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Berlin
(Germany),
29---31
August
2013

**Moving up and moving out: the long history of secondary
schooling and suburbanization in London**

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**Paper presented at the International RC21 Conference 2013
Session: Education and the City**

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Abstract

Within British geography and sociology of education there has been renewed interest in how local housing markets interact with school choice particularly in London (Ball *et al.* 1995; Butler with Robson, 2003; Ball and Vincent, 2007; Butler and Hamnett, 2011). This literature has mainly focussed on the school choice dilemmas faced by middle class gentrifiers in Inner London. It has been stated that these experiences result from a secondary school system built to serve the needs of working class residents (Hamnett *et al.* 2007: 1259). However, this literature has not yet explored the historical relationship between middle class suburbanization and education. In this paper I argue that the dilemmas of school choice experienced by current parents are nested in these older processes of suburbanization of schools and their middle class clientele. I focus particularly on the suburban movement of secondary schools from sites in Inner London to suburban or (semi-)rural locations. This process occurred over a long period (1872-1977), primarily before 1939. I argue that this suburban or semi-rural model for older middle class and elite secondary schools has proved particularly persistent, which may explain the perception that secondary and post-16 education is better in Outer London and the suburbs.

Introduction

Following market-driven Conservative educational reforms in the 1980s, there has been a resurgence in the UK literature exploring how processes of school choice are intertwined with urban residential patterns and social class (Adler and Raab 1988, Raab and Adler 1987, Ball *et al.* 1995, Butler and Robson 2003b, Tim Butler and Chris Hamnett 2011, Marsden 1977). Much of this literature has focussed on London and particularly on the complex, anxiety-driven choice processes of middle class parents in response to their perceived lack of 'acceptable' secondary schools (Raveaud and Zanten 2007, Reay 2007). These parents form part of a middle class return to Inner London which has occurred since the 1960s/1970s following a lengthy period of suburbanization and counter-urbanization from the mid-late 19th century onwards (Hamnett 1986, Hamnett 2003, Champion *et al.* 2007, Thompson 1982). This earlier outward movement of the aspiring and established middle classes re-shaped urban class identity which, in turn, had dramatic effects on London's

nascent educational ‘system’. In London,¹ secondary schools serving elite and middle-class groups found themselves forced to follow their clientele and the ‘advancing ripple of Suburbia’ (Kenward and Ardizzone 1955: p. 58). Between 1872 and 1977 at least 38 secondary schools re-located from Inner London to the suburbs. Institutional suburbanization allowed these schools to retain, maintain or create their positions as guardians of elite and middle class social reproduction. These schools largely remain amongst the elite of English secondary schools and their outward move helped create and reinforce a particular image of elite, upper middle class schooling. Examining the effects of suburbanization allows us to see how contemporary ‘dilemmas’ of middle class gentrifiers in London continue to be shaped by much earlier processes of urban-educational change than has previously been recognized (Butler 1999, Hamnett et al. 2007).

The central focus of this article will explore how these schools came to leave Inner London and the historical effects both on the schools themselves and on the educational structures of Inner London today. In addition, by analysing this question we can also produce more tentative answers to two further issues. For both parents and children from Inner London boroughs there has been an aspiration to move out to schools in Outer London boroughs or neighbouring counties outside of London (Ball et al. 2000, Butler et al. 2011, Watson and Church 2009). This is based on the perception, and not necessarily the reality, that these schools or colleges are academically better. Secondly, this perception also exists in the academic literature where the ‘suburban middle class school’ appears as a loose ideal-type (Stuart Hall 1974, Midwinter 1972, Raynor 1974, Whitty 2001). This is used to generalize about the persistent but increasingly inaccurate,² dichotomy between low educational performance in deprived, ethnically-mixed inner city areas and higher performance in the generally wealthier middle class suburbs. An approach based on a historical analysis of the structures which shaped and continue to shape contemporary sociological phenomena allows a deeper understanding of London’s urban-educational field today.

This historical contextualization of contemporary sociological change in the urban-educational arena uses an approach which sees education as situated ‘in a trinity of contexts: of time, of place and of society’ (Marsden 1987: p. 1). As I will now examine

¹ A similar process happened across urban England in the late 19th and early twentieth century with schools moving to the urban-rural fringes in Manchester, Liverpool, Norwich, Blackburn, Wolverhampton, Bedford, and Brighton (Seaborne and Lowe 1977).

² Although there is still strongly polarised educational performance between inner-city areas and the suburban areas in many cities, including in London, more recent research has shown that poor students on Free School Meals (FSM) actually perform better in inner city urban schools than in rural and suburban schools (Harrison 2013). Some research has found that this is particularly true for FSM students in London schools who appear to be performing better than similar students in other UK cities (Cook 2013, Wyness 2011). Note that FSM is a measure used in UK education research as an indicator of deprivation and low socio-economic status.

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below, this particular approach responds to a lack of historical-orientation in British sociology generally and in sociology of education more specifically. Following this discussion of my theoretical approach and methodology, I begin my analysis with a brief summary of how suburbanization began in London in the second half of the nineteenth century through to 1939. This was the period in which most of the schools re-located to sites outside of Inner London. I then examine the educational effects of suburbanization over two periods 1872-1939 and 1945 to the present day. In these two sections I focus primarily, though not exclusively, on the outward movement of schools and these movements are mapped using a type of Geographical Information Systems (GIS, see below). The final ‘contemporary’ section examines the continuing association of educational excellence with suburban educational institutions by young people and parents in London in light of historical (sub)urban-educational processes.

Theoretical and methodological approach

As noted above, over the last 15-20 years there has been renewed interest in British sociology and geography on socio-spatial research with an educational focus. This has in no way been limited to the UK with research from France (Broccolichi 2009, Poupeau and François 2008, Van Zanten 2001), Germany (Meusburger 2000) and North America (Lipman 2009, Freeman 2010) to mention only a very small number of similar works. However, in the UK context at least, this research has focussed on *contemporary* sociological and/or geographical issues; little attempt has been made to grapple with the historical contexts shaping contemporary educational experience and structures. To some extent, this may be a problem with British sociology which as Inglis (2013) has recently argued has tended towards presentism and away from more historically-oriented sociology. However, Calhoun’s (1996) criticism of historical sociology’s development stretches beyond the British context, though certain English sociologists come in for considerable criticism. There are various approaches which could be called on to allow a historical approach to contemporary urban educational phenomena. Mike Savage (1993: p. 61) has previously suggested the importance of combining the case study paradigm in urban history with the class formation paradigm in sociological and historical research. The case study paradigm involves seeing the urban as a site for exploring the relationship between class structure and class action, whilst in the class formation paradigm, ‘the urban is not simply a “case study area”, but itself plays a crucial part in the process of class formation’ (Ibid.). I would argue that a similar emphasis is needed in understanding how geographically-specific, class-based urban processes like suburbanization or gentrification shape educational structures and experiences. In the British literature there are a number of historical works which suggest a workable conceptual and (inter-)disciplinary framework for a historically-oriented, urban sociology of education.

In the UK, and in the German (Müller et al. 1989) and American literature (Kaestle and Vinovskis 1980, Katz 2001), and perhaps elsewhere, there is a tradition of urban historical analysis of education. Marsden's (1987) work on schools and social class in the cities of Liverpool and London and Smith's (1982) work on Birmingham and Sheffield are the salient examples of historical analyses of urban education in Britain. Marsden (1987: p. 2) recognizes the need for a broad conceptual and interdisciplinary framework using the 'appropriate apparatus from the urban historian, the historical geographer and the urban sociologist.' Furthermore, Marsden (1987: pp. 14-15) notes Katz's call for a 'historical ecology of school systems' and also notes Ralph Samuel's criticism of purely quantitative approaches to urban social history which need the richness of the 'moral topography' of a place experienced by individuals. To the framework Marsden puts forward for understanding 19th and early 20th century urban education, I would add the need to use and take forward the current concerns, theories and methodologies of sociology of education. It is important to emphasise this point as the trick here is to use urban history and the history of education to inform our analysis of *contemporary* urban and educational sociological processes. This, in a brief form, is the approach I hope to develop through this article. An outstanding and largely over-looked account of how historical urban and educational change shapes contemporary circumstances, is Campbell's (1956) study of how secondary schooling in London was shaped by suburbanization in the first half of the 20th century. This work is referred to below and provided an important source of inspiration for this article. Lowe (2005, 2008) has noted the central importance of suburbanization for the development of secondary schooling throughout the twentieth century. Two other main works also mention the removal of schools to the suburbs following their middle class clientele, specifically the educational section of Booth's 1892 survey of London (Collet 1892, Smith 1892) and Seaborne and Lowe's (1977) history of school-building/s in England. This article provides a (near) complete survey of London schools which re-located in relation to the city's specific history and relates this back to contemporary urban-educational processes.

Before setting the scene of the beginning of London's suburbanization, I wish to outline briefly the methodology and limitations of this study. This work is in some ways highly specific, focussing on the particular urban trajectory of London and its school system. This is peculiar and exceptional within English and British urban experience, and the suburban development in UK cities runs contrary to the experience of many, but not all, cities in continental Europe (Wagenaar 1992). The sort of suburbanization which took place may bear some similarities to the US, but the educational structures, if not the educational effects of suburbanization, were and are quite different. This approach is also limited in its focus on the minority world, but the findings here may not be without parallel in the

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majority world. The findings detailed below are partly the result of an extensive literature review on works relating to how suburbanization developed in the UK and London, particularly in relation to schooling. Alongside this sits an internet survey of the school histories of as many London secondary schools as possible using lists of London schools available from the government, cross-referenced against their school websites, the websites of old pupil's associations and local history sites amongst others. Where I identified a school which had re-located outside of inner London, I followed this up comparing current and previous addresses using historical and current maps to find their location. In some cases a precise address was not found due to a lack of available information and a road name or similar other detail has been used instead. These were mapped using GIS, specifically batchgeo.com and also SAGA GIS (maps using SAGA GIS are this not included in this draft). To examine the reasons behind individual school's movements I also used an archive of local school histories held at the Institute of Education, London. I should add here that this paper lacks subjective perspectives of students, teachers or parents involved in earlier processes of suburbanization and schooling in London. However, this fact should not be read as a downgrading of the importance of their accounts, but rather as merely a limitation in the scope of this article.

Finally, there are also some important terminological issues about place names. Inner London is now defined in official statistics to include the boroughs of the City of London³, Camden, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Westminster, Haringey and Newham. However, from 1889 to 1965 the first form of London local government, the London County Council, included what is now the borough of Greenwich but excluded what are now Haringey and Newham which were then part of the semi-rural counties surrounding London. Substantial urban areas within these otherwise rural counties became part of Greater London in 1965, forming the *then* Outer London boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hounslow, Richmond, Kingston, Merton, Sutton, Croydon, Bromley, Bexley, Havering, Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Newham, Waltham Forest, Haringey, Enfield, Barnet, Harrow, Hillingdon. The 1963 Act which established these new boundaries also established the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) as a central authority administering education in the Inner London boroughs (not including Haringey and Newham at that time). This was abolished in the early 1990s since which time each individual borough has administered schooling separately. For simplicity(!), I use the current Office for National Statistics definition of Inner London (including Newham and Haringey but not Greenwich) to refer to Inner London and I refer to the other boroughs as Outer London. Occasionally I refer to central London which I understand to mean the area immediately surrounding the river

³ An anomalous 'borough' which is administered differently from the other areas through the City of London Corporation.

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where the political, economic, legal and to some extent educational centres of London and the country were and are still largely found.

The sub-/urban context of educational change: a summary of early suburbanization 1830-1939

The suburban development of London is tied up with a number of complex strands of urban change and development over the 19th and 20th centuries. To do justice to the complicated nature requires historical work which is beyond the scope of this article (See for example: Clapson 1998, Clapson 2000, Dyos and Reeder 1973, Dyos 1961, Jones 1984, Olsen 1976). Instead, the aim here is to describe succinctly the process of suburbanization from 1830 to 1939 with special emphasis on those issues which had educational implications. This period coincides with the years in which the largest number of secondary schools left Inner or central London. The 1830-1860/70 period which preceded the departures of these schools is included here as it underlines the central importance of time-lags in understanding how urban change affects educational structures and vice versa. Only in the 1860s did upper-middle class and elite educational institutions begin to recognize that changing conditions of Inner London and the outward movement of their clientele might force them to re-locate. This is a central point in understanding the relevance of this article to contemporary analysis, as the process of London's gentrification, first noted in 1964 (Glass 1964), was only seen by parents, or at least academics, to have educational effects 30 or 40 years later. I know briefly summarize the development of suburbanization between 1830 and 1939, noting the importance of transport, the conditions in central London and the role of social class.

Although suburbanization had already begun to occur for London's exceptionally wealthy residents at the end of the 18th century, it only became established as a recognizable and recognized trend during the 1830s. This was the decade in which suburbanization 'became almost a self-sustaining activity' (Thompson 1982: p. 16). The growth of middle class housing on the fringes of London was permitted or at least encouraged dramatically by the building of the first commuter railways in the 1830s (Pollins 1964). Suburban railway lines remained largely the preserve of the middle classes until the 1860s and 1870s when with the building of the tube (1863) and cheaper railway fares regulated by law (1883) opened up the possibility of commuting and suburban living. This was the first challenge to the 'bourgeois monopoly' over suburban development, and this extension of suburban living to the lower middle classes and upper working classes accelerated again in the inter-war period (1918-1939) and especially after 1945 (Clapson 1998, Dyos and Reeder 1973,

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Johnson 1964). The railway was to play a crucial role in permitting prestigious schools to relocate and this was an important prerequisite in determining their new sites.

However, if the middle class desire to leave London was enabled through the building of the railways over the 19th century it was stimulated in part by what was happening in central London. The intensification of industrialization and the lack of affordable transport or sufficient housing meant that by the 1830s London's working class populations was increasingly concentrated in the central area of London in slums and rookeries that had become notorious (Jones 1984: pp. 159-160). Enormous population growth with no improvement in housing helped produce an urban crisis in central London which only began to be "resolved" in the 1880s and 1890s through slum clearance, model dwellings, sanitary regulation and cheaper transport. By this time living conditions for the working class in central London had worsened distinctly as a result of economic change in the city. London's developing urban economy saw land values in central London rocket over the 19th century. Land-use in central London changed substantially with residential areas cleared for railway development, warehouses, docks and commercial and government offices. With no palliatives on offer until late in the 19th century, and no viable economic alternatives to living within walking distance of the workplace, living conditions for the working class deteriorated in central London with massive overcrowding in low-quality housing (Jones 1984). As Dyos and Reeder (1973: p. 361) have pointed out, slum and suburb development was intertwined with the worst slums being found in areas of large houses vacated by the middle class and only affordable (and profitable) if split up into multiple tenements. The fear of this urban working class and the polluted, crowded conditions of inner London did much to encourage the outward movement of the middle class to early suburbs like Islington and Camberwell and gradually further afield. This was of course combined with the desire for green space and larger, relatively cheap housing on the ever-advancing outer ripples of suburban development.

What was being created through suburbanization was not only a new structure to the city, but distinctive new lifestyles which forged new (middle) class identities. Daily separation of work and home through commuting, the house as a female domain and the centrality of private domestic life created a distinctive social class identity separate from the higher elite and the lower orders (Thompson 1982: p. 13, Gunn 2004: p. 38). The suburban ideal that developed over the 19th century was solidly middle class in theory and for certain areas this was perhaps true to reality. In practice, however, suburbia was more often a 'social patchwork' with islands of working class housing and houses deliberately built for distinct socio-economic fractions of the middle class (Thompson 1982: p. 20). This erosion of the (upper) middle class ideal of the suburb began with increasingly lower middle class and upper working class commuters on the new cheaper railways (Trainor 2000). After 1918, in a

pattern that continued after 1945, major estate building by local councils and the London County Council (LCC) in particular made a different sort of suburban living possible for London's working classes (Clapson 2005, Johnson 1964). Through cheap house building and new forms of mortgage provision, owner occupation in the suburbs was also extended to new lower middle class/upper working class groups during the inter-war period (Buck et al. 2002: p. 23). This opening up of suburban living was to continue after 1945 when house-building began again. Nevertheless of the 4 million homes built for private ownership between 1918 and 1939, 2.5 million were built for middle class occupancy (Clapson 2005: p. 60). The effect of this structural change was to produce new middle class identities in which the participation in the urban life of the centre of cities was less important (Gunn 2004, Savage 1993, Trainor 2000). In his final volume, Charles Booth noted that London's new suburban middle class were the group 'which will, perhaps, hold the future in its grasp' and for whom 'religion and education find their greatest response' (Booth 1902. Cited in Hapgood 2000: pp. 47-48). Education was at the core of suburban class identity early on and also shaped the new neighbourhoods' identities as we will now see.

The educational effects of suburbanization – the strange case of London's moving schools

As early as 1841, the suburbs were being described as 'regions of preparatory schools' (Murray 2006) which was a telling indicator as to how the educational aspirations of these residents would come to shape and be shaped by London's new residential structure. This observation was corroborated in Booth's survey which found some 450 private 'adventure' schools⁴ in London in 1892, with many situated in suburban areas 'which are the paradise of the "academies" and "collegiate establishments"' serving middle class children (Smith 1892: p. 250, Kenward and Ardizzone 1955: pp. 95-99). Where new suburbs were built it was also common to find new private schools being built to serve new middle class residents (Carr 1982, Rawcliffe 1982, Jackson 1973). Private provision of education was able to respond much quicker than local councils on the periphery of London, who struggled to keep up with the pace of private residential development. There were particularly severe effects on the peripheral LCC council estates built during the inter-war period and state-provided schools were at first non-existent and then over-crowded (Jackson 1973: pp. 298-305). This underlines the differentiated nature of suburbanization and its educational effects, which in reality escape simple generalization. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that the British trope of associating the middle class with the suburbs and the working class with slum neighbourhoods originates in the 19th century (Gunn 2004) and this may also be true for the

⁴ These schools were often family businesses, also known as 'dame schools' which often began with a parent teaching their own children and taking in a few neighbours. In working class areas these schools were closed down but middle class adventure schools were allowed to remain for longer and some eventually became more established independent schools or entered the state-sector.

reputation of suburban schools. Before examining how secondary schools began to move out of Inner and central London and mapping these movements, I first provide a paragraph on the educational context of the period.

Prior to 1870 there was no compulsory educational provision in England and after this date parliament legislated for, theoretically, compulsory schooling for 5-10 year olds only. This was the first major intervention in education by the state and previously schooling was provided by a varied collection of private, for-profit schools and charitable schools run by churches and other bodies. The school-leaving age was increased to 12 in the 1890s and to 14 in 1918 where it remained until 1944 when compulsory, free secondary schooling to the age of 15 was implemented. Before 1944 secondary schooling to the age of 15/16 or 18 (depending on school and curriculum) was dominated by the elite and middle classes. These students tended to attend separate 'preparatory' schools preparing students for entrance exams at prestigious secondary schools at age 11 or 13. Running parallel to this, the 'elementary' school system from 5-14 was state-funded with only a few students leaving at 11 or 13 if they won scholarships to secondary or other types of schools. With the exception of certain elementary schools with a reputation for winning scholarships, these institutions were almost exclusively working class (Smith 1930: p. 249). Even before the state intervened in 1907 to fund a proportion of 'free places' at secondary schools, there were a limited number of scholarships to local secondary schools. However, in practice it was not always the 'deserving poor' who won these scholarship places, as the middle classes proved quite adept at manipulating the scholarship exams. Secondary schooling itself was the site of conflict over the content of education, but it was the liberal, classical curriculum of the elite, 'public' schools⁵ and the grammar schools⁶ which won out. Their academic model of education was that which prepared students for Oxford and Cambridge and, arguably, it is still the model which dominates the school system today. It is these two types of secondary school, the public schools and the endowed grammar schools,⁷ alongside a third type of

⁵ These were in fact a small elite of expensive, fee-paying schools which were and are almost entirely independent of government interference. Most were founded by charitable donations or wealthy backers in the 16th and 17th centuries.

⁶ These institutions were also often founded in the 1500s or 1600s and often survived off a combination of fee-income and Endowments which frequently included large estates of land. Some were also founded in the 19th century and some were even funded by local government. The grammar schools were selective at age 11 or 13 and this model of selecting the most academically able was the model taken up when compulsory secondary education was implemented in 1944.

⁷ The distinction between the two was blurred in the 19th century with the main distinction being income, the public schools tended to be older and richer, and the social prestige attached to the public schools (Eton, Harrow, Christ's Hospital, Charterhouse etc). The older endowed grammar schools received a form of state funding from 1902 on top of any additional income from land or other sources. Local, state-managed and financed grammar schools also existed from 1902, which tended to be newer institutions, without the endowed grammar schools semi-independence from the state. Only in the 1970s were these older grammar schools forced to decide between becoming part of the state system or going private.

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secondary school, the proprietary school,⁸ which began to leave central and inner London in the last third of the 19th century.

As noted above, at least 38 secondary schools largely situated in central London in the 1870s, removed to suburban or semi-rural locations in or near what is now Outer London. Although I have tried to be as comprehensive as possible, this list is not final and it also suffers from fuzzy definitions. In mapping the original locations, I have excluded four of the 39 as they no longer exist and a further two schools were found after I completed the mapping.⁹ I have also excluded preparatory schools (i.e. schools for younger pupils aged 5-11/5-13) although at least three of these schools re-located outside of London. On the map below (figure 1), 32 schools are included which were largely situated in central London, especially North of the river, with some schools located in London's earlier suburbs of Islington and Camberwell. Several of these schools, eight in total, moved twice following the advancing tide of suburban development as their second sites became over-crowded, dilapidated providing a motive for an additional move. These interim moves have not been mapped, and instead in the second map (figure 2) I show the final and current locations of these schools. Before discussing their final locations, I want to address the motives these schools had for relocating to their new sites. Here I focus, specifically on the motives for schools which left before 1939, as those that came afterwards largely had a different set of reasons.

⁸ These were run by limited companies, sometimes charities, famous examples include the Girl's Public Day School Trust or the Church Day Schools Trust which still exist today. However, they could also be run for a profit.

⁹ These are the Royal Hospital School, in Greenwich until 1889 when it moved to Holbrook near Ipswich, and the City of London Freeman's School, in Brixton until 1926 when it moved out to Kent.

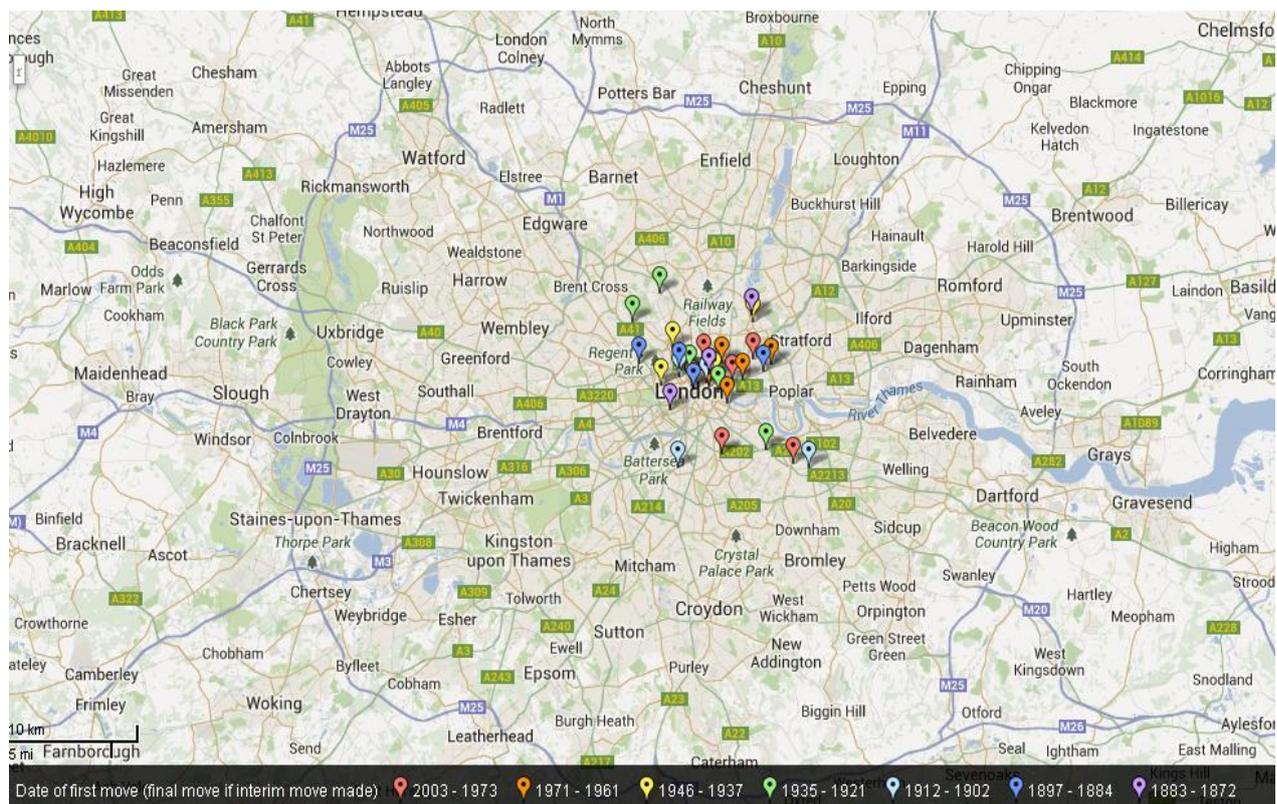


Figure 1: Map to show the locations of 33 secondary schools in central London in 1872 colour-coded by time interval in which they left.

In general the majority of these schools (18) were founded before 1800, before much of the urban development which transformed the immediate surroundings of the schools, as we will see below. These older schools tended to be wealthier than the newer institutions, some owning large estates which funded the schools' operations.¹⁰ These included three of 'the nine' public schools investigated and regulated by the government in the 1860s, namely Charterhouse, St. Paul's School and Merchant Taylor's School. Booth's survey of schooling in the 1890s indicated that many of these older institutions situated in now heavily built-up, polluted and sometimes impoverished neighbourhoods of central London were out of place (Smith 1892). Middle class movement away from most neighbourhoods in central London, meant that daily commuting by bus or train to these prestigious, centrally-located schools was common (Bryant 1986, Campbell 1956, Smith 1892). Parents saw these daily journeys through poorer neighbourhoods as risky, particularly for their daughters though their daughters were not necessarily anxious about the experience (Marsden 1987: pp. 128-129). For three of the schools that suburbanized, Charterhouse, University College School and Merchant Taylor's School, they produced their own surveys on the changing residential patterns of students' families. Parents at Merchant Taylors' were unhappy about sending

¹⁰ One school, St Paul's School, owned considerable estates in East London near Stepney through the Colet Trust. Despite being one of the poorest areas in London, the rents from this estate funded the school (an elite, prestigious private school) until they were compulsorily purchased after 1945 for social housing.

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their children from suburban, rural locations into a polluted, overcrowded central location. By 1928, just before the school decided to re-locate, 43% of students lived 5-7 miles away, 27% over 10 miles away and 18% over 12 miles away, mostly North of the Thames. Changing intake patterns and the simple need to follow their students as their families suburbanized was thus a core part of why these schools began to leave central London.

Despite the importance of their clientele's residential choices in bringing about institutional suburbanization, there are multiple reasons for schools' outward movements. A rural location with large grounds for sports (specifically rugby, cricket, rowing and in the more elite schools 'Eton Fives') was a core part of what was seen to constitute a middle class education (Bryant 1986). Moreover, this was particularly true at the end of the 19th century until the start of the First World War, when the ideological influence of the sports-dominated culture and curriculum of athleticism was most influential (Mangan 2000). It is important to underline this point, as 'internal' educational processes like curriculum interacted with 'external' processes of urban change. The necessity of expansion to allow for greater numbers of students, better more modern facilities in spacious surroundings was also seen as crucial. Proximity to a railway station was also key to the re-location of schools before 1939 and the railways revolutionized intake patterns of private fee-paying schools from the mid-19th century onwards (Scott-Giles and Slater 1966, Braithwaite 2006). On the map of re-located schools (figure 2), there is a considerable concentration of schools in Hertfordshire, North-West of London, which were well-served by local public transport. This area had the early advantage of an underground line (the Metropolitan Line) and the railway to Watford and further afield.

It is important to emphasise here that multiple-causality was at work, with circumstances being slightly different in each case. What is important to emphasise though is that these schools frequently saw this outward move as a necessity to retain or maintain their reputations as schools serving and reproducing the upper-middle class identity and elite (Davies 1921: p. 214, Draper 1962: p. 276). Just as imitation played an important part in personal lives in suburbia (Jackson 1973: p. 170), those schools wishing to attain or confirm their status as elite schools tended to copy the older public schools in acquiring larger new sites (Seaborne and Lowe 1977: p. 43). The suburban and semi-rural setting, generally combined with collegiate architecture like Oxbridge, produced a very strong visual aesthetic and an educational model which has proved phenomenally resilient. This is true today as of the 30 English schools with the highest progression rates to the most selective universities in England, ten of them are schools which re-located from central London to the suburbs (Sutton Trust 2011). Before tracing the continuing effects of suburbanization on London's education system after 1945, I first provide a brief analysis of what was happening to the endowed grammar schools and elite schools remaining in inner or central London.

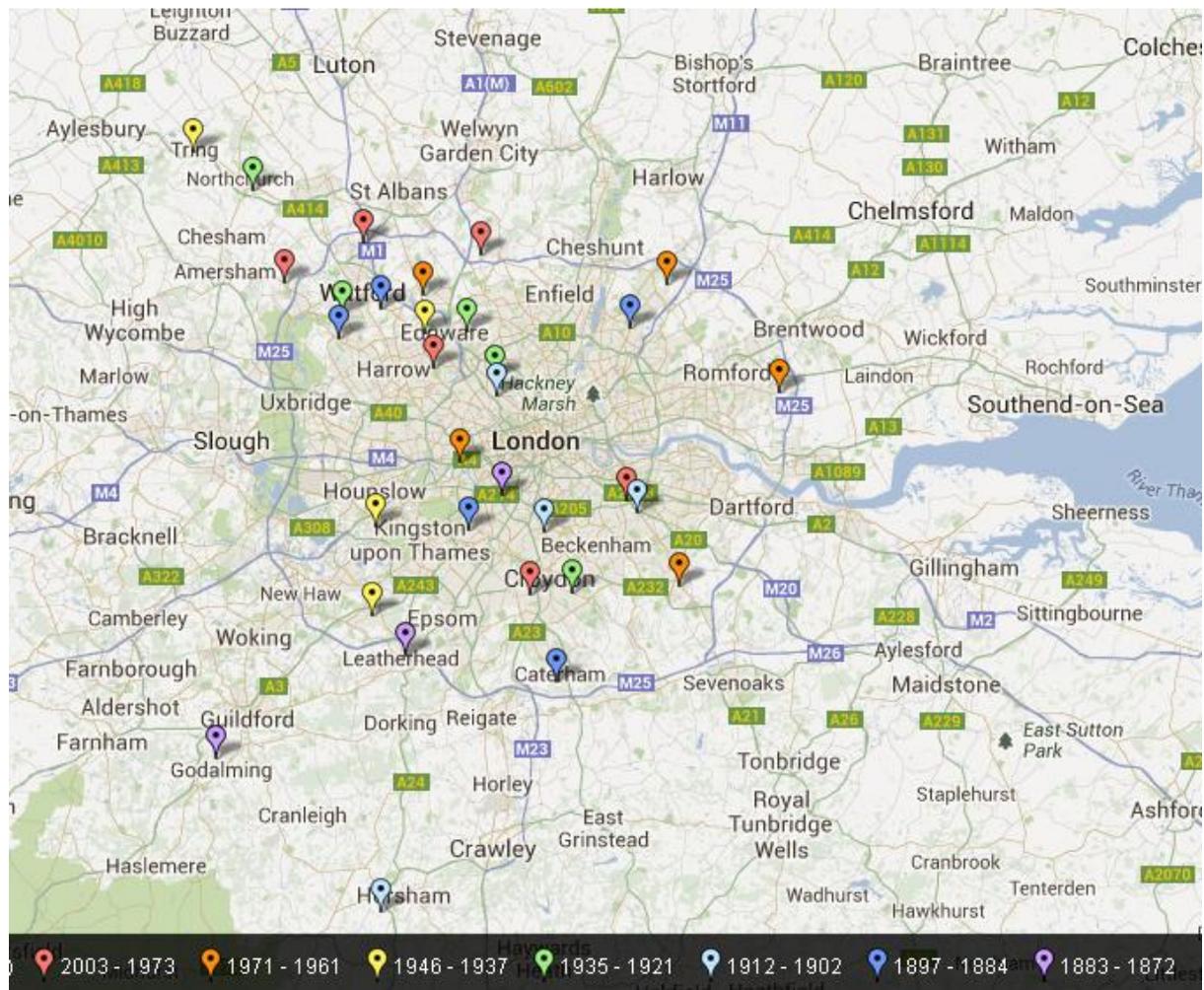


Figure 2: Final and present locations of the 33 schools shown in figure 1, colour-coded by date of relocation

Although the number of schools departing for the suburbs was significant given the relatively small number of schools then in London,¹¹ many well-established middle class schools without the means or desire to leave central London opted to remain. The fate of these schools provides further evidence of the importance of suburbanization on shaping the school system. With the creation of the London School Board (LSB) in 1904 local government gained increasing control over secondary education in London. Not only did the LSB build many new secondary schools, it also funded some of the older Endowed and Proprietary schools. This was necessary as these older schools faced financial problems with

¹¹ According to Lindsay (1926: p. 62), in 1925 there were 103 ‘public’ secondary schools of which 24 were ‘maintained’ (i.e. funded and governed by the London School Board) and fifty were ‘aided’ by the council (meaning they received some sort of government funding but retained greater control over their affairs). In addition there were ‘at least 590’ private schools which then, as now, were very varied. Some of these schools attempted to compete with the former group as ‘first grade’ secondary schools, others were preparatory schools for younger students and some were effectively cramming establishments. By 1925, 14 of the schools mapped here had left inner or central London.

declining fee income as their middle class intake left central London and the East End (Campbell 1956: 80). Between 1920 and 1945, the grammar schools of parts of central London became increasingly working class whilst London grammar schools situated further out London and beyond the city's boundaries were relatively unaffected (Campbell, 1956: 45-50). Campbell identifies three main reasons for this (Ibid: 52):

1. The expansion of the number of secondary school places compared with population size.
2. The increased number of scholarships being offered as a result of the LCC's broadly progressive policy towards greater working class access to secondary schooling.
3. The internal change in class structure of London's population.

Evidence of the effects of this middle-class withdrawal are present in HMI reports on secondary schools in Islington (1905), Stepney (1905), Fulham (1927), Westminster (1928), Chelsea (1935) and Dulwich (1937). This did not affect all secondary schools the same way, as the most established public schools were able to maintain their intake through student commuting or by moving out of London (Campbell 1956: pp. 59-62). The differentiated effects of middle class withdrawal from the city had significant effects on staying on rates after 15/16 within different grammar schools. The sixth form¹² was a crucial element of school reputation and the length of time students could afford to continue studying after 16 varied with their ability and socio-economic circumstances. In 1926 the proportion of pupils over the age of 16 in six London-region fee-paying 'public' schools varied between 17.9% and 37.5%, in 5 grammar schools in suburban middle class areas of London the proportion was between 13.7% and 19.3% whilst in 5 poorer grammar schools in East London it was between 5% and 11.3%. As secondary education expanded, though still only a minority pursuit, internal urban hierarchies of status were created which responded in part to the extensive changes to urban life with the loss of middle class population in Inner London.

Suburbanization of schools and families after 1945

After 1945, as noted above, the character of suburbanization changed substantially with numbers of skilled working class residents moving out to the suburbs (Clapson 2005). Within the boundaries of the LCC and, later, Inner London, the post-war period also saw dramatic demographic change with mass immigration from former colonies and with substantial council house building which changed the identity of many neighbourhoods. During this time the outward movement of schools continued but the reasons for moving out were

¹² The final two years of secondary schooling (16-18) during which university entrance exams were sat. Though much changed, this academic model for finishing secondary school remains the most prestigious post-16 educational route.

significantly different. Two schools left their central London locations for reasons similar to those that had left before 1939. In 1961 Haberdasher's Aske's Boys school moved away from Hoxton, as it had outgrown its premises in what had become an area of inner London social housing following World War Two bomb damage. Three years previously the Jewish Free School had moved from Bethnal Green in central East London to Camden.¹³ The school had found itself isolated from its Jewish community which already in the 1920s had begun to leave the area. A further nine schools left central or Inner London from 1966 to 1977, their principal reason for moving however, was categorically different.

Of these nine schools, eight were state-funded grammar schools,¹⁴ generally semi-independent from government regulation with direct-grant status, and found themselves after 1965 under the indirect responsibility of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). The ILEA and LSB before it were active proponents of the comprehensive school movement. In London this aimed to abolish all forms of selection at age 11 and replace the grammar schools with comprehensive, 'neighbourhood' schools recruiting on the basis of catchment area and, specifically in the ILEA, having a balanced proportion of each ability level. For these 9 schools eventual comprehensivization was inevitable, the only alternative being either re-location or becoming independent, privately-funded schools. Becoming comprehensive schools on the ILEA's terms was unacceptable to the leadership and the parents of pupils in these schools and these schools instead opted to leave Inner London completely for suburban locations in Outer London or further afield in Hertfordshire (a county bordering London). The Labour dominated ILEA had no authority over the boroughs of Outer London, many of which were Conservative-led councils. Many of these Conservative boroughs opted to retain their grammar schools or were able to offer schools wishing to re-locate comprehensivization on more 'acceptable' terms (often including the retention of some degree of selection). These moves were more directly the result in a shift in national educational policy than suburbanization *per se*. However, it was (middle class) suburbanization which had shaped the generally more Conservative-voting political identity of the Outer London boroughs and the Home Counties just outside London's boundaries. The model of the successfully re-located suburban school had, after all, already been well-established by schools that had already moved out.

Although the outward movement of the middle class population continued into the 1970s (Peter Hall 1974, Hamnett 1986, Waugh 1969), the re-location of schools essentially ceased after 1977. Nevertheless, de-centralization of the population and the perceived 'crisis' of

¹³ In 2003 it moved again to Brent to be closer to the Jewish community, it is this move which is mapped above.

¹⁴ The ninth school was St. Paul's School, one of the schools which moved twice and already, at that time, a private public day school.

the inner-cities fed into a brief period of educational research describing an educational crisis of the inner cities in the 1960s and 1970s (For a summary of this literature see McCulloch 2007). Some of this literature specifically identified the potential educational problems of this loss of middle class population in Inner London and the centres of other cities (Raynor 1974, Bash et al. 1985). However, in light of the middle class return to the city which has gathered pace of the 1990s and 2000s (Hamnett 2003), this anxiety about the educational effects of middle class flight seems dumbfounded. Nonetheless, on an institutional level the decision of the eight grammar schools noted above to re-locate permitted them to retain a middle class intake which grammar schools that remained in central London were unable to do. The conversion to comprehensive status and the loss of the ability to select children by ability at 11 in a very real way ‘let space in’. These former grammar schools had been established to serve early middle class suburbs in Kentish Town/Holloway (The Holloway School) or Hackney (Hackney Downs School), the advancing ripple of suburbia had long left these institutions behind. As their original middle class inhabitants had, by the 1970s and 1980s, largely departed, these schools found themselves serving catchment areas which now had large areas of social housing and new migrant groups. Schools like the Holloway School were able to be successful in spite of this, but others like Hackney Downs School lacked the steady school management required to survive this shift in intake (Tomlinson 1998). A broader survey is needed to establish the extent and nature of these processes of grammar-comprehensive conversions.

Conclusion – suburbanization’s long tail of educational effects

By the 1990s then, suburbanization was no longer the major urban change affecting educational institutions in London as it perhaps had been for middle class secondary schools before 1939. However, the knock-on and long-term effects of this process combined with new urban changes to produce the stereotypical image in the 1990s and into the early 2000s of low performance in Inner London secondary schools. This reputation is no longer warranted with the most recent data revealing Inner London’s secondary schools to be improving quicker than schools with similarly deprived intakes elsewhere in the country (Cook 2012). Nevertheless it is still true that most suburban Outer London boroughs have higher educational results at 18 than Inner London boroughs, but not if you are a Free School Meals student. The anxiety and dilemmas of middle class parents which the school choice literature of the 1990s and early 2000s recorded (Gewirtz et al. 1995, Butler and Robson 2003a), can be better understood through a historical contextualization accounting for early urban-educational change. Examining the effects of suburbanization on the secondary schools which were built to serve the middle class population of Inner or central London in the 19th century, reveals how London’s secondary school system, in its infancy, was not built to serve working class needs at all. Only with the establishment of mass

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secondary education after 1944 did secondary education become a reality for the majority of young people. Prior to this secondary education was for primarily for London's middle class youth plus a sprinkling of working class youth. This remained true even as London's middle class population declined with suburbanization between 1900 and 1939 as Campbell (1956) noted. Even after 1944 it is a matter of historical (and political) debate whether the secondary school system in fact served the needs of London's working classes. Nevertheless, the departure of the middle class from the inner city and the institutional suburbanization which occurred alongside this, are crucial to understanding the educational 'dilemmas' of London's gentrifiers in the 1990s and into the 2000s. Their recent experience, and the experience of schools, former grammar schools and otherwise, are nested in this long tail of effects which resulted from the long middle class absence from large parts of Inner London. It is important not to overstate the effects of this, as international immigration, social housing and de-industrialization, as well as educational reforms like comprehensivization, were key factors in shaping London's school system after 1945.

Moreover, the model created, or perhaps reinforced, when these elite/middle class secondary schools left inner London remains largely unchallenged as *the* model for social reproduction through schooling in England. There are notable exceptions to this, with certain newer state schools having been colonized by the middle classes in certain neighbourhoods and sometimes schools in working class neighbourhoods which buck the trend. However, the aesthetic and the particular ideal of a suburban or semi-rural elite secondary education remains visually and educationally tremendously powerful in English society. Evidence of this was seen in April 2013 with the announcement by an Academy school in Brixton that they wished to open a state-funded boarding school in the Surrey countryside to serve Brixton's ethnically diverse community. Images of the proposed site fit exactly the same model that was adopted by schools wishing to re-locate in the late 19th and early 20th century and the building was in fact used by a former private school. Interestingly this has proved unacceptable to a local Conservative politician who was forced to resign after making racist comments objecting to the school's new location in a white (middle class), rural village (Ellery 2013). Furthermore despite inner London's gentrification, recent research suggests that moving house to ensure access to allegedly 'better', selective grammar school education in London's rural periphery is still happening (Smith and Higley 2012).¹⁵

Finally, it is difficult to show a direct causal link between the process of suburbanization I have described and the apparent perception amongst students and parents that schooling is

¹⁵ This article in some ways parallels the findings of an article by Ray Pahl (1963) comparing commuter's educational decisions and those of locals in Hertfordshire villages in the 1950s.

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better in Outer London and the suburbs (MR Tim Butler and Chris Hamnett 2011, Watson and Church 2009, Ball et al. 2000). Any link made between the removal of a particular group of relatively elite schools from 1872 to 1977 and those perceptions must be tentative at best and further work could be done to examine differences in attainment between Inner and Outer London in greater depth. Nevertheless, it reveals how a broad general trend of (sub-)urban development can shape educational structures over long periods of time, producing patterns of educational attainment over boroughs and schools with strong traditions of sending students to certain universities. Students and parents may not be consciously aware of the historical processes shaping these inequalities but they are certainly aware of the differences, as they perceive them, between suburban and inner-city schools.

As I outlined above, there is a particular value in understanding how historical changes shape contemporary sociological phenomena. This is especially true in the context of British schooling reforms which currently seem to assume that institutional change through the conversion of comprehensive schools into academies will allow schools to escape the sociological realities of their intake and their reputation and status in relation to other local schools. Comprehensive schools were, in a very different way and context, intended to do the same thing but the number of areas where they actually succeeded in escaping their prior roles was small (Newsam 2003, Brighouse 2003). In the context of reviewing the effects of suburbanization on the nature of secondary school provision, it has been suggested to me that a similar institutional transformation may result from the gentrification of Inner London by the middle classes. Given the time-lag as educational institutions respond to urban changes in local populations, it is unlikely that a comprehensive answer to that question will be possible soon. We already know that the gentrifying middle class is active in colonizing certain desirable primary and secondary schools (MR Tim Butler and Chris Hamnett 2011, Vincent et al. 2004, Butler and Robson 2003a). However, it would be wrong to give all the agency in the urban-educational field to the middle class and particularly the white middle class. I am aware that this article could be seen as being guilty of this and a study of the educational effects of working class suburbanization is equally necessary. Moreover, improvements in results at 16 amongst poorer students in inner London (Cook 2013, Wyness 2011) suggest that it may be the ethnic minority working class who is currently having a larger impact on inner London's schools. Whether this continues in the face of continuing gentrification and cuts to housing benefit remains to be seen.

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