-mixed types.

Where are those 500 working-class neighbourhoods which are the best candidates to the gentrification model, and what is their contribution to social change in the metropolis?

The first result is that the contribution of gentrifying working class neighbourhoods of the central city of Paris is quite limited, with 7500 more members of upper and upper-middle categories, compared to 14000 in the same modality in Hauts-de-Seine, 6500 in Yvelines, almost 4000 in Val-de-Marne. If gentrification, in the wider sense of rapid social upgrading of working class areas, is a significant element in the general trends of change of the metropolis, it is not predominantly focused on its central part, and takes place more in *banlieues* than in Paris.

A second result is that the contribution of the closest modality which is that of working class areas experiencing a moderate growth of middle categories and casual jobs, is quite low.

A third result is that the strongest growth of upper and upper-middle categories in the central city of Paris has taken place in the middle-mixed types first of all, and secondly in the upper types: 73% has occurred in the 400 IRIS of the upper and middle-mixed groups experiencing a strong growth of upper categories.

The total number of neighbourhoods corresponding to gentrification in the complete definition is thus quite small (63 IRIS) and they have a limited contribution to the growth of upper and upper-middle categories in Paris (16%).

How can we explain such a contrast with the widespread image of gentrification transforming dramatically the social landscape of Paris?

The first element of the answer is that there were not many truly working class neighbourhoods left in 1990 – only 177 IRIS out of 872 for Paris. Among those however the proportion of gentrifying neighbourhoods is quite significant, more than a third, a proportion

higher than in the rest of the metropolis, which was one fifth. In other words, gentrification is not a very significant element of change in Paris as a whole, but it is significant for the few remaining working class neighbourhoods.

A second element of the answer is that the widespread image of gentrification encompasses many areas which are still seen as working class neighbourhoods, which were so in the past, but have ceased to be for a decade at least. Gentrification is thus used inappropriately to describe social change in areas which already belong to the middle-mixed types – it is in that group, as we have seen, that the growth of upper and upper-middle categories has been the most intense. In the XVIIIth arrondissement for example, in the north, the large majority of IRIS that have experienced a strong growth of those categories were classified as middle-mixed in 1990. We know from data at a less detailed scale that many of them were working class neighbourhoods decades earlier<sup>14</sup>. It can be concluded that gentrification does take place in Paris, but that it is a much slower, more continuous and more progressive process than the Anglo-American model argues.

Another interesting result that the map shows has to do with the location of those few truly gentrifying neighbourhoods. Almost all of them are contiguous with middle-mixed or upper areas, in such a way that their change of profile is clearly an incorporation into those wider areas stretching out their borders – and not the conquest of new territories starting from outposts, as part of the literature puts it.

#### **4. Gentrification in the suburbs?**

As we mentioned already, the vast majority (437 out of 500 IRIS) of the working class neighbourhoods experiencing a strong increase of upper and upper-middle class categories are to be found out of the Ville de Paris, in the *banlieues*<sup>15</sup>. The *département* most concerned, and that received the largest part of the growth of those categories, is that of Hauts-de-Seine, with 98 IRIS, and 11% of the total growth of upper and upper-middle class categories (against 63 and 6% for Paris). Yvelines, west of it, comes next, with 79 IRIS and 5.2%, then Val de Marne with 67 IRIS et 4.6%, and Essonne with 59 IRIS and 3.2%. This type of social transformation of working class areas is undoubtedly predominantly suburban, the growth of upper and upper-middle class categories in such areas in the four *départements* mentioned representing four times that inside Paris.

The proportion of such neighbourhoods among working class ones is about one third in Hauts-de-Seine, like in Paris. It is only one fifth in Yvelines and Val-de-Marne. And Seine-Saint-Denis, the most working class *département*, is also the one less concerned, with only one tenth of its 555 working class IRIS.

---

<sup>14</sup> The division in IRIS cannot be used for census data prior to 1990. The most detailed division available was that of the 80 *quartiers* of Paris that we used in previous work (Préteceille, 2000, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> Which by the way shows how wrong is the unified image of the *banlieue* given by the media, who consider it as equivalent of run-down public housing estates for unemployed poor immigrants...

Within the *département* of Hauts-de-Seine, the cases of most rapid growth of upper and upper-middle class categories – which are neither gentrification in the usual sense because it is not in the central city, nor suburbanisation of upper-middle classes because this *département*, like the other two in the first ring, is a dense urban area close to the central city – are to be found in the municipalities of Levallois-Perret (+2684), Rueil-Malmaison (+1452), Suresnes (+1172), Boulogne-Billancourt (+1016), Issy-les-Moulineaux (+860), Puteaux (+828), Asnières (+796), Antony (+704). These are all municipalities where neighbourhoods of the upper and middle-mixed groups are predominant, and they show the same type of location of gentrifying neighbourhoods observed in Paris, i.e. and incorporation into compact upper or mixed areas of adjacent working class neighbourhoods.

This is particularly clear in the central area of the *département*, where those gentrifying neighbourhoods either enlarge the preexisting upper areas, or contribute to their homogeneity by rubbing off the few remaining working class areas within. A similar trend can be observed in the south of the *département*, around the municipality of Sceaux. By contrast, there is not one single gentrifying IRIS to be found in the northern part, which is predominantly a working class area, like the municipality of Gennevilliers.

In the Val-de-Marne *département*, the second of the first ring, south-east of Paris, there is a similar but smaller expansion of the compact upper and middle-mixed areas situated around the park of Vincennes, or along the valley of the river Marne.

In the predominantly working class areas of the west-centre of Val-de-Marne and of Seine-Saint-Denis – the third *département* of the first ring, north-east of Paris – the less numerous cases of gentrifying IRIS are more scattered, except for some clustering in the south-east of Seine-Saint-Denis – which is fact corresponds to the previous logic of expansion of upper and middle-mixed areas of Vincennes and Paris – and some in the centre of Seine-Saint-Denis, on a Les Lilas-Tremblay-en-France axis – where the few more *bourgeois* municipalities of the *département*, like Le Raincy, are to be found.

In the second ring of suburbs, the *département* of Yvelines, in the west, has the highest number of gentrifying IRIS and the strongest contribution to the growth of upper and upper-middle class categories. Map 2 shows that, in that ring, they are mainly located according to two logics. The first is in the continuity of compact upper and middle-mixed areas in the centre-east of Yvelines and is in fact the same phenomenon observed already in the adjacent Hauts-de-Seine, the expansion of relatively dense upper class urban areas. The second is a dispersion of more isolated cases in outer suburban areas, with some more limited clustering along the Seine valley, and the Oise valley in the north, around the new town of Cergy-Pontoise, and no neighbourhoods of the upper group close to them. That second type of location can be considered as closer to suburbanisation of upper-middle classes.

As a whole, we see that there is a predominant logic in the location of gentrifying IRIS, which is the expansion of compact upper and middle-mixed areas into adjacent working-class areas; and a distinct one, significant but minority, which is of scattered neighbourhoods

creating new small poles of upper and upper-middle class concentration in predominantly middle-mixed and working class areas.

The first logic is found mostly in those parts of the metropolis which concentrate the largest share of upper and upper-middle categories and also the largest share of their growth. These areas are mainly in Paris, Hauts-de-Seine and Yvelines, all three *départments* which have in common that the majority of the growth of upper and upper-middle class categories takes place there not in gentrifying working class areas but in neighbourhoods of the upper and middle-mixed types (table 3).

This logic of expansion of dense concentrations of upper and upper-middle class categories is not homogenous however because the areas in the upper group of clusters are not homogenous. Our analysis (Préteceille, 2003) has shown that there are three modalities which present substantial differences in the relative weight of the detailed upper categories. One sub-group has a clear dominance of upper categories linked to private firms and liberal professions, and can be considered as the real spaces of the bourgeoisie (the XVIth and VIIth *arrondissements* and Neuilly-sur-Seine, for example). From a spatial point of view, the expansion of those spaces can thus be correctly named as *embourgeoisement*. A second sub-group has some predominance of the more intellectual upper categories, although the private business categories and liberal professions are very present too (the Vth and VIth *arrondissements* for example); the expansion of these areas is less clearly *embourgeoisement* in the classic sense. The third sub-group has more intellectual categories and categories in the media, artistic and entertainment activities, a smaller presence of private firms professionals and managers, and more people with casual jobs; the expansion of these areas is closer to the classic narrative of culture-lead gentrification, and could certainly not be called *embourgeoisement* – no real bourgeois would even envisage a residence in areas like Belleville or La Goutte d'Or or Montreuil. Again, this is from a spatial point of view, considering the dominant profile of the upper status areas into which those gentrifying neighbourhoods are being integrated. We will return to this discussion later from a social point of view, by discussing the social profile of the gentrifiers.

The second logic in the location of gentrifying neighbourhoods, with a smaller weight than the former, is quite different, since it is that of scattered neighbourhoods representing isolated spots of gentrification in predominantly working class and middle-mixed areas with no upper areas close by. A few of them are to be found in the north-east of Paris, but most are in the suburbs. They represent a scattered process of social upgrading of these areas which, again from a spatial point of view, seems to have little to do with either *embourgeoisement* or culture-lead gentrification. Some of them, being in the outer areas of the urban region, with a low density, are clearly cases of suburbanisation of upper-middle classes – but they are not very numerous.

## 5. Social housing against gentrification ?

In the analysis of gentrification processes, the dynamics of housing markets play an important role, a major one when they are not the result of intense public interventions. The existence of formerly middle-class residences in bad condition, able to provide large apartments with architectural and historical qualities when renovated, or of industrial buildings or warehouses that can be converted into lofts, are often seen as positive factors in the more cultural, demand-side interpretation. Brownfield areas which can be emptied to build entirely new neighbourhoods are positive factors of a different kind, corresponding more to the supply-side interpretation but also to a different kind of cultural orientations for the customers. There are no data bases on the qualities of the housing stock or use of land which would allow a statistical exploration of those factors, which can only be seen at work through qualitative studies of local processes. There is, however, data on another aspect of the housing stock, the distribution of social housing (called HLM, *habitations à loyer modéré*, i.e. moderate rent housing), which can be considered a priori as a negative factor regarding potential gentrification since it stabilizes the presence of modest or low income groups. Furthermore, the image of social housing is often associated with poverty, unemployment and immigration, a stigmatizing vision not very attractive for gentrifiers.

Table 4 gives the distribution of neighbourhoods which have seen a strong increase or upper and upper-middle categories according to the share of the resident population in social housing<sup>16</sup>.

**Table 4: Share of social housing residents in 1999 in working class neighbourhoods of the Paris metropolis with a strong growth of *cadres supérieurs* by *département***

<i>Département</i>	0%	0.1% to 10%	10% to 25%	25% to 50%	50% to 75%	>75%	Total gentrif
Paris	1	24	13	15	8	2	63
Hauts-de-Seine	4	26	25	27	14	2	98
Yvelines	16	30	13	15	2	1	77
Val-de-Marne	3	19	21	18	4	2	67
Essonne	17	14	10	14	6	1	62
Val-d'Oise	6	17	8	9	1	1	42
Seine-et-Marne	19	9	5	3	2	1	39
Seine-Saint-Denis	7	14	10	9	8	2	50
Total	73	153	105	110	45	12	498

Source: INSEE – Recensement général de la population 1999, data by IRIS that belonged to the working class clusters in 1999

In the central city of Paris, out of 63 neighbourhoods concerned, only 10 had more than 50% social housing residents. Since there were a total of 74 working class neighbourhoods with more than 50% social housing residents, only a small minority have been touched by gentrification, and the contribution of such neighbourhoods to gentrification is quite small.

<sup>16</sup> This data by IRIS is available for 1999 only. Contrary to many western countries, France has maintained a social housing policy, but it was slowed down substantially during the 1990s, although there were no massive privatizations or destructions as in other cases. Therefore it can reasonably be considered that the 1999 data account for a stable situation over the 1990s.

In contrast, among the 83 working class neighbourhoods with less than 50% social housing residents, the majority, 53, have experienced gentrification.

There is thus confirmation that a strong presence of social housing is an obstacle to gentrification. And this is not specific to the central city. A similar situation can be observed in the *département* of Hauts-de-Seine, with only 16 neighbourhoods experiencing a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories out of the 113 working class ones with more than 50% social housing, or in that of Val-de-Marne with 6 out of 59

The proportion is even smaller in Seine-Saint-Denis and much smaller in the second ring of suburbs. This is not surprising since in the outer *départements* such neighbourhoods, can hardly be attractive for upper and upper-middle classes, considering the stigmatizing image of public housing and the often low quality of the urban environment and urban landscape in which it has been built there. Whereas inside Paris and to a lesser degree in the first ring of suburbs, especially in the municipalities close to Paris, the location advantages or potential qualities of the urban environment can be strong enough to allow gentrification in a number of areas despite the dominant presence of social housing. It should be added that in the more central urban locations, a substantial part of the public housing stock has a more mixed population and does not carry such a negative image.

In that central part of the metropolis, if the predominant weight of social housing in a neighbourhood does constitute an obstacle to gentrification because of the type of housing and tenure, the mere presence of social housing in neighbourhoods where it is mixed with other types of housing does not discourage gentrification. This can be seen in the much larger number and proportion of working class neighbourhoods with 25 to 50% social housing which experience a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories.

## **6. Who are the gentrifiers ?**

A widespread narrative of gentrification processes gives an active role to upper-middle categories in artistic and intellectual occupations, with high cultural resources and interests but average or low incomes, who would find interesting and cheap spaces for housing and for developing cultural activities in working class areas relatively close to the central part of the city, whose history and traditional neighbourhood culture they would also value positively. Their increasing presence and investment would then result in a physical and symbolic transformation of the neighbourhood making it progressively attractive for other upper-middle and upper occupation groups less culture oriented but with higher incomes, first as consumers of trendy bars, restaurants, art galleries and music places, then as dwellers, and simultaneously to developers interested in exploiting the rent gap (Smith, 1996) through upgrading and marketing the housing stock.

In most empirical analyses of gentrification cases however, the sociological characterization of the actors involved is fuzzy, and fluctuating from one case to the other. We

will attempt here to specify the contribution of the various upper and upper-middle categories according to the nomenclature of *categories socioprofessionnelles* presented before.

The analysis of the overall change in the socio-spatial structure of the Paris metropolis shows that managers and executives in private firms (CS37) and engineers and technical professionals in private firms (CS38) are the categories contributing most to the polarisation trend increasing the social distance between upper status areas and working class areas (Préteceille, 2003, p. 90 and following). This is a general result and does not necessarily apply to those working class neighbourhoods we are considering here. Table 5 shows the absolute variation between 1990 and 1999 for each category, by *département*, for the whole of neighbourhoods under discussion (TotalOΔS), for the whole of neighbourhoods with a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories (Total ΔS) and in the whole metropolis.

The sub-group of working class neighbourhoods with a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories (OΔS) accounts for 40% of the total growth of those categories in the Paris metropolis, and shows a distribution of the variations across categories slightly different from the whole group of neighbourhoods experiencing a similar change (ΔS). Categories with the strongest absolute increase are also managers and executives in private firms and engineers and technical professionals in private firms, but in relative terms of the share of total variation in the group (ΔS) it is highest for managers in civil service, professors and literary and scientific professions, and even more for professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities. This slight inflexion is not sufficient to validate the current commonly held narrative of gentrification giving the pioneer role to intellectuals, artists and culture oriented professionals, since the corresponding categories only account for 20% of the total growth of upper categories in the sub-group of neighbourhoods, against 56% for engineers and private firm professionals.

**Table 5. Variations of CS3 by *département* in working class neighbourhoods having experienced a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories 1990-99**

CS\département <sup>v</sup>	75	92	78	94	91	95	77	93	TotalOΔS	Total ΔS	Total
Liberal professions (non sal.)	466	630	210	479	97	142	-44	81	2061	5381	9950
Liberal prof. (sal.)	131	56	48	49	-5	4	7	8	298	1529	2958
Managers civil service	610	953	464	804	414	167	205	155	3772	7383	13169
Profess. & litter. & scientif. prof.	847	460	756	557	337	170	354	143	3624	6492	9427
Prof. info., arts & untertainment	407	523	26	57	105	59	38	-2	1213	-902	-2979
Manag. & priv. firm exec..	1078	4516	1663	1285	856	860	400	131	10789	27382	7585
Eng. & tech. prof. in priv. firms	1499	4829	2459	1648	1597	890	721	520	14163	35878	30329
Professional in casual positions	1837	1245	550	673	288	215	157	502	5467	19192	38507
Unemployed professionnals	691	684	376	265	309	137	118	250	2830	7456	16757
Total CS3	7566	13896	6552	5817	3998	2644	1956	1788	44217	109791	125703
Total active pop.	2636	13612	6107	7505	6799	6658	5301	808	49426	77889	111187

This is particularly clear for professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities, supposed to be the core of gentrification pioneers. They decrease in numbers in the whole group of neighbourhoods where upper and upper-middle categories grow, and increase

<sup>17</sup> The code numbers for the *départements* are the following : Paris 75, Hauts-de-Seine 92, Yvelines 78, Val-de-Marne 94, Essonne 91, Val-d'Oise 95, Seine-et-Marne 77, Seine-Saint-Denis 93).

only in the subgroup of working-class ones – but that represents only 1217 persons, 3% only of the growth of upper and upper-middle categories in those places.

This result is fragile however because the figures relate only to those with a stable job, whereas that category is known for a strong incidence of casualisation of labour. In 1999, 50% of active persons classified as professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities (CS35) had a casual job, against 12% of professors and literary and scientific professions, 9% of managers in civil service and 4% for engineers and private firm professionals. For the whole metropolis, persons in CS35 with a stable job decreased 6% between 1990 and 1999, whereas those with a casual job increased 75% and those unemployed 42%.

For statistical reasons, stable and casual jobs cannot be distinguished at the neighbourhood level<sup>18</sup>, but only for larger units, *départements*, *municipalities*, *arrondissements* and *quartiers* of Paris. The share of CS35 casual jobs among all CS3 casual jobs is 66% for the whole metropolis, going up to 77% for Paris, followed by Seine-Saint-Denis (67%), Seine-et-Marne (59%), Val-de-Marne (57%) and Hauts-de-Seine (55%).

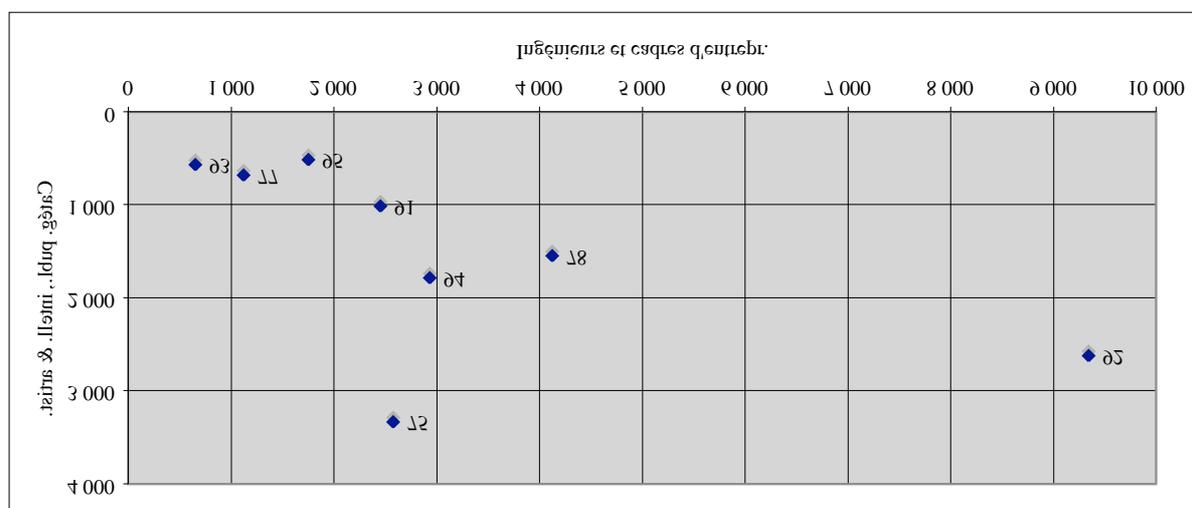
For the metropolis, then, our general result is confirmed: the total growth of public sector, intellectual, artistic and entertainment professionals (CS33, 34, 35) is about 12500, only about half that of engineers and private firm professionals, 25000. But the very uneven distribution of the different categories and their growth among the various parts of the metropolis – 54% of persons in CS35 with a job live in Paris, and 13% in Hauts-de-Seine - calls for a more detailed spatial analysis. Inside Paris, the total growth of public sector, intellectual, artistic and entertainment professionals can be estimated to between 3300 and 3700 (in the case all casual jobs in CS3 would belong to CS35), whereas the total growth of engineers and private firm professionals is about 2600, showing therefore a slight predominance of the first group in the central city. By contrast, in the *département* of Hauts-de-Seine, the second group has a much stronger growth than the first (9400 against 2600), and the same is true for all other *départements*, except Seine-Saint-Denis where the growth of the two groups is similar but with much much smaller figures (650 against 570).

Figure 2 sums up the contrast between the trends in Paris (75), where the strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories in working class neighbourhoods is due to a majority of public sector, intellectual, artistic and entertainment professionals plus a strong minority of engineers and private firm professionals, in Hauts-de-Seine (92) where the latter group is predominant, and in the rest of banlieue *départements* with a profile similar to Hauts-de-Seine but much lower figures.

---

<sup>18</sup> Such census data are drawn from a ¼ sample, and the size of IRIS is too small to allow a distinction between such small groups.

**Figure 2 : Variations by *département* in the two sub-groups of CS3 in working class neighbourhoods having experienced a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories 1990-99**



To examine in more detail these social contrasts between neighbourhoods, we have compared the distribution in the growth of the various CS3 in the 500 working-class neighbourhoods which experienced a strong growth of the categories as a whole. The result<sup>19</sup> is a clustering into 4 classes. Table 6 gives the profile of each class, measured by the % distribution of change over the various CS3.

**Table 6: Social change profile of classes of working class neighbourhoods with strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories cases 1990-99**

CS\clusters	A	B	C	D
$\Delta$ PLIBI	108	158	134	60
$\Delta$ CS_31	51	1188	112	-150
$\Delta$ CS_33	76	102	131	105
$\Delta$ CS_34	120	98	106	79
$\Delta$ CS_35	150	149	114	36
$\Delta$ CS_37	87	100	142	90
$\Delta$ CS_38	89	72	85	125
$\Delta$ CDD_3	119	89	45	114
$\Delta$ CHOM3	153	85	40	87

(the index is the ratio between the % of each CS in the total change for CS3 in the class, and the same % for the whole; the average value is 100)

Class A gathers neighbourhoods with the strongest growth of professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities (CS35) and professors and literary and scientific professions (CS34), plus professionals with casual jobs (CDD3) which for a large part belong to the first category as we discussed before. Engineers and private firm professionals (CS37 and CS38) have grown slightly less than average.

<sup>19</sup> The method used was an ascending hierarchical classification of areas based on variations in numbers by CS, recoded into 5 classes of equal variation.

In Class B we find neighbourhoods with the strongest growth of the liberal professions (CS31), and a very strong increase, close to that in class A, of professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities (CS35).

Neighbourhoods in class C show the strongest growth of managers and executives in private firms (CS37) and managers in civil service (CS33).

Class D gathers neighbourhoods with the strongest increase of engineers (CS35) and the weakest of professionals in the media, artistic and entertainment activities (CS35).

The relative profiles are thus quite contrasted. However, the importance of the absolute variations of professionals and engineers in private firms being much superior, the distribution of absolute variations between the four classes (table 7) shows differences in shades rather than marked oppositions.

**Table 7: Social changes in classes of working class neighbourhoods with strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories cases 1990-99**

CS\clusters	A	B	C	D	Total
ΔPLIBI	748	322	528	463	2061
ΔCS_31	51	350	64	-167	298
ΔCS_33	963	379	948	1482	3772
ΔCS_34	1462	352	736	1074	3624
ΔCS_35	608	179	264	162	1213
ΔCS_37	3148	1067	2924	3650	10789
ΔCS_38	4211	1006	2304	6642	14163
ΔCDD_3	2183	479	472	2333	5467
ΔCHOM3	1449	239	216	926	2830
	14823	4373	8456	16565	44217

The results for class A confirm what we saw for the whole of working class areas of Paris: although that group of neighbourhoods exhibits the strongest growth of professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations, this relative dominance is not sufficient to make them the largest part of the increase, the absolute numbers for engineers and professionals in private firms being of the same magnitude. And in all the other classes, the growth of the latter plus liberal professionals accounts for more than half of the increase.

This first class of neighbourhoods is the closest to the usual narrative of gentrification in terms of its social profile, but does not match it entirely because of this strong contribution of engineers and professionals in private firms, similar to that of the more culture-oriented gentrifiers usually considered. It is also the closest in spatial terms, since it is the class proportionally most present in the central city; but again it is far from matching the spatial model perfectly, since the majority of neighbourhoods in that class are not in the central city. And, last but not least, it comprises less than one fourth of all neighbourhoods under study, whereas classes C and D, which have very few of the culture-oriented gentrifiers, account for 70%.

**Table 8: Social changes in classes of working class neighbourhoods with strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories cases 1990-99**  
**Neighbourhoods by *département***

Département	A	B	C	D	Total
Paris	24	10	2	27	63
Hauts-de-Seine	25	10	7	56	98
Yvelines	14	11	1	53	79
Val-de-Marne	7	12	5	43	67
Essonne	9	7	1	45	62
Val-d'Oise	3	2	2	35	42
Seine-et-Marne	3	4		32	39
Seine-Saint-Denis	5	3		42	50
Total	90	59	18	333	500

Inside the central city, neighbourhoods in Class A account for 38% of all cases. Their location (map 1) is predominantly adjacent to non-gentrified working-class neighbourhoods or middle-mixed neighbourhoods (16 out of 24), only 4 being adjacent to upper status ones. Class D is in fact the largest one, with half of the cases, and has a very contrasted location: most neighbourhoods are not adjacent to non-gentrified working-class ones (21 out of 27) and 11 are adjacent to high status ones.

Inside Paris then, Class D neighbourhoods are those constituting the most clearly an extension of already high status areas spreading out into their immediate surroundings, as well as they have a profile of change which brings them closer to the social profile of those areas. The social characteristics cumulated with the spatial ones confirm that these are clear cases of *embourgeoisement*. It can be expected that the engineers and professionals in private firms and managers in civil services who settle in those neighbourhoods belong to the upper part of those categories, in terms of hierarchy, income, social networks, and that real estate prices have gone up higher than elsewhere, reflecting the rapidly changing social meaning of those locations.

Class A neighbourhoods are less numerous in Paris, they are closer to remaining working-class areas and to middle-mixed areas, and their change of social profile brings them closer to the part of these last which has a strong presence of upper-middle categories of professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations. Real estate prices are therefore probably less expensive there than in Class D. These neighbourhoods are the ones fitting better the usual model of gentrification, because of both their social change profile and their central location. They provide for these upper-middle categories with middle incomes residential locations in areas with a mixed population, which inside Paris means a noticeable proportion of unskilled workers, many of them immigrants, partly due to the presence of social housing.

**Map 1 : Working class neighbourhoods of Paris  
with a strong growth of *cadres supérieurs* - IRIS 1990-1999**



Middle-class newcomers usually find there a quite dense network of shops and commercial services – not mainly ethnic ones – which tend to be upgraded and become more sophisticated with their increasing presence. They also contribute to the developments of new forms of cultural activities, galleries, music places, etc. There is some tension regarding some public services, mainly local schools, wherever there is a strong concentration of children of immigrant parents. There are also cases of tension regarding security issues in some areas where drug dealers are active and attract drug users. Such issues reveal diverse reactions and relations with the other inhabitants, showing that gentrifiers are a heterogeneous groups, some valuing the local class and ethnic diversity, some only interested in the physical and social upgrading of the neighbourhood, as some monographic studies of such areas have shown (see Simon, 1997, for Belleville and Bacqué and Fijalkow, forthcoming, for La Goutte d’Or). We can hypothesize that such a split may be linked with the heterogeneity of the new upper-middle categories in those areas that our statistical study has shown, mainly the fact that the proportion of professionals in private firms and engineers is similar to that of professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations – these two groups tending to be quite different in terms of income, values, relations to the dominant class, etc. as the sociological debate has argued since Mendras (1988) and Singly and Thélot (1988). We find similar results in an ongoing study with M. Oberti of social relations of middle middle classes in middle-mixed areas.

Outside Paris there is less contrast between the spatial distributions of the two main classes. In the first ring of suburbs, in Hauts-de-Seine (west) where Class A neighbourhoods

are as numerous as in Paris, they are all, like Class D ones, adjacent to middle-mixed neighbourhoods and correspond to an expansion and consolidation of these areas, which are themselves adjacent to upper status areas and separate them from working class areas. The only limited contrast can be found in the two other *départements*, Val-de-Marne (south-east) and Seine-Saint-Denis (north-east) and it is paradoxically the opposite of that found inside Paris: the few Class A neighbourhoods are almost all adjacent to middle-mixed areas or upper status areas, in Paris, in the concentration of upper status areas east of Paris around the Bois de Vincennes and the river Marne, whereas a noticeable number of Class D ones are more scattered in the middle of predominantly working class areas.

To explain this apparent inversion of the spatial logic of the two most socially contrasted classes of socially upgrading neighbourhoods, one has to consider both arguments related to the urban context and to the differences within each social category according to the different locations.

Class A neighbourhoods outside of Paris are essentially concentrated in the more central part of the first ring of suburbs, close to Paris, and in areas which are rather mixed, either because they are middle-mixed neighbourhoods or a mosaic of upper, middle and working class ones. And what we know sociologically about the professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations is that they clearly favour more central residential locations, for reasons of lifestyle as well as because their residential location is an important element of their relation to their specific labour markets and professional networks which are very central. This explains also why there are very few Class A neighbourhoods in the second ring of suburbs<sup>20</sup>. In that sense the spatial logic of Class A neighbourhoods is, all things considered, rather similar in the suburbs to that in Paris.

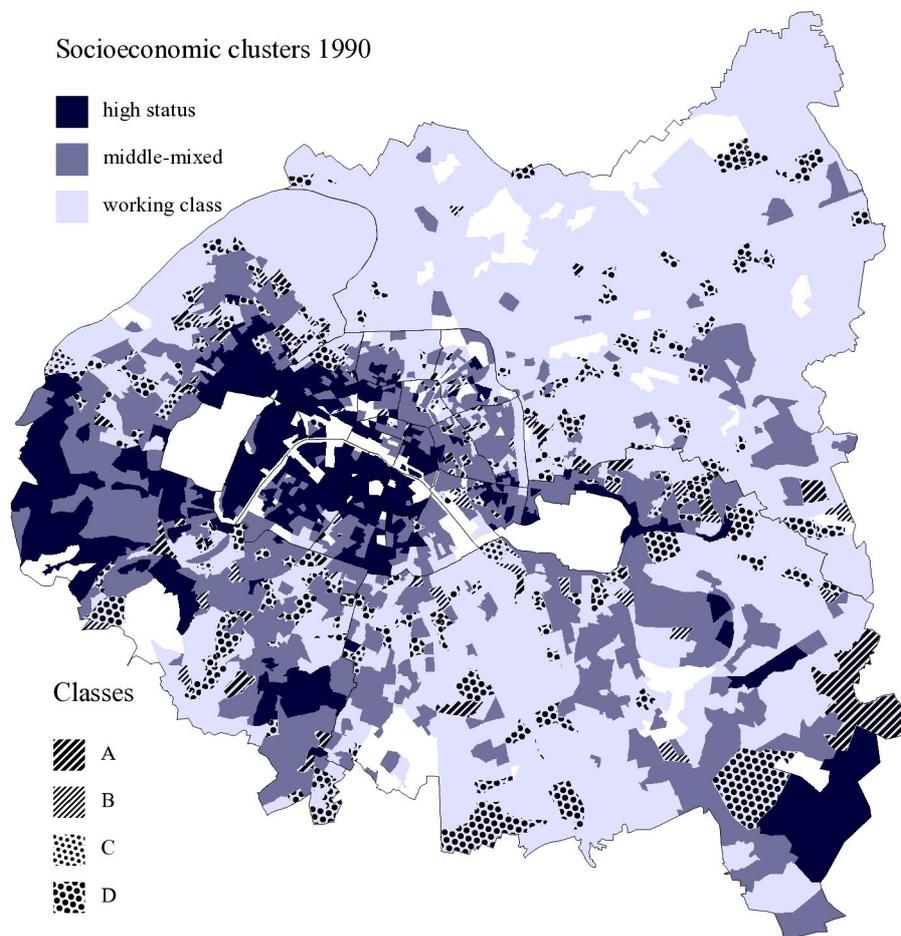
A significant part of Class D neighbourhoods outside of Paris have conversely a spatial distribution completely contrasting the one they have inside Paris. They are more distant from upper status areas and closer to working-class ones, if not scattered among them. In the first ring of suburbs, this can be found in Seine-Saint-Denis on a Les Lilas-Tremblay-en-France axis already mentioned, or in the south-centre of Val-de-Marne. In most cases, these areas are predominantly areas of detached houses with small gardens – in contrast to other areas in those *départements* which are predominantly large estates of social housing –, rather close to the central city still and well connected and serviced. Several case studies have shown the progressive replacement in such areas, known as *lotissements ouvriers*, single family housing developments built for and often by workers in the first half of the XXth century, of the retired and ageing owners by young middle-middle class couples with children. A complementary explanation has to do with the hypothesis that many of these middle-middle class people, whether in the public or private sector, would be in more modest professional positions than people classified in the same categories living in upper status areas, and would often come from working class backgrounds through upward social mobility.

---

<sup>20</sup> The two areas where they are slightly more present being the centre-east of Yvelines where they are in the most dense and relatively central part of the *département*, and in the south of Val-d’Oise around Pontoise, for similar reasons.

Finally, the rest of neighbourhoods with a strong growth of upper and upper-middle categories, essentially Class D ones, found in the outer part of the second ring of suburbs, correspond to a logic of middle-class suburbanization in low density, single housing areas. The contribution of the more intellectual, artistic or media oriented categories is very low, they are mostly engineers and professionals in private firms. Although this case is evidently out of the scope of gentrification, it is interesting to note that these people are probably in the lower part of their category and in a process of upward social mobility, as in the case discussed just before. There are almost no outer suburban areas that can be considered upper status ones.

**Map 2 : Working class neighbourhoods of Paris and the first ring of suburbs with a strong growth of *cadres supérieurs* - IRIS 1990-1999**



## Conclusion

Cases of rapid social change in favour of upper and upper-middle classes in working-class neighbourhoods do constitute a significant, but limited, part of the overall dynamic of social change in the Paris metropolis. They represent one fifth of all working-class neighbourhoods, and 11% of the total population.

These cases, however, do not fit very well the usual narrative of gentrification. First of all because they are part of a continuous process of growth of those privileged categories in the more central parts of the city, that they have constantly favoured for their residence. And secondly because, far from being a specific process of central areas, they are far more numerous in the *banlieues*, particularly in the first ring of suburbs, than in the central city itself.

The detailed analysis of both the social profile and the spatial characteristics of those rapidly changing working class neighbourhoods shows that there are in fact several quite different processes going on. To subsume them under one single category such as gentrification would be sociologically misleading. This is not a classic argument that things are more complex. The social and spatial logics of these processes are too different to be considered as variations of just one. We will summarize them in the form of three ideal-types based on the key results of the statistical analysis presented before, many cases of individual neighbourhoods being more or less intermediate between them.

The process which characterizes the largest group of working-class neighbourhoods under study, about one third of them, is the incorporation of those neighbourhoods into large compact upper-class areas they are adjacent to. This takes place through a process of social change in which the newcomers are overwhelmingly private business professionals, *cadres d'entreprise*. Some of these neighbourhoods are in the central city, but the vast majority are in the suburbs, in the dense part of the *banlieues*, Hauts-de-Seine and Yvelines in the west and Val-de-Marne in the east. It is the logic of proximity with existing concentrations of upper-class areas which is clearly predominant, and not the attraction of centrality as such. The reasonable hypothesis is that such a residential choice means an effort of integration into the upper class, through the social networks, the urban way of life and use of urban services, the symbolic identification (see Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 1989), and the isolation from the working class and poor immigrants, who are rapidly evicted from such areas. The upper-middle class groups here would have higher incomes, and, even without belonging directly to the capitalist class, would be part of the “new spirit of capitalism” (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999) through their professional responsibilities and ideologies. To designate this process, the word *embourgeoisement* seems definitely more adequate, even if it requires an updating of the definition of the dominant class, the bourgeoisie.

The second type of process is characterized by a similar predominance of private business professionals, but a different spatial logic. Those neighbourhoods – about one fourth of the total – are not adjacent to and often quite distant from upper-class ones, and they are conversely close to many working-class areas and middle-mixed areas. In that case, we shall hypothesize that, beyond the statistical similarity in the profile of upper and upper-middle class residents, there are significant social differences with the ones in the former group, in terms of income, type of education and job, and social origins. Even belonging to the same social categories, they would be more middle-middle class, not be part of the top management and highly paid jobs, and often be of working class or low-middle class social background. It seems that an adequate name for this process would be something like upward social mobility

of working-class neighbourhoods. Upper-middle class groups there would maintain a social as well as spatial proximity to the working class, and the neighbourhoods would become middle-mixed ones but not jump up to upper-class status.

The third<sup>21</sup> type of process, comprising about one fifth of the neighbourhoods under study, is the one closer to the usual narrative of gentrification. The attraction of centrality is clearly a strong factor and the more culture-oriented upper-middle classes are overrepresented in the newcomers. But even that type does not fit the model very tightly. The centrality factor is strong compared to the other types, but in a loose sense: a minority only of the neighbourhoods in that case are in the central city, the majority being in the dense parts of the first ring of suburbs, rather close to Paris. And the upper-middle classes whose numbers are increasing comprise a significant proportion of professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations – much higher than in the other cases – but professionals in private business are quite present too, about half of the influx.

May the use of the term gentrification be considered an adequate mode of categorization for that type at least? There are still reservations against it, due to the homogenisation of the upper-middle class actors of the process under the metaphorical denomination of ‘gentry’, and what it implies in terms of stressing the social distance to the working class – particularly strong in N. Smith’s (1996) “revanchist” reading of gentrification which has been very influential. What case studies of various neighbourhoods of Paris or nearby suburbs corresponding to that type have shown is more a tension between two groups of upper-middle classes. One of private business professionals willing to push the transformation further, for social and real estate interests. The other of professionals in public, scientific, media and artistic occupations who valorise the mix with working class and immigrant groups, and ways of life less exclusively centred on private commodity consumption and more on collective services and public goods. Whether the tension is being resolved by the incorporation of the second group into the values and politics of the first, of whether conversely the second group, joined by some in the first, may be an actor in public policies maintaining working class and immigrant groups in those areas thanks to housing policies, urban planning, public services, is an open question for the future of such neighbourhoods. It may also be a key question to understand differences between apparently similar processes of urban social change in different cities and countries, instead of seeing them superficially as homogenous manifestations of one global process of gentrification.

---

<sup>21</sup> We shall leave aside a fourth type which is that of socially upgrading outer suburbs, clearly beyond the discussion of gentrification.

## References

- Bidou, Catherine (edit.). 2003. *Retours en ville, des processus de gentrification aux politiques de revitalisation urbaine*. Paris: Descartes et Cie.
- Bidou, Catherine, Dagnaud, Monique, Duriez, Bruno, Ion, Jacques, Mehl, Dominique. 1983. *Les couches moyennes salariées, mosaïque sociologique*. Saint-Étienne: CRESAL.
- Bidou, Catherine. 1984. *Les aventuriers du quotidien. Essai sur les nouvelles classes moyennes*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Boltanski, Luc. 1982. *Les cadres. La formation d'un groupe social*. Paris: Editions de Minuit.
- Boltanski, Luc, Chiapello, Ève. 1999. *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Chalvon-Demersey, Sabine. 1984. *Le triangle du XIVe: des nouveaux habitants dans un vieux quartier de Paris*. Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- Coing, Henri. 1966. *Rénovation urbaine et changement social*. Paris: Editions Ouvrières.
- Desrosières, Alain, Thévenot, Laurent. 1988. *Les catégories socio-professionnelles*. Paris: Editions La Découverte.
- Donzelot, Jacques. 2004. "La ville à trois vitesses: relégation, périurbanisation, gentrification". *Esprit* 303 :14-39.
- Duclos, Denis. 1973. *Propriété foncière et processus d'urbanisation. Deux opérations de rénovation urbaine à Paris entre 1958 et 1971*. Paris: Centre de Sociologie Urbaine.
- Florida, Richard. 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books.
- Glass, Ruth. 1964. *London: Aspects of change*. London: Centre for Urban Studies.
- Godard, Francis, Castells, Manuel, Delayre, Henri, Dessane, C., O'Callaghan, C. 1973. *La rénovation urbaine à Paris: structure urbaine et logique de classe*. Paris: Mouton.
- Grunberg, Gérard, Mouriaux, René. 1979. *L'univers politique et syndical des cadres*. Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques.
- Hamnett, Chris. 1994. "Social polarisation in global cities: theory and evidence". *Urban Studies* 33/8 :401-424.
- Hamnett, Chris. 2003. *Unequal City. London in the global arena*. London: Routledge.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1968. *Le droit à la ville*. Paris: Editions Anthropos.
- Lebas, Elizabeth. 1982. "Urban and Regional Sociology in Advanced Industrial Societies. A Decade of Marxist and Critical Perspectives". *Current Sociology* 30/1 :1-107.
- Ley, David. 1996. *The new middle-class and the remaking of the central city*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lojkine, Jean. 1972. *La politique urbaine dans la région parisienne. 1945-1972*. Paris: Mouton.
- Lojkine, Jean. 1974. *La politique urbaine dans la région lyonnaise. 1945-1972*. Paris: Mouton.
- Mendras, Henri. 1988. *La Seconde Révolution française. 1965-1984*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Oberti, Marco, Préteceille, Edmond. 2004. "Les classes moyennes et la ségrégation". *Education et Sociétés* 14:135-153.
- Pinçon, Michel, Pinçon-Charlot, Monique. 1989. *Dans les beaux quartiers*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Préteceille, Edmond. 1995. "Division sociale de l'espace et globalisation. Le cas de la métropole parisienne". *Sociétés Contemporaines* 22-23 :33-67.

- Préteceille, Edmond. 2000. *Division sociale et services urbains. Volume I: Inégalités et contrastes sociaux en Ile-de-France*. Paris: Cultures et Sociétés Urbaines.
- Préteceille, Edmond. 2001. *Les transformations de la ségrégation sociale en Ile-de-France 1982-90*. Paris: Cultures et Sociétés Urbaines.
- Préteceille, Edmond. 2003. *La division sociale de l'espace francilien. Typologie socioprofessionnelle 1999 et transformations de l'espace résidentiel 1990-99*. Paris: Observatoire Sociologique du Changement.
- Préteceille, Edmond. 2006. "La ségrégation sociale a-t-elle augmenté? La métropole parisienne entre polarisation et mixité". *Sociétés Contemporaines* 62 : 69-93.
- Sassen, Saskia. 1991. *The global city. New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Simon, Patrick. 1997. "Les usages sociaux de la rue dans un quartier cosmopolite". *Espaces et Sociétés* 90-91 :43-69
- Smith, Neil. 1996. *The New Urban Frontier. Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. London: Routledge.
- Topalov, Christian. 1973. *Capital et propriété foncière. Introduction à l'étude des politiques foncières urbaines*. Paris: Centre de Sociologie Urbaine.
- Topalov, Christian. 1974. *Les promoteurs immobiliers. Contribution à l'analyse de la production capitaliste du logement en France*. Paris: Mouton.
- Topalov, Christian. 1984. *Le profit, la rente et la ville*. Paris: Economica.
- Zukin, Sharon. 1982. *Loft living*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.