— SOCIAL POWER AND POWER OVER SPACE:
How the Bourgeoisie Reproduces itself in the City

MONIQUE PINÇON-CHARLOT AND MICHEL PINÇON

Abstract

Urban sociology has long ignored districts of wealth and privilege in cities because they harbor few 'social problems' and the class background of sociologists has not inclined them to venture there. In France after 1968, the continued attraction of Marxism and the sulfurous reputation of sociology conspired to make such investigation difficult. Pierre Bourdieu pioneered it with his landmark book on the bourgeoisie, Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste. *This essay reports on two decades of research extending Bourdieu's model of social space to study the territories and strategies of the French high bourgeoisie and aristocracy. The dominant class lives in reserved upscale districts and this seclusion, resulting from the elective spatial aggregation of familial dynasties, is a fundamental characteristic of the group. Segregative isolation is strengthened by specific institutions, such as society balls and social clubs, entrusted with effecting class closure and perpetuation. But, in the greater Paris region, the best districts also attract businesses (corporate headquarters, luxury firms), and thus employment that prompts the established bourgeoisie to migrate westwards in an endless search for social exclusivity. In addition to their Paris homes, upper-class dynasties possess family properties (a castle or a large manor house) in the provincial hinterland that serve as a basis for paternalistic forms of sociability, linking them to the local lower class via such institutions as riding to hounds. Spaces reserved by and for the high bourgeoisie are major vectors of social reproduction and, along with family and elite schools, help to train heirs suited to safeguarding and valorizing their inherited assets.*

Introduction

Urban sociology has devoted considerable attention to those neighborhoods where poverty concentrates and assorted social ills accumulate, chief among them the social housing estates where the most underprivileged reside and disorder periodically flares up. In that regard, it has fulfilled and continues to fulfill a civic role—that of analyzing the hardship of deprived populations and of informing the state (its main funding source) about their predicament so that it may take remedial action (when political conditions permit). But 'urban seclusion' is not only manifest as a result of constraints at the bottom of urban space: it also operates as a result of choice at the top, through real-estate prices and assorted mechanisms, where it is driven not by poverty but by wealth—all the more so when the wealth of the dominant class is at once economic, cultural, social (through criss-crossing networks of power-laden connections)

and symbolic.[1] To achieve social tranquility and to fashion an environment that suits them and ensures the best conditions for educating their children, members of the *upper bourgeoisie practice systematic social ostracism*, and do so without a shade of guilt. Since they have the financial means to do so, its members do not understand why anyone would criticize them for seeking out the best residential settings, that is, those that best fit them (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 2000). The organizing principle of this spatial seclusion at the top is the search for 'people like us', for social, economic and cultural *entre-soi* or homogeneity in one's residential environment. This results in class clustering that is often narrower and more intense than the conspicuous concentration of poverty observed in some working-class districts that has been the obsession of students of 'neighborhood effects' (Bacqué and Fol, 2007).

The poverty of urban research on the wealthy

The families that make up the higher circles of power and privilege, and the specific spaces in which they live, have not been subject to much sociological investigation, including by students of the city. There have been exceptions. In the early 1970s, the anthropologist Laura Nader (1972) championed the principle of 'studying up', that is, the need to inquire into the top strata of society, to focus more on the colonizer than the colonized, on the culture of the powerful than on the culture of the powerless, and to probe wealth as much as poverty. In France, the work of Pierre Bourdieu and of researchers associated with the Center for European Sociology is a signal exception. From the mid-1970s onwards, they focused on the upper class and deployed a wide range of studies aiming to uncover processes of domination and reproduction. This research agenda was adumbrated in the inaugural issue of the center's journal, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, in January 1975, by an article co-signed by Bourdieu and his erstwhile student Yvette Delsaut on *haute couture*, which reveals how the internal hierarchy of the universe of fashion designers mirrors that of the social geography of Paris (Bourdieu, with Delsaut, 1975). It was articulated in a special issue of the journal the following year entirely devoted to 'La production de l'idéologie dominante' (The production of domination ideology) (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1976) centered on the 'neutral institutions' and technocratic idiom facilitating the reconversion and genealogical perpetuation of the dominant class in France.[2] It was amplified by another thematic issue of the same journal devoted to 'The corporate class' in 1978 (see in particular Bourdieu and de Saint Martin, 1978).[3] More pivotal still was the publication of *Distinction* in 1979 (Bourdieu, 1979), which devotes several chapters to the accumulation, appropriation and mutual conversion of economic and cultural capital, and whose very title is a stenographic evocation of the lifestyle distinctive of the bourgeoisie. More recently, owing in good part to the financial crisis of 2008, the study of elites has undergone a full-scale revival, but this is a late development.[4]

There still remains a real dearth of studies of the dominant classes. There are various reasons for this 'injustice'. Here we point out a few of these that we encountered in our own research endeavors, making no claim to providing a comprehensive list.[5] In

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1   These different forms of wealth are described by Bourdieu (1986) as 'forms of capital'. For an approach to socio-spatial seclusion that integrates privileged populations and disadvantaged categories, selective spaces and disreputable places into a single model, see Wacquant (2010).
2   This issue of *Actes de la Recherche* was reprinted in its entirety (minus the illustrations) in book form as *La Production de l'Idéologie Dominante* (Bourdieu and Boltanski, 1976).
3   This study was amplified and merged a decade later into Bourdieu's broader dissection of the role of elite schools in the reproduction and transformation of the internal structure of the ruling class in *La Noblesse d'État* (1989), published in English as *The State Nobility* in 1996.
4   An extended update of Bourdieu's research agenda on the upper class, adapting the concept of 'field of power' to financial globalization and the accelerated international circulation of economic and cultural capital, may be found in the thematic issue of *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* of May 2011, edited by Anne-Catherine Wagner, devoted to the topic of 'Social classes and modes of domination'.
5   For a full account of the rise, trajectory and themes of urban sociology in France in relation to intellectual, social and political transformations during the second half of the twentieth century, see Amiot (1986) and Lassave (1997).

France, a good part of the production of sociological knowledge about contemporary social formations relies on the construction of original data sets, carried out through research projects based on contracts with government ministries. The latter include, in particular, the ministries in charge of housing and urban planning and assorted public or para-public bodies. Wealthy families attract hardly any attention from these funders: being well-endowed with economic, cultural, educational and social capital, they do not pose any severe threat or urgent social problems for city managers. Research contracts prioritize the major social issues of the moment, such as unemployment and job training, immigration and integration, lower-income housing renovation, marginalization and welfare policies. This bias is justifiable in terms of pressing public intervention, even if it is questionable from the standpoint of our knowledge of basic social mechanisms. One may readily concede that it is more vital to focus on the 'new poor' and the declining working-class estates on the Parisian periphery than on the near suburb of Neuilly, France's wealthiest city (and historic stronghold of President Sarkozy, who was its mayor in the 1980s) and the adjoining Parisian neighborhoods of Auteuil and Passy—to mention only the most emblematic examples.[6]

What is more, sociology presupposes the existence of sociologists, that is, of social agents who are themselves located in social and physical space, and thus enmeshed in the object of their science. The discipline is at a social crossroads: recruitment into it is particularly diversified, mixing children from the high bourgeoisie with the sons and daughters of teachers and shopkeepers and a few miraculous survivors of the system of educational elimination from urban or rural working-class backgrounds. Few sociologists are ready to risk engaging in field situations in which the asymmetry in social position between researcher and subject places them at a disadvantage. Whether they come from the middle or working class and have reached a merely middling social position or from the 'upper crust' and have experienced decline in terms of objective social status, sociologists are never at ease with tackling a social world they do not know or one that—since it is where they started from—they realize is now socially above them (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 2005). During research they conduct in a working- or middle-class setting, sociologists enjoy a relationship that has an imbalance in their favor. In dealing with respondents, the researcher assumes a dominant position even if interaction strategies can temporarily challenge this imbalance. However, it is a wholly different situation when the researcher has to engage in interviews with fieldwork agents who are better endowed with capital in all its forms, or often just in its cultural form—agents who are rich in terms of symbolic capital, that is, goods, manners and knowledge suited to conveying the legitimacy of the position they occupy. The high bourgeoisie always know how to keep their place and put you in yours, in most cases with exquisite politeness—a symbolic violence that constitutes a potent weapon in the armory of class domination.

While one could discuss many other explanatory principles for the quantitative dearth of research on the high bourgeoisie and its spaces, we wish to highlight one last factor in the French case: the political and intellectual climate after the events of May 1968. The weight of concepts challenging the social order, anchored by Marxism

6   Neuilly, the electoral fiefdom of Nicolas Sarkozy, who was its mayor for 20 years, adjoins the upscale districts of western Paris, located along the Champs-Élysées and the Avenue de la Grande Armée. Auteuil, in the south of Paris's 16th *arrondissement*, includes the Villa Montmorency, an exclusive estate founded in 1853, which encompasses several dozen imposing bourgeois mansions set in immense gardens and served by a network of private streets, with access rigorously monitored at its gates. Carla Bruni Sarkozy owns a mansion there, as do billionaire Vincent Bolloré (media, publicity, telecommunications), Arnaud Lagardère (the owner of Hachette Group and main shareholder in the EADS-Airbus Group) and Vincent Bolloré (owner of major transportation, media and power companies), and a bevy of top entrepreneurs, artists and writers, such as Céline Dion and Sylvie Vartan. Passy, a little further north, lies between the Maison de la Radio and the Place du Trocadéro. The abbreviation NAP (Neuilly-Auteuil-Passy) has come to designate this secluded urban universe with its unique concentration of wealth and elegance. The abbreviation has been widely used in public culture since it was spoofed in a famous mock rap music video by the standup comedians Les Inconnus in 1991 ('Auteuil, Neuilly, Passy, c'est pas du gateau/Auteuil, Neuilly, Passy, tel est notre ghetto', available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1N3WXZ_1LM).

(whether proclaimed by left-wing or Maoist groups or by the Communist Party) and by the highly fashionable theses of Michel Foucault and others (such as the Situationists close to Guy Debord), was burdensome within the sociological microcosm and worked against research on the dominant fractions of the dominant class in two ways. First, the existing climate made the discipline of sociology deeply suspect in the eyes of privileged groups who had just experienced the great scare of May 68 and were now on their guard. Secondly, it valorized inquiries plugged into political action, thus privileging research approaches closest to the blue-collar world, which could lead all the way to becoming an *établi* (that is, someone taking up factory work alongside laborers, with more of an activist than a scholarly intent).[7] The lifestyle of the baronesses of the Faubourg Saint-Germain (in the posh 7th *arrondissement* of Paris, the long-time stronghold of the French aristocracy) was scarcely on the agenda then, and it was closed to outside observers and researchers anyhow.

For it was indeed a question of modes of living: the established bourgeoisie was not missing from research but, rather, it was grasped in a segmented manner through its social roles in managing corporations, holding political offices and securing a monopoly over elite schools (see Bourdieu, 1989, on France, and Cookson and Hodges Persell, 1985, on the United States). Everyday life and lifestyles were rarely studied for themselves, and when they were, the focus was chiefly on working-class families.[8] What empirical research was carried out on the dominant classes concerned corporate leadership, senior civil servants or the French system of *grandes écoles*, and it dealt with how those institutions operated. So we decided to deploy an anthropological approach to grasp the diversity and everyday functioning of the bourgeoisie as a social class.

There were signal exceptions to this pattern of disinterest, of which the most notable were Pierre Bourdieu and researchers close to him. They investigated the upper classes in order to uncover processes of domination and the strategies of reproduction they deployed (Bourdieu, 1978). We previously mentioned Bourdieu's article on high fashion, which appeared in the very first issue of the journal he had founded in 1975, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, which connected the internal hierarchy of designers to the spatial patterning of Paris, anchored by the opposition between the Left (cultural) Bank and the Right (economic) Bank of the city. The following year, Bourdieu also published the first sketch of social space featuring the structural opposition between the economic and the cultural fractions of the bourgeoisie in 'The Anatomy of Taste' (Bourdieu and de Saint Martin, 1976). By proposing to map the linkages between strategies of classification, patterns of consumption and internal stratification at the top of the social structure, Bourdieu (1979) brought the bourgeoisie to the epicenter of the analysis of class, culture and power in *Distinction*.

We had been researchers at the Centre de Sociologie Urbaine (CSU) (the Center for Urban Sociology, a laboratory inside CNRS, France's National Center for Scientific Research), where Marxism had been the dominant orientation since 1970.[9] In reaction to the early publications of Bourdieu on the bourgeoisie, Michel Pinçon obtained a research grant to draw out the importance and implications of Bourdieu's theoretical system, anchored by the concepts of habitus, field and different species of capital, for urban sociology; the resulting mimeographed report was entitled *Besoins et Habitus* (Needs and habitus) (Pinçon, 1976a). But this theoretical system was not well received at the time, in an environment stamped by a highly structuralist form of Marxism, as represented by Castells and Poulantzas. For one, Bourdieu was breaking with the

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7   This gave rise to some noteworthy publications, though these failed to take the proper urban dimension into account as they affirmed the centrality of work and relations of economic exploitation. See, in particular, the landmark account by Robert Linhart (1978), *L'établi* (a long excerpt of which was published as an article in *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales* prior to the book's release); see also Dubost (1979) and Mauger (2006).
8   This focus proved enduring, as illustrated by the classic study by Schwartz (1990).
9   Préteceille, who was a member of the CSU, reviews the tenets, concerns and shifts in the Marxist agenda of urban sociology in France during that decade (see Préteceille, 1989).

economic (or economistic) conception of class by stressing the plurality of forms of capital and their imbrication in the formation of social space. And then the notion that the social structure was internalized and embodied in the guise of habitus (as 'a system of durable and transposable schemata of perception, appreciation, and action', *cf*. Bourdieu, [1972] 1977) and therefore functioned through symbolic domination was downright heretical and difficult to swallow for many Marxist and Marxoid social scientists committed to negating subjectivity (Castells, 1972).

Our first research projects informed by Bourdieu's theory tackled the city through quantitative research, analyzing the characteristics of the population residing in the social housing sector (state-funded low-income public housing or HLM). Most strikingly, our findings revealed that the spatial distribution of this very specific housing stock reproduced, indeed aggravated, the segregation processes stamping the metropolis as a whole (Pinçon, 1976b). There is very little social housing in the upscale districts, but wherever there is, residents are managers and professionals, even owners of medium-sized firms, that is, members of the upper class.[10] A similar pattern was uncovered during our research into the spatial distribution of public amenities and facilities, with over-provision in upscale districts and under-provision in poor neighborhoods (Pinçon-Charlot *et al.*, 1986). So it is this urban path that first led us to the upper classes, with a view to displaying the *homology between urban space and social space* and its implications: roughly put, the city is structured in the same manner as social space. This objectivation of the opposition between dominant and dominated positions in urban space is so clear-cut that it speaks volumes about the ways the dominant class mobilizes in defense of its interests. We thus decided to tackle spatial segregation by starting with those who benefit from it: those groups who, while endowed with the means (capital) to live wherever they wish, will not live anywhere but in the proximity of their social peers.[11]

Social space and urban space: homology and struggles

Social groups thus tend to occupy distinct places in physical space, mirroring the distances and oppositions that define them socially. The region where we reside, Île-de-France, which encompasses Paris and its suburban rings, became our first field of investigation. The upscale districts (*beaux quartiers*) stand in opposition to working-class neighborhoods, and both contrast with neighborhoods that have less marked social configurations and where the middle classes predominate. The great families of the wealthy aristocracy and the old bourgeoisie possess an economic and social power that is also a *power over space. They have the means to translate social distances into spatial distances*. The social consequences of this double process of segregation and aggregation were addressed by Pierre Bourdieu in a paper presented at a conference on 'Poverty, Immigration and Urban Marginality in Advanced Societies' at the Maison Suger in 1991 (Bourdieu, [1991] 2018, this issue), and then in the chapter on 'Site effects' included in *La Misère du Monde* (Bourdieu, 1993). Familial dynasties reside among one another and thus shield each other from any undesirable social promiscuity. The logic of this concern for strict homophily (*volonté de l'entre-soi*) leads them to exclude most of urban space from consideration as a possible place of residence. In the Paris region, the families of the upper bourgeoisie cannot decently live anywhere other than in the 7th or 8th *arrondissement* of the city, north of the 16th or south of the 17th or, more recently, in the 6th *arrondissement*.

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10   We use the present tense, since this proposition remains true today, as we revealed in our study of the occupants of the tiny subsidized housing sector in Neuilly (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 2011).

11   Later, a thematic issue of *Ethnologie Française* (1990), devoted to 'bourgeois cultures', confirmed us in this interest in the upper reaches of the bourgeoisie. Béatrix le Wita, who guest-edited the issue, had already published *Ni Vue, Ni Connue* (1988), an anthropological study deepening many aspects of Bourdieu's *Distinction*. Other notable contributors to this journal issue were three young scholars who subsequently became university professors: Cyril Grange, who did his dissertation research on the *Bottin Mondain* (a French variant of the *Who's Who*), Eric Mension-Rigau, who examined home schooling, and Anne-Catherine Wagner, who worked on elite immigration.

In the inner ring of city suburbs, they reside in Neuilly and in a handful of municipalities that extend the city's upscale districts to the west, such as Chatou, Le Veysinet and Saint-German-en-Laye (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 1989).

Embedded in the urban fabric of social diversity, these districts and municipalities enter into a system of relations that both differentiates them from other districts and municipalities and unites them with one another, just as the different social categories are themselves opposed or mutually joined. Residential location takes its meaning and value from this system of objective relations and owes most of its distinctive properties to these relations. One's position in urban space is the *physical expression of one's position in social space*. This homology may be direct, as when one's residence is a faithful reflection of social position—for example, an industry tycoon who lives in a plush apartment building in a western part of Paris—or indirect, as in the case of an apparently anomalous situation such as that of a working-class family 'straying' (though not without reason) into an upscale district. Social agents are never exhaustively defined by their occupational status: age, gender, nationality and the specific places where they reside contribute to defining them as social beings.

This is because urban space is always *a projection of the cleavages of society onto the city* and its neighborhoods, and so it matters greatly that a person lives in one place rather than another, not only for access to the resources attached to a given location but for its differential value. Like the dichotomies of language that oppose top and bottom, the distinguished and the vulgar, the refined and the coarse, or contrast rich and poor in everyday perception (Bourdieu, 1979), the French (or European) city sets its upscale districts in fundamental opposition to its working-class periphery. Urban space is at once a material, objective structure and a symbolic matrix. Granted, the city is only an imperfect version of the shadow cast by society, for the time needed for the built environment to evolve imposes delays and lags between urban reality and the social reality that engenders it. The mediations between social space and urban space are too complex and inertia too great to allow for a one-to-one mapping and thus absolute spatial segregation. Nevertheless, there is still sufficient contrast in urban space that we may journey along its pathways (from Passy to Belleville, for example, or from Neuilly to Aubervilliers) as one would travel through social space from big industrialists to skilled manual workers, from senior government officials to low-ranking clerical staff.

But these systems of oppositions can be more precise still, and can be shown to operate even within a narrower 'field' such as that of the senior civil service. In the Paris region, again, we found a correspondence between the hierarchy of urban spaces and those of the residences of senior civil servants classified according to the prestige of the administrative body (*corps*) to which they belonged inside the state. This prestige scale was 'objectively' grasped through the order of choices made by graduates of the École Polytechnique or the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) according to their class ranking at the end of their studies (Pinçon-Charlot and Rendu, 1987).[12]

Nonetheless, spatial ostracism alone is woefully insufficient to ensure the social homophily to which the members of the high bourgeoisie aspire, if one judges by the exceptional concentration of their housing, vastly superior to any other social category and perfected by deploying specific techniques of social closure. Spatial segregation in a market economy would be deeply imperfect insofar as a high income suffices to buy access to an upscale district. But a high income is not enough to gain full membership

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12 The École Polytechnique is an elite school of science, mathematics and engineering (run by the military) whose alumni staff the higher rungs of French corporations and public administrations. The École Nationale d'Administration (ENA) trains senior civil servants and top government officials (several French presidents and countless cabinet members of the past thirty years are *énarques* (alumni of the ENA). To locate them in the French field of power, see Bourdieu (1989). In *Sociologie de Paris* ([2004] 2008) we document the precision of segregative processes that organize the 100 square kilometers or 39 square miles of the capital.

in the upper bourgeoisie, whose long-standing place or 'seniority' at the top is the crowning achievement of the social success of several preceding generations. Because anyone who just got rich—any *nouveau riche*, or, in other words, any 'imperfect' rich person or 'late-comer', as Bourdieu (1979) calls them—can live in the best districts, spatial ostracism has to be bolstered by social ostracism effected by the highly exclusive practices of society balls that bring teenagers and young people together, and in the organized circles or clubs that are one of the privileged sites of adult intercourse. We found that this *entre-soi* is one of the decisive techniques aimed at ensuring the transmission of symbolic goods and of various forms of capital more generally. Places of homophilic sociability effect the micro-segregation of space at the level of personal interaction. Society parties, balls and clubs both presuppose and enable the carving-out of a space where you can be sure that you will encounter only social peers. Indeed, this is the very aim of this type of institution (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot [1996] 2007).

Although the dynastic families have the financial assets that allow them to live wherever seems best to them and to reside strictly alongside those like them, the iron law of the market disrupts the game of residential segregation. Corporate headquarters and luxury shops, even central government services and diplomatic missions vie with these dynastic families for occupation of the most highly valorized and valorizing urban spaces. Indeed, having a *belle addresse* matters as much for big companies, luxury firms and central state administrations as it does for old aristocratic and bourgeois lineages. They are the families who first stamped this spatial quality by lending their pedigree to the typically newly urbanized districts where they first set up residence. The exceptional symbolic value of the *beaux quartiers*—whose 'beauty' is above all social—stems from the renown and prestige of these dynastic families and the forms of urban life their predominant presence implies. The presence of these families confers a 'label' on these districts, much like the signature ('*griffe*') of an exclusive fashion designer does to the clothes coming out of his design studio, insofar as it authenticates membership in an extraordinary—the Durkheimians would say 'sacred'—universe. In this case, it is the districts that benefit from a signature that may be described as spatial. The appropriation of this spatial *griffe* then becomes a stake in a social struggle. Dynastic families and firms find themselves competing to occupy a district whose symbolic value is all the higher, as it constitutes one of the rarest goods, one that is most difficult to reproduce and is therefore particularly coveted (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 1992).

Thus powerful and persistent determinations have pushed high-end tertiary-sector businesses to migrate westwards and to poach on the preserve of the high bourgeoisie. Upper-class apartment complexes, corporate headquarters and luxury shops become inextricably linked by the dynamics of their location. As settlers were pushed towards virgin territory by the rapacity of newcomers, the families of the old aristocracy and established bourgeoisie appeared less free in terms of their choice of residence than the social forces that confined them to upscale districts first suggested.

The colonization of mansions (*hotels particuliers*) in the 7th arrondissement by ministries began immediately after the French Revolution. The process was repeated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the invasion of the 9th and 8th *arrondissements* by the tertiary sector. Nowadays it is the area north of the 16th *arrondissement* and the city center of Neuilly that are being subjected to this onslaught. Even though, thanks to the successful development of La Défense, the headquarters of major industrial and banking corporations have leapfrogged Neuilly and settled instead into the high towers of the new business district, that location does not escape the rule of proximity to the most socially prestigious districts. It is not by happenstance that La Défense is located at the end of the 'triumphal axis' that starts at the Louvre, runs up the Champs-Élysées and traverses Neuilly.

But, whatever these firms' quality and status, their proliferation is bound to induce spatial nuisances of various kinds. Moreover, it is causing a dizzying rise in

property values in the district. These two factors combine to prompt the exodus of dynastic families. The increasingly visible presence of wage earners foreign to the 'high society' of these districts first diminishes and then annihilates what made up their unique attraction, namely, the assurance of being among one's kind. The cohabitation of privileged families with lower-income white-collar workers whom the metro and the RER (regional transit) train bring from their remote suburbs every morning provokes a clash in lifestyle, in modes of being, in everything in one's conduct, down to the most seemingly innocuous details that signify class membership. And just as everything that made these districts attractive in the eyes of their bourgeois residents fades away, as the latter start to feel the urge to leave, the rising property prices make the offers of real-estate agents and developers look more enticing.

So despite their immense resources, even wealthy families are not capable of opposing the forces that mold urban space. While they can make economic gains— sometimes considerable ones—by forsaking their old district, they cannot depart for areas further from the city center and, eventually, for the outer suburbs without suffering significant symbolic losses. The work of appropriating the space needed for a new 'signature' to appear has still to be taken up and completed; this is going to take time and require the group's vigilance. There is emotional damage too, for those dynastic families who had been settled in the established upscale districts for several generations. Suffice it to say that the current state of tension in the real-estate market and migration flows leave no social stratum untouched.

This groundswell, which is replacing the dynastic families with corporate offices, high-fashion shops and jewelry studios, luxury stores, central government departments and embassies is also sweeping away everything that created the incomparable urban value of these exceptional areas. A neologism was coined to designate the process of degradation of the symbolic value and, eventually, the economic value of these districts: 'boulevardization'. For the *grands boulevards*, the great avenues that were the chosen places of high society during the Second Empire (1852–1870) and throughout the early twentieth century, are the paradigm for this slow but inexorable urban drift that threatens the most select and sought-after neighborhoods (Charle, 1977). Residential property owners of the Champs-Élysées grew apprehensive as they discerned the trend in depreciation of symbolic value along this avenue, once so highly prized. Prudently, most of its residents and luxury shops deserted it. By the 1990s, the avenue had become a deceptive shop window for luxury tat for suburban families on a Sunday afternoon stroll and hordes of foreign tourists bussed in by tour operators. For the descendants of those who used to have their family mansion there it has become the incarnation of urban hell. The city of Paris and the remaining property owners have had to mobilize jointly to try and thwart this process of 'boulevardization'.

Urban spaces are thus evolving in keeping with shifting economic stakes to the point where the oppositions that structured capital in the 1970s—such as Pierre Bourdieu described them (see Bourdieu, with Delsaut, 1975), with avant-garde *haute couture* positioned on the Left Bank of the Seine and the more traditionalist fashion houses located on the Right Bank—have become less pronounced in Paris today. Market hegemony linked to neoliberalism's provisional triumph has taken objective form in the patterning of neighborhoods, such that luxury has defeated even the memories of Jean-Paul Sartre and Boris Vian from the district of Saint-Germain-des-Prés (in the 6th *arrondissement*), which used to embody literature and jazz. In the wake of deindustrialization, large sectors of the working-class districts in the north and east of the capital (the 19th and 20th *arrondissements*) have been appropriated by 'bobos'— high-income, more highly educated bourgeois bohemians who work in design, fashion, architecture, the film industry and the media. The established upscale districts and bourgeois municipalities have, since the nineteenth century, continued to shift further and further west (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 2009).

The double territoriality of the dynastic families

But mapping the delayed projection of the apex of the French class structure onto the space of the capital does not tell the whole story. For, in addition to their Paris home, the great bourgeois dynasties also possess at least one family property in the hinterland of the province, often a *château*, sometimes a large manor house. Their social existence thus stretches across a *double, and sometimes even a plural, territoriality*. What is more, the social bounding of these two places typically presents opposite patterns (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, [2007] 2010): while the Parisian residential space and the institutions that complement it (society parties and clubs) are strictly closed, cut off from the working and middle classes and even from the more recent fractions of the upper class, the provincial home serves as platform for frequent and even intimate contact with people of modest social standing, owing to its inscription in rural space. This is particularly true for the wealthy nobility, which forms an integral part of the dominant class. It exhibits many similarities with the high bourgeoisie, but its deep rural rooting—through the family castle—embed it in a time that keeps alive the memories of the lineage, a specific asset that bourgeois newcomers do not possess (see de Saint Martin, 1993).

Hunting, and specifically riding to hounds, is one of the activities that families of the provincial nobility do to maintain their roots.[13] But at the same time, in some of its modalities, fox-hunting or deer-hunting are not dissimilar from going to an event at a society club in Paris: membership in the hunt (*équipage*), that is, of a permanent group of riders with its own pack of hounds and its own hunting territory or 'country', does not come easy. As with the capital's top clubs, getting into a leading hunt happens through a slow process of careful co-optation. It is not enough to have the financial means to hunt stag or deer on horseback: one must also be accepted by the hunt master and the 'field' (*boutons*, or members) who make up the hunt. Riding to hounds, therefore, in its most 'high-society' forms, offers the paradox of being a prestige activity de facto reserved to members of the most eminent social groups, which at the same time offers occasion for cordial encounters and direct contact between dukes or bankers and ordinary people. The relationships established on such occasions, which are typically paternalistic in nature, are another way of symbolically highlighting the social eminence of the *veneurs* (riders).

The modalities of transmission and reproduction of dominant positions emerge as a constant preoccupation—often self-conscious, sometimes latent—in both the practices of segregation and aggregation of urban space through the symbolic role of the spatial *griffe* and the benevolent paternalism of the 'community' of riders and their 'hunt followers' on foot. The management of symbolic goods (name, address, image, and so on) and the multiple and specific forms of learning indispensable to life in high society (passed on through select parties, balls and clubs, and honed in managing relations with 'ordinary' people in the ceremonial act of hunting) all converge to ensure the successful transmission of a patrimony composed not only of material inheritance but also of other forms of rare cultural or social capital that require heirs capable of receiving them and making proper use of them.

Coda: social reproduction mediated through space and place

Our various investigations into class and space have always strived, from various angles, to explain what social reproduction owes to spatial segregation for different social categories. For the past two decades, this orientation has led us to focus our attention on the groups that occupy the pre-eminent positions in social space. In the final analysis, it is the strategies of these groups that drive social segregation and reproduction. Since they have a vested interest in residing in spaces protected from social promiscuity and their associated dangers, these categories are at the root of the social specialization of urban

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13   We carried out in-depth ethnographic research on this practice, including riding to hounds (while following our horseback-riding informants on bicycles), with support from the French Ministry of Culture's Office for Ethnological Heritage (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, [1993] 2003).

spaces, the different divisions of which reproduce core social divisions through price mechanisms and related social processes. The will for the social homophily or *volonté de l'entre-soi* of the dominant classes sets apart the most expensive spaces and those most highly charged with symbolic value, and thereby draws out the territories most inaccessible to the vast majority of people, given that the middle and working classes internalize the notion that upscale districts such as Passy and Neuilly are not for them.

The contribution of these spatial inscriptions to social reproduction operates first and foremost through the various forms of learning that the urban environment constantly provides. In most cases this is unnoticed, unconscious learning, taking place unbeknownst to either youngsters or their parents. Every peregrination through the city is a journey of initiation since it constantly reveals the system of similarities and differences that, through the plethora of symbols in the street, teaches us how to decipher the language of bricks and mortar, shop windows, clothes, corporeal demeanor, accents—in short, everything that continually proclaims distances and inequalities.

By experiencing the city, its varied neighborhoods with their differences and contrasts, one learns the diversity of the social world and one's place in it. For aristocrats and the established bourgeoisie, who have lived secluded in upscale districts since childhood, this means having experienced the privilege of being a member of the ruling categories, while internalizing, through specific practices in reserved urban spaces, the ways of being and dispositions (habitus) peculiar to one's social category. When you are truly at home there, the neighborhood where you reside expresses and bolsters your social and your class identity. Like any social agent, the members of the upper classes are always partly identified with the places where they have lived. In tracing their histories, we have the means to understand to what extent they owe their position and life trajectory to their living spaces.

Our investigations aim to reveal the conditions of transmission of the assets of France's wealthiest families. Space has turned out to be one of the key vehicles through which transmission operates and inscribes itself in time. More precisely, just as the transmission of privileged social positions—and therefore, of good 'fortune' in a number of senses—relies on specific spaces, it also benefits from a particular temporality. Social pre-eminence is asserted in space and in time, and its reproduction presupposes an exceptional inscription in both dimensions. Just as we may speak of power over space, we may characterize the wealthiest families also by their power over time. Much as these families enjoy the benefits of an enlarged 'surface', both spatially and socially: they stretch their being over a 'durée' that is not common time but extends across successive generations. These generations are not forgotten—on the contrary, they constitute a 'collective memory' that effectively transforms the family into a lineage. Indeed, one of the key concerns of those who have become wealthy only recently is to manage to acquire or project time, that is, a past, a definite family 'patina' (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, [1996] 2007).

The theoretical model of domination elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu, anchored in the plurality of forms of capital and spotlighting the organized practices needed to convert and accumulate them, has provided powerful concepts and guiding hypotheses for dissecting the dominant class and its distinctive territories in France, so much so that, even after publishing some fifteen books on the topic, we still have more research on this topic in the pipeline. Besides, the positive reception of our studies by members of these wealthy dynasties refutes the common misperception that this theoretical system is applicable only to the dominated: our noble informants often confessed to us that, whereas ensuring the transmission of their assets and social position requires deft practical sense, we have brought them a scholarly gaze, a reflexive and analytical grasp they lacked of the principles undergirding their social existence and guiding their strategies of reproduction.

Monique Pinçon-Charlot, Centre de Sociologie Urbaine, CNRS, 28 Rue Armand Millet, 92340 Bourg-la-Reine, Paris, France, pinconcharlot@free.fr

Michel Pinçon, Centre de Sociologie Urbaine, CNRS, 28 Rue Armand Millet, 92340 Bourg-la-Reine, Paris, France,

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