



Young Adults of Maghrebi Origin from the French Banlieues: Social Mobility in Action?

Emmanuelle Santelli

► To cite this version:

Emmanuelle Santelli. Young Adults of Maghrebi Origin from the French Banlieues: Social Mobility in Action?. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 2012, 13 (4), pp.541-563. 10.1007/s12134-011-0232-2 . halshs-00683029

HAL Id: halshs-00683029

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00683029>

Submitted on 8 Nov 2022

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

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

Young Adults of Maghrebi Origin from the French Banlieues: Social Mobility in Action?

Emmanuelle Santelli

**Journal of International Migration
and Integration**

ISSN 1488-3473

Volume 13

Number 4

Int. Migration & Integration (2012)

13:541-563

DOI 10.1007/s12134-011-0232-2

Fall
2012
Vol 13, No 4

**Journal of International
Migration and Integration**



 Springer

 Springer

Your article is protected by copyright and all rights are held exclusively by Springer Science+Business Media B.V.. This e-offprint is for personal use only and shall not be self-archived in electronic repositories. If you wish to self-archive your work, please use the accepted author's version for posting to your own website or your institution's repository. You may further deposit the accepted author's version on a funder's repository at a funder's request, provided it is not made publicly available until 12 months after publication.

Young Adults of Maghrebi Origin from the French Banlieues: Social Mobility in Action?

Emmanuelle Santelli

Published online: 23 March 2012
© Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2012

Abstract A cohort of young French adults of Maghrebi origin, aged 20 to 29, who grew up in the same banlieue neighbourhood was constructed and used to observe their labour market integration. The biographical survey reviewed the pathways of these young men and women through the prism of social mobility. On the one hand, their parents' migration (from one of three Maghreb countries), low skills level and occupations are not conducive to upward social mobility; on the other hand, the expectation of integration, the aspiration to a better life and education in French society are potentially positive factors. After describing the fieldwork conditions, the article presents the results as a typology comprising five types of occupational integration. These are compared with the parents' occupational status in order to define the form of social mobility. While some young adults have clearly experienced upward social mobility, others have not managed to find stable employment in the blue-collar category. This outcome can be attributed partly to the diversity of educational pathways. However, the analysis would not be complete without a discussion of the changes in the labour market, growing job insecurity and downclassing. These new trends, which affect the whole population, have a special resonance in a situation of urban segregation, generating new inequalities. The occupational statuses of these young adults highlight the deindustrialization that has taken place between their parents' generation and their own, constraining opportunities for social mobility.

Keywords Banlieue neighbourhood · Labour market · Social mobility · Typology · Young adults

E. Santelli (✉)

Chargée de recherche CNRS at the Centre Max Weber, Université de Lyon, INED, Paris, France
e-mail: emmanuelle.santelli@ish-lyon.cnrs.fr

E. Santelli

Institut des Sciences de l'Homme, Centre Max Weber, 14, avenue Berthelot, 69363 Lyon Cedex 07, France

E. Santelli

Sociologist, CNRS, Centre Max Weber, Lyon University, INED, France

Research recently started to address the socio-occupational pathways of second-generation migrants in terms of social mobility.¹ The occupational status of their parents, most of whom are or were unskilled migrant workers, is not conducive to upward social mobility—the power of social reproduction is well known.² However, the parents' social status is not limited to their occupations in the country of settlement; they may have had a higher and/or more valued status in the country of origin, and they may also be literate in their native language. Migration may have led to downclassing. At the same time, structural conditions in the country of settlement may have facilitated access to higher education, offering more opportunity to achieve upward mobility than in the country of origin. The mobilisation of family resources, channelled into the children's success, can also be a positive factor in achieving a higher status that would justify their parents' migration.

Numerous studies also highlight the unfavourable living conditions of migrant workers' families, including lower incomes, less stable employment, a high unemployment rate, illiteracy and inferior residential environment. These conditions reduce the possibility of social mobility, since there is a causal link between living conditions and propensity to achieve upward social mobility in disadvantaged social groups. Conversely, access to a social network outside a deprived neighbourhood can be a positive factor, which can compensate for the residential environment. A community network is another possible ticket to social mobility.

Taking these factors into consideration, this paper focuses on the socio-occupational status of a cohort of young French adults of Maghrebi origin who all grew up in the same disadvantaged neighbourhood in the banlieue (peripheral suburbs) of Lyon. The article examines their socio-occupational pathways and differing opportunities for social mobility according to their social and individual characteristics. The undeniable impact of this residential environment, a banlieue neighbourhood,³ is included.

This article is divided into five sections. After describing the methodology, the first section sets out the approach to the research question, posed in terms of social mobility, as well as the main hypotheses developed to interrogate it. The following three sections are devoted to the empirical analysis, which is based on a typology. Five types of socio-occupational integration pathway are identified. Indeed, far from forming a homogeneous group, these young adults exhibit divergent pathways within their own age group (20–29) and in comparison with their migrant fathers, who were unskilled or low-skilled workers. The typology highlights the factors that facilitate or hamper upward social mobility, since some young people are clearly experiencing social mobility, while others manifest social reproduction, and still others do not have the means even to attain the same status as their parents. The last section addresses the link between the father's occupational status and that of the second generation. This inter-generational

¹ Recent publications include: Crul (2000), *Journal of International Migration and Integration* (2001), Santelli (2001), Meurs et al. (2005), Platt (2006), Silberman and Fournier (2006), Simon (2007), Papademetriou et al. (2008), Zhou et al. (2008), *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2008).

² In addition to the seminal work by Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) on the mechanisms of reproduction of social hierarchies, other works on social mobility provide figures to support this, both at the bottom and at the top of the social hierarchy. On the French case, see Merllié and Prévot (1991) and http://www.inegalites.fr/spip.php?page=article&id_article=904.

³ The literature on this subject is abundant. Recent studies include Lapeyronnie (2008) and Avenel (2004), describing the specific features of this type of residential environment in France.

perspective draws attention to the disparity in social conditions experienced by the two generations, and reveals how worsening economic conditions are exacerbating the impact of segregation, which particularly affects young people of foreign origin.

A Cohort: a New Approach That Yields More Contrasting Results

Researching a cohort⁴ of young French people of Maghrebi origin who have experienced the same environment during the same period seemed the most suitable method for overcoming the assumption of a relatively homogeneous group of young adults based on their common migration history, working-class status and Muslim culture.⁵ In this methodology, all the young adults who grew up in the same neighbourhood were studied, irrespective of their socio-occupational status and place of residence at the time of the survey. The method therefore did not consist in interviewing council estate youths hanging around outside, but in tracing young adults who grew up in the same neighbourhood during the same period in order to understand the differences and similarities in their pathways. The analysis thus covers young adults with different profiles in order to gain a better understanding of what growing up in the banlieue can lead to. Does having a similar past and similar experiences create a “common destiny”? The aim of my approach, which is deliberately longitudinal, is to capture how the experience of growing up in the banlieue affects entry into adulthood and the labour market.

The scope of the survey, conducted in 2003 for a monograph, was all the young men and women who grew up in one peripheral working-class neighbourhood of Lyon.⁶ The respondents were aged between 20 and 29; their parents migrated from one of three Maghreb countries (Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia) and they themselves were French: 94% were French citizens at the time of the survey and approximately the same percentage were born in France. At the time of the survey, slightly more than half of these young adults still lived in the neighbourhood... in other words, almost half had moved out.

On the basis of the survey (see Methodology inset), five types of socio-occupational pathway were identified. This typology, derived from the analysis of the qualitative material (biographical interviews),⁷ was constructed with reference to their subjective status. The typology is intended to be a summary of the modes of entry into the labour force set against the backdrop of their longer pathways, assessed through the prism of two criteria: place of residence and educational qualification.

⁴ In demography, a cohort is a group of individuals who have experienced a similar event during the same period of time: here, growing up in the same neighbourhood.

⁵ These young adults are the children of migrants who came to France from one of three Maghreb countries (Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco) between the 1950s and the 1980s. The fathers, classed as migrant workers, held manual jobs in various industrial sectors (in construction, chemicals, car manufacturing, etc.). Most of these jobs were unskilled and their working conditions were hard. The mothers joined the fathers under family reunification schemes. Depending on their social and personal characteristics, the families' experiences of exile varied.

⁶ Located on the former industrial periphery south-east of Lyon, the neighbourhood consists of social housing in mid-rise and high-rise blocks. The neighbourhood has been targeted by the city's policies for around 10 years owing to the high concentration of social problems (high unemployment, wage insecurity, low incomes and over-representation of welfare recipients). It is a *zone urbaine sensible* (ZUS) or “sensitive urban area” in the official terminology. See Methodology inset on the field survey.

⁷ Applied to the questionnaires, the statistical analysis confirmed the existence of the five main types of socio-occupational integration.

Living in the neighbourhood or not living in the neighbourhood at the time of the survey proved to be determinant and represents the first division between the young adults. Apart from the characteristics of the place itself, having left the neighbourhood is an indicator of family status: having moved out of the neighbourhood implies certain resources.⁸ The second decisive criterion is educational qualification; it distinguishes between young people who have a qualification and those who do not, and indicates the level of education attained (ranging from a junior secondary vocational certificate to a higher education degree).

While these two characteristics have an explanatory dimension, we cannot deduce a systematic causal link between having a characteristic and belonging to a type. Employment status at the time of the survey reveals how the characteristics are represented in each type and combine with other factors, such as an insecure employment contract. Some young people are especially likely to be employed on insecure contracts and are thus more vulnerable on the labour market. This concerns not only young people with no qualifications or a low-level qualification but also deskilled university graduates. Educational qualifications have different impacts on the modes of entry into the labour market depending on whether they are academic or vocational. Three types in the typology consist almost entirely of men with no qualification or a low-level qualification. The other two types consist mainly of women with qualifications, which, in a majority of cases, is a higher education degree. The types thus also exhibit a strong gender dimension.

The five types—the *excluded*, the *insecure moving towards emancipation*, the *invisible proletarians*, the *insecure graduates* and the *stable employed*⁹—describe the specific features of each group. They offer insights into these young adults' modes of entry into the labour market, depending on their individual and social characteristics. The quantitative results mentioned come from the statistical mining of the 200 questionnaires. Each type accounts for roughly one fifth of the total, except the insecure moving towards emancipation, slightly less than one fifth and the stable employed, slightly more than one fifth.

At the time of the survey, these young adults could be in one of three situations: in education (slightly fewer than one quarter of the total), in employment (almost half) or unemployed (slightly more than one quarter). Apart from the young people in education, their status is characterised by insecurity: almost two thirds had a relatively insecure status (including 20% with an extremely insecure status). The analysis focuses on the young adults who are no longer in education.

⁸ Three-quarters of the young people no longer living in the neighbourhood left when their parents moved to another area. Leaving the neighbourhood represents an improvement in living conditions, even if the new residential environment may differ little in objective term from the neighbourhood they moved out of. For the families, however, it may represent an opportunity to move into non-social housing and/or a more sought-after residential environment and/or to buy their own home. The young people who left the neighbourhood when they moved out of their parents' home, the move is also always perceived positively: occurring upon marriage or, less frequently, for a job or education.

⁹ For a more detailed description, see Santelli (2007a). It should be noted that the typology is an analysis of the situation at a given point in time. In no way does it describe a static condition: the pathways of these young people can change to another type due to age or to an improvement in their social position attributable to personal strategies or resources or to structural conditions (decrease in unemployment, policies that target youth, etc.). The analysis was performed on three quarters of the young people who were no longer in education at the time of the survey.

A Specific Context? Some Issues and Definitions

Examining the social mobility of young adults from the banlieue, including young French adults of Maghrebi origin, amounts to interrogating the influence of their residential environment and how it affects their entry into the labour market. Their modes of entry into the labour market also offer a snapshot of current structural conditions (school streams, conditions on the local and national labour market, wage insecurity, etc.). How do these conditions affect their access to the labour market? The research question also involves considering the personal context of each person (family status, available resources, parents'/father's occupational status, etc.). The combination of these three contextual levels—micro, meso and macro—reveals the multiplicity of factors influencing social mobility.

If we define social mobility as a change in socio-occupational position compared with the previous generation, the occupational positions attained by these young adults, who face increasing employment insecurity, prompt us to investigate the factors facilitating or hampering their upward mobility. This article therefore seeks to study their propensity for upward social mobility depending on their main characteristics. In other words, does their social condition (as young adults who have attended school, who have an educational qualification in some cases, and who are proficient in the language and codes of the settlement country, all of which differentiates them strongly from their parents) enable them to obtain a higher position than their fathers¹⁰? If so, how are they distributed in the occupational hierarchy, given that almost all of their fathers were manual workers? Do some of these young adults hold similar positions to their fathers or perhaps lower positions than them? Changes in the labour market prompt the question because, when the second generation are employed as unskilled workers on insecure contracts, isn't this situation perceived as worse? The fathers of these young adults entered the labour market at a time when unemployment was low, and they held their first jobs as manual workers when the industrial sector was still booming. They therefore experienced relatively secure wage employment, at least for part of their working lives, whereas their children are entering the labour market at a time of job insecurity (Wacquant 1996; Roulleau-Berger 2004). Deskilling, a phenomenon observed in our societies, might be aggravated by living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. These young adults have, however, benefited from educational democratisation. To what extent has upward mobility been facilitated by higher education degrees? Compared with the majority group, we already know that this population is more frequently insecure, unemployed and reports feeling discriminated against (Beauchemin et al. 2010). How likely therefore is upward social mobility for them?

In an attempt to answer these questions, my approach was to look at what happened prior to labour market entry, by mapping the whole educational pathway. The three empirical sections, focused on the different pathways in this cohort of young adults, describe five types of labour market integration and the explanatory factors in each. That analysis concerns the respondents' subjective status. In the last section of the article, the analysis describes the changes observed from one generation to the next in order to identify the objective conditions of social mobility. The

¹⁰ Only a minority of the mothers worked (see the last section of the article).

contribution of this article to the analysis of social mobility is mainly the combination of subjective and objective perspectives, offering insights into why upward mobility is possible for some people, whereas others who aspired to social mobility now find themselves insecure and still others are excluded. In this way, my approach differs from a survey of inter-generational social mobility based on statistical data.

Methodology: the field survey

The neighbourhood selected is located in a municipality south-east of the city of Lyon on the old industrial periphery. The housing stock is social housing and the population is less than 10,000. Data from the French national statistics office – Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE) – highlight the increasingly insecure wage employment faced by these residents, compared with residents of the municipality's town centre. The unemployment rate among residents of the neighbourhood aged 25–49 is 32%, compared with 8% among those who live in the municipality's town centre – in other words, four times higher. Regarding insecure employment contracts, the percentage of neighbourhood residents on fixed-term contracts is twice as high (13% compared with 6.5%) and the percentage on temporary or government-subsidized contracts is more than six times as high (6% and 7%, compared with 1% in the town centre). The number of residents “with no qualification” is three times higher in the neighbourhood, at 39% compared with 13% in the town centre.

The records of the primary schools located in the neighbourhood were used to compile the list of young adults born between 1974 and 1983 with an address in the selected neighbourhood and both parents with Maghrebi first names and surnames (to exclude children of mixed parentage).

Of the 473 individuals identified, some did not live in the neighbourhood long enough to be included (e.g. they were enrolled at a local school for only one year), and others could not be contacted: I was unable to find any information on 55 people. Other specific situations emerged for a further 25 people (three were intellectually disabled, five were in jail at the time of the survey, 14 were living abroad – mostly in their parents' country of origin – and three had died). In total, the cohort consisted of 393 young adults, of whom 200 were surveyed by questionnaire. All surveys have a non-response rate, and none – or almost none – covers an entire population with no exceptions. In this case, almost one young adult in two was surveyed. Altogether, the 200 young people surveyed form a representative sample, not in the statistical sense because the approach is qualitative, but in the sense that the sample in the two data sets (questionnaire survey and interview) reflects the **breakdown** by gender, place of residence and social status of all the young adults, because, apart from the 55 who could not be contacted, I was able to gather minimum information about all the others (educational qualification, place of residence and employment status) from family members. Care was taken not to include too many siblings (families have an average of six children) in order to ensure that all the sibships were represented.

The questionnaire included many questions about the main themes of their biographical pathways. Around thirty biographical interviews were also conducted. The two survey methods – questionnaire and interview – led to a biographical analysis. The survey covered the respondents' life pathways between their childhood in the neighbourhood and the date of the survey through seven main themes: relationship with the neighbourhood, educational pathway, employment, modes of sociability, family relationships, moving out of the parental home and union formation (if applicable), and sense of belonging.

The time limit of one year for the survey set by one of the institutions funding the research (the Directorate of Population and Migration at the French Ministry of Social Affairs) meant that it was not possible to perform a comparative study with other young people of a different origin or from a different neighbourhood. It was already a gamble to find all the young adults for this survey, given that some of them had moved out of the neighbourhood and I did not know at the outset how I would locate them. Lastly, as in any survey, I received refusals. Almost all of these came from the most distressed young adults, even though they probably have the most free time. A methodological analysis of the survey conditions exists in a previous article (Santelli, 2010a).

Pathways Characterised by Exclusion: Impossible Reproduction

In the first type—the excluded—occupational integration remains problematic. These young adults, with or without a low-level qualification, experience long or repeated periods of unemployment, insecure short-term jobs and no prospect of improving their employment conditions. Excluded from the wage society, they bear the brunt of the fragmentation and inequality of the labour market, and feel increasingly “insecure” or worse, “excluded” (Dubet 2000).

The Excluded: Struggle or Labour-Market Rejection¹¹

The young adults in this type, almost exclusively men, live in the neighbourhood and are aged 20–25. Two thirds of them left school without any qualification. Men are strongly over-represented among respondents with no qualification.¹² Advised to enter short vocational streams leading to a *certificat d'aptitudes professionnelles* or a *brevet d'études professionnelles* (BEP),¹³ they either failed or dropped out. Their school results had generally been poor since primary school, a situation that may have been simultaneous with an entry into petty crime that aggravated their difficulties. The distress they experienced at school was also worse when they felt discriminated against, particularly in subject/career guidance.

With no qualifications or work experience, these young adults have a dismal employment record. Only one in five was working at the time of the survey, as unskilled manual workers on insecure (temporary or fixed-term) contracts. No one in this type had held a job for more than three consecutive months since they left school: there is thus no opportunity for socialisation in and through the workforce. This group knows only the margins of the labour market, and discontinuously, having held only jobs requiring no particular qualification, such as handling, cleaning and security. These extremely insecure young adults form a “reserve” to meet spot needs on the local labour market. For example, when a new supermarket is built, they will be employed for a few weeks mounting shelves. They are one of the faces of globalisation described by Sassen (2009, p. 197), who points out that the process of economic restructuring is based on a simultaneous increase in jobs for highly skilled specialists and low-paid unskilled workers in services and production. Failure at school is the first stage in a series of exclusions, which fosters a sense of living on the margins permanently.

These young adults epitomise youths from council estates. Unemployed or only occasionally employed, they spend most of their time outside with their friends and

¹¹ In both senses of rejecting the labour market and being rejected by it.

¹² This type comprises the largest number of young people with no qualification; more than half of all the young adults with no qualification belong to this type. Fully 25% of all the respondents have no qualification. The figure is 34% of those who were no longer in education at the time of the survey. That figure is in line with the results from other ZUS (see Observatoire des ZUS), but is much higher than the national average. The unemployment rate of people with no qualification is almost three times that of higher education graduates (INSEE employment surveys 1982–2008).

¹³ These are 2-year vocational courses, with the CAP covering a narrower range of subjects than the BEP. In the French school system, students are usually channelled into these vocational streams at the end of junior secondary school, so the students in the streams are aged between 15 and 17. In France, it is compulsory to attend school until the age of 16.

are highly visible on the estates. They have an intimate knowledge of the workings of the neighbourhood. Part of their survival strategies, the neighbourhood is their structure and the group its foundation—friends from the neighbourhood provide valuable support, as they are often the only people they can rely on. However, they are aware of how fragile the connection is because their friends are as bereft of resources as they are and might leave at any time. In the meantime, these friendships are a way to kill time, to try to forget their problems and to pool resources in order to get by. The pathways of these young adults reveal experiences of violence, social problems and personal problems, aggravated by economic insecurity, which together form a vicious circle from which they have not yet been able to escape. Usually cut off from the support of employment integration services (Santelli and Legube 2005), they rely on “contacts” to find jobs, usually the same temporary or cash-in-hand kind they have had before. Real and perceived discrimination in accessing employment and in the workplace is compounded by the lack of prospects of a stable job.

The interviews with these young adults reveal a deep sense of despair, psychological suffering and extreme physical fatigue, indicative of their deep distress, even if they try to give a different impression in a desperate attempt at “rationalisation of survival strategies in a context of no jobs” (Dubet 2003/1987, p. 12). Although they are young, their lack of occupational and personal prospects (without a stable job, when will they be able to leave their parents’ home, form a union, have children, make plans for the future?) make them feel excluded from society. They therefore withdraw into themselves and the neighbourhood. They have (over-) invested in the neighbourhood and appropriated it: it is *their* neighbourhood. For a lack of other frameworks of reference, they feel comfortable with the norms of the neighbourhood, which they reinforce,¹⁴ and find themselves bereft of resources when they have to deal with other practices.

Compared with the previous generation of migrant workers, these young adults do not even exhibit social reproduction, i.e. maintaining a social position—downclassing is evident in their case. And it is felt all the more keenly as they have attended school and not experienced exile, which made their parents feel disadvantaged in the country of settlement. Their other object of comparison is a group of peers, some of whom have done better. Lacking resources, confined by their residential environment, which reinforces their stigmatisation, they are excluded from the wage society.

A Pathway Characterised by Remaining in Manual Work: a Case of Social Reproduction

This type, the invisible proletarians, also consists mostly of men. But it differs from the previous type by stable wage employment. These young adults’ integration into the labour market reflects undeniable occupational skills, making them sought-after labour.

¹⁴ They enforce a certain moral order, a key effect of which is to limit the presence of young women in the outside areas (see Santelli 2010a).

The Invisible Proletarians: Reproducing a Manual Worker Status

The young adults in this predominantly male type also still live in the neighbourhood. Either they still live with their parents or have moved out of their parents' home but prefer to live nearby. They differ from the men of the previous type, however by their "invisibility" in the neighbourhood: they do not maintain any relationship with the neighbourhood; their friends, frame of reference and leisure activities are all outside the neighbourhood. They live a kind of double life, separating the two social worlds (in and outside the neighbourhood), which is similar to the next type.

While half of the respondents in this type also have no educational qualification, they differ by their occupational stability: they all have permanent jobs, mainly in manual work, some of them in (highly) skilled positions. Their occupational integration may have taken time after they left school, but they have acquired undeniable experience and occupational skills that have a protective effect on the labour market. With several years' employment behind them, they have developed skills and a structure for themselves. In addition, by securing permanent positions, they have achieved stability in the labour market. For some, this pathway was facilitated by specific types of vocational qualifications, which have proved more profitable by providing know-how valued by employers. In any case, this group feels recognised in the workforce.

These young adults have also benefited from a more structured social environment, within their family circle and through relationships with teachers and advisors at educational institutions and social services from whom they have sought advice or to whom they have been referred. Those interactions were milestones towards entry into adulthood and they took advantage of them. Overall their pathways have been less chaotic, even if these young adults have sometimes felt they were treated unfairly. But unlike the first two types, they have found a place more quickly (through their jobs, sociability networks and other activities, such as sport). They feel that they belong to society.

Their obvious socialisation in and by French society differentiates them from their fathers. But they are like their fathers in that they are employed in elementary administration and service occupations on permanent contracts. Generally, they do not work in the same industrial sector and are also more present in services, owing to the restructuring of the labour market (security, supermarkets, etc.). Their successful occupational integration, despite two disadvantageous characteristics—having no or a low-level qualification and being young men from the banlieue—makes them a special case. Indeed, this pathway is relatively rare in the *zones urbaines sensibles* (ZUS), where the majority of young men of Maghrebi origin are either unemployed or experience recurring insecurity (moving between casual jobs, temping, fixed-term contracts and unemployment).¹⁵

They have not experienced upward social mobility at this stage in their life cycle—they are aged under 30—but they have acquired a stable job and are developing skills through work experience. They are unusual in that they have managed to reproduce their fathers' social position amid increasing economic insecurity and a destructured

¹⁵ Men who live in a ZUS are more than twice as likely to be unemployed as men who do not; the gap is smaller for women (INSEE, employment survey, 2008).

labour market. When they were younger, their pathways were similar in some ways to the pathways of the excluded and the insecure moving towards emancipation (early school leaving, low-level educational qualifications and insecure manual jobs), but certain factors in their pathways set them apart. Despite their tough exterior, the excluded feel vulnerable: the biographical interviews rapidly reveal their emotional scars (feeling excluded, family conflict, separation, violence, etc.). They try to protect themselves by withdrawing into the group and by “messing around”, but these scars exacerbate their social problems, and offer some explanation for their fragmented pathways. Self-esteem, which is crucial from primary socialisation onwards,¹⁶ is problematic for this group. Their struggle is an expression of family distress: these young people’s family environments did not provide them with the recognition they needed for their psychological and identity development¹⁷; as a result, their whole lives are unstructured. That effect persists, particularly as their families remain distressed for various reasons. By contrast, the invisible proletarians seem to have fewer emotional scars, because their families provided a more protective, structured framework and/or because, like the next type, the insecure moving towards emancipation, they have resources that enable them to do better. Unlike the insecure moving towards emancipation, however, the invisible proletarians have secured a place in the workforce and do not contest the current employment hierarchy. They justify it by explaining that they “work hard” like their fathers, and that they have had to prove themselves but that their efforts have been rewarded by the stability they have acquired.

Pathways Characterised by Insecurity: a Deterioration of Employment Conditions

Two of the five types are characterised by job insecurity: the insecure moving towards emancipation and the insecure graduates. One type consists mostly of men who left the neighbourhood when their parents moved to another area. The other type consists mainly of women who still live in the neighbourhood, because their parents have not been able to leave it. These types exhibit starkly contrasting educational pathways: the insecure moving towards emancipation have a similar level of qualification to the first two types (no qualification or a secondary vocational qualification), whereas most of the insecure graduates have a higher education degree. Despite their many differences, these two types share one key characteristic: they are confronted with the increasing insecurity of wage employment. Their employment status is particularly hard for them to accept as they expected to achieve upward social mobility.

¹⁶ This can be compared to A. Honneth’s “recognition through love” (2007).

¹⁷ We are obviously reaching the limits of our discipline here. Some scholars nevertheless address these aspects, such as V. de Gauléjac and I. Taboada-Léonetti, who reveal the close links between identity and dignity: “The positivity attached to the self is an important human characteristic and a vital need” (1994, p. 96). During meetings with these young people, micro actions reveal how damaged their self-esteem is, which has a huge impact on their lives as a whole. The testimonial of Amrani and Beaud (2004) offers another illustration: his difficulty relating to others outside the neighbourhood stems from a lack of self-esteem even within his family. That distress, combined with a socially stigmatising status, produces and aggravates the processes of social exclusion, exacerbating their suffering and making it very hard for them to make progress: access to other social territories seems difficult or even impossible.

The Insecure Moving Towards Emancipation: Able to Mobilise Resources to Improve Their Situation

Like the two previous types, this type is also predominantly male, but, unlike them, all these young people live outside the neighbourhood. This group is older on average than the excluded: half of them are aged 26 to 29. Another significant difference is that slightly over half have a qualification (usually a secondary vocational certificate). Half of them were also working at the time of the survey, employed on insecure short-term contracts, mostly as temporary manual workers.

Like the excluded, these young people, with no or a low-level qualification, all experienced insecure unskilled jobs in the early years of their working lives (as handlers, builders' labourers or order pickers). Unlike the first group, however, they have never or rarely been out of employment: the jobs held were short-term but regular. And they have always preferred to work, even in tough jobs, because they are motivated by longer term goals.

While their experience of education and labour market entry is similar to that of the excluded group, their pathways seem more open now. After several years in the workforce, these young adults perceive their working conditions as exhausting and degrading—working as an insecure employee is a dead end, from which they want to escape before it is too late. The young adults in this type share a common experience: after an event (workplace accident, repeated disappointments or family assistance), they have developed new occupational goals. The combination of experience of conditions in the workforce, where they feel vulnerable and increasingly depleted physically (they hold poorly paid, physically demanding jobs that offer no opportunities for advancement), and their personal goals has encouraged them to envision an alternative occupational future. They thus differ from the excluded, who have fewer resources and for whom stigmatisation is a bigger barrier.

More frequently employed, despite very difficult working conditions, they have managed to cope. They cite the “value of work” to explain that working is a way for them to achieve recognition. But disappointed with wage employment, they say they no longer want to accept any conditions (low hourly wages, odd working hours, difficult or dangerous tasks, etc.) and demand to be treated equally. Victims of labour market restructuring, they contest their working conditions, in an echo of their fathers' lot as exploited migrant labour in industry (Pitti 2008). By expressing a goal of upward social mobility and the aspiration to build a better future for themselves, they reject the social reproduction to which they feel condemned, and the additional hardship of increasing job insecurity.

At the time of the survey, they were working towards an occupational goal (training to obtain a valued skilled job or setting up a business). Integrated into a denser network of social relations, they have the resources (especially family resources) to make this career change. They have a more protective family network, which provides assistance or support or offers a role model, as in the case of families where the father and/or an elder brother or sister have set up a business. They nevertheless remain vulnerable because of the segmentation of the labour market and discrimination against young men from housing estates.

Although they left the neighbourhood when their parents moved out, they maintain ties with the neighbourhood and continue to go there regularly, because nothing else has replaced the relationships they formed there and the benefits they bring. For a lack of alternative options, the workings and relationships of the neighbourhood

continue to predominate and influence their everyday lives. While these young people value no longer living there, they do not denigrate life in the neighbourhood. When they return to the neighbourhood, they are indistinguishable from the young people of the first type. Moreover, many of them belonged to the excluded type before events enabled them to find a way out (Dubet 1987). Their current occupational status is still unstable, but offers them the hope that they will be able to improve their living conditions and achieve their goals. They do not want to reproduce their fathers' occupational status, since they grew up in France and developed other goals, and so have plans for upward social mobility.

Insecure Graduates: a Desire for Upward Social Mobility

All the young adults of this type were living in the neighbourhood at the time of the survey. They differ strongly from the previous types by education level: all of these young adults have an educational qualification. Two thirds have at least the *baccalauréat*,¹⁸ which, in nine out of ten cases, is a vocational or technology *baccalauréat*. All the members of this type have qualifications, so have evidently benefited from the democratisation of education. They have also felt strongly encouraged and supported by their parents who connected doing well at school with upward social mobility. However, being channelled into vocational streams in secondary school (towards a vocational or technology *baccalauréat*) is often perceived as an obstacle to their educational goals.

These young people attempted to return to academic subjects at university¹⁹ after a technology or a vocational secondary education, leading some to drop out in the first year or before qualifying for the degree. Some “stick it out”, but fail to get a good degree, after repeating almost every year. In addition to needing to earn money while they study,²⁰ these young adults are acutely aware of the differences in other resources between students: when they meet young people from other social backgrounds, they realise that they do not have the same advantages (awareness of courses and career pathways, access to books, language ability and general knowledge, etc.).

These young people, who believed in upward social mobility through education, feel a deep sense of disappointment and frustration, reinforced by a perception that they have disappointed their parents' expectations. Despite their education, they are insecure in the labour market, where they have been deskilled²¹. While three quarters

¹⁸ The *baccalauréat* is the senior secondary leaving qualification, usually obtained at age 18. Different streams lead to different types of *baccalauréat*: academic, technology or vocational.

¹⁹ After a BEP, school students can enter a senior stream (entry is based on their school results) that leads to a vocational or technology *baccalauréat* and then go on to higher education. Since technology institutes have stricter entry requirements, these students opt for academic university courses (such as law or economic and social administration), which are seen as less selective (at least at entry).

²⁰ These are mostly unskilled jobs that are physically demanding and have odd hours (very early in the morning, before classes or in the evening). Some of these young people have also experienced difficult personal events (death of a parent, family breakdown), which are an explanatory factor in their chaotic educational pathways (taking 4 or 5 years to qualify for a 2-year university degree, lack of financial resources, etc.).

²¹ Deskilling is an occupational situation where young people hold jobs below their educational qualifications and/or work experience. Deskilling can be a subjective perception or an experience based on objective criteria.

of these young adults have a job, it is low-skilled or unskilled. Half of them are employed on insecure (temporary or fixed-term) contracts.

While these young people had an optimistic view of their occupational futures, with educational qualifications being a guarantee, several years after they leave school, they feel deskilled and frustrated, because their jobs do not match the level and/or the nature of their qualifications. They are “insecure employees” (Paugam 2000), because—like the insecure moving towards emancipation although for different reasons—their situation is characterised by dissatisfaction with work (status and tasks) and unstable employment. Conversely, unlike the previous types, they have left the industrial sector. But they hold subordinate occupational positions as employees (hostesses, cashiers, data inputters, telemarketers and customer advisors),²² even though they have 2-, 3- and 4-year university degrees.

They are extremely disappointed when they realise they are stuck in the first jobs they took after graduating. They feel they have even less chance of escaping as these service sector jobs illustrate the wage restructuring in progress: a low-skilled labour force dedicated to the multiple services that meet growing (but fluctuating) consumer needs, which is consequently insecure. They see joining the civil service as a possible way to escape from this dead end and acquire the sought-after occupational promotion.

These young adults hope that their strong work ethic will eventually be recognised and their skills valued. That would enable them to achieve the upward social mobility they strongly desire and into which they have put enormous effort. Their sense of downclassing is reinforced by the fact that they do not have the financial resources to leave the neighbourhood: as they are insecure, they still live with their parents. They feel rejection for the neighbourhood, for its norms and practices and for the residents who contribute to its degradation. The only way for them not to suffer these “negative effects” is to spend as little time as possible there and be as invisible as possible when they are there. Like the invisible proletarians, this type leads a double life: all their activities and friends are outside the neighbourhood. “In the neighbourhood” and “outside the neighbourhood” represent two separate social worlds—one imposed on them, the other aspired to. If they could become more occupationally secure, they could access a new lifestyle, far from the neighbourhood. They have all the advantages to make that happen—qualifications, experience and hyper-conformism to the dominant norms—but find themselves blocked by economic conditions that make upward social mobility extremely difficult. They are not in a situation of social reproduction either: although they hold low-skilled jobs, they are not blue-collar workers. They belong to a new category of white-collar workers, who, although they hold office jobs that are less physically demanding, are just as dominated in workplace relationships.

The fact that this type consists of mainly women is a sure advantage because, unlike the young men, they enjoy a positive image among the majority group, which facilitates their integration into the labour market. While very few young men with no qualification are employed, having no qualification does not seem to be an obstacle

²² The number of these service-sector jobs has increased substantially in recent years, mainly benefiting women. See INSEE's website for the nomenclature of socio-occupational categories used in France: <http://www.insee.fr/fr/methodes/default.asp?page=nomenclatures/pcs2003/pcs2003.htm>

for women: women without qualifications are employed in the same proportions as women with qualifications. Women also access their first jobs sooner after leaving school and are more frequently employed on permanent contracts (Santelli 2007a, 2007b).²³ While this has clearly benefited their occupational pathways, these young women feel their career progression is blocked and that they have no future.

Pathways Characterised by Access to Skilled Jobs: Evident Upward Mobility

The last type, the stable employed, also consists almost entirely of young women. This group also differs from the first three types by educational qualifications—most have at least the baccalaureate. They differ from all the other types by a combination of stability and upward mobility on the labour market, a position they have achieved in the space of a few years. Supported by more significant family resources, which have been effective,²⁴ they have successfully cultivated an ambition to rise socially by doing well at school.

Stable Employed: Successful Integration into the Workforce

This type also predominantly consists of young women, all of whom live outside the neighbourhood, most of them having left when their parents moved to another area. This type has the highest percentage of parents who no longer live in the neighbourhood, and many of them own their homes (more than half of the home-owning parents have children who are stable employed). Leaving the neighbourhood reflects a goal of upward social mobility shared by the family, which connects leaving the neighbourhood with accessing better life opportunities. The young adults in this type have clearly benefited from family resources and have been able to rely on help from their parents.

As in the previous type, the vast majority of these young adults (nine in ten) have a qualification, although there is a range of levels. Their main distinguishing feature is a high percentage of career-oriented higher education degrees, either a *brevet de technicien supérieur* (BTS) or a *diplôme universitaire de technologie* (DUT), both of which are 2-year courses.²⁵ This type is not made up solely of “good students”. Some of these young adults had a “short linear” education, with no repeated years or only one, in a stream they chose, and obtained a secondary-level qualification, usually a BEP or a vocational baccalaureate. Others had a “long linear” education that led to a higher education degree, and still others have a “long chaotic” education, made up of repeated years and course changes. The latter group obtained higher education degrees, but were set back by various obstacles (unfavourable conditions

²³ These results, obtained in my survey, have been confirmed by other surveys conducted in ZUS: women seem to do better, which is not verified when there is no distinction by place of residence.

²⁴ Parental control of girls enhanced their performance at school; it has also proved decisive for boys.

²⁵ It is worth noting that the percentage of respondents with higher education is only 14% among those who were no longer in education at the time of the survey, compared with 83% among those still in education at the time of the survey. All the young people who went on to higher education stress the family support they received throughout their education.

for studying, a lack of information when they chose subjects or courses, and/or racist discrimination by some teachers).

This type differs from the previous type with more bankable qualifications, particularly technical higher education degrees (BTS or DUT). The vast majority of young people who succeed in technical and career-oriented higher education courses had an academic secondary education (nine out of ten stable employed have an academic baccalaureate), which is the reverse pattern of the insecure graduates (who went from a technology or vocational baccalaureate to an academic higher education course). The stable employed have chosen a pathway that pays off in terms of occupational integration, job stability and upward social mobility. This contrasts with the problematic workforce integration of the insecure graduates, who have been sharply deskilled, generating high frustration. A change in the type of educational course pursued thus has very different effects on the occupational integration of these young adults, depending on whether the direction is academic to vocational or vice versa.

While the insecure graduates believed in upward social mobility through education (illustrated by their entry to university), the stable employed were more pragmatic. They internalised the limits imposed on them and focused on the added value offered by a career-oriented higher education qualification. When they attempted to go on to higher education, their student job often turned into their first real job, as some chose to drop out of study and enter the workforce.

At the time of the survey, almost all of these young adults had a job, with nine out of ten employed on a permanent contract or in the civil service. Their occupational status is therefore stable and also reflects relative upward mobility: one third are employed in intermediate occupations.²⁶ When they entered the labour market, they took manual or elementary administration/service jobs (in almost nine cases in ten): they thus experienced deskilling when they left school, sometimes for several years. However, unlike the insecure graduates, these young people significantly improved their employment position by subsequently obtaining more skilled, stable jobs. The initial deskilling was perceived as an essential stage that gave them the time they needed to find the right job for their skills. As well as having stable, skilled jobs, the stable employed now feel they have a place in the workforce, perhaps fragile and uncertain in the current economic climate but incomparably more rewarding than the position of the insecure graduates. Whereas the gap in occupational position between the excluded and the insecure moving towards emancipation could be attributed to their age difference (as the excluded are younger, their status could improve as they get older), the insecure graduates and the stable unemployed have a similar average age.

The stable employed also express new occupational ambitions, aimed at furthering their upward social mobility. They envision different ways of achieving this. Becoming self-employed is one possibility, as for the insecure moving towards emancipation. Other ideas they are considering include moving up in the same company or changing employer, if necessary by obtaining another qualification through continuing education.

²⁶ For example as youth workers, corporate administrative staff, store managers or technicians in industry or services.

Their diverse experiences, facilitated by good results at school, spatial mobility and the acquisition of new norms and aspirations, have helped broaden the range of possibles,²⁷ which encourages occupational mobility. In addition, there is little mention of discrimination, even if they all report having been treated unfairly at one point or another in their pathways. They also emphasise the need to conform to the norms of the milieu they are integrating into, which is how they think they can “change the way they are perceived” in order to earn recognition. There is a real rupture with the neighbourhood: they have only sporadic contact with the neighbourhood and its residents, nothing seems to tie them to the place any more (if their parents have also moved out). Their pathways reflect an ability to adapt to and participate in social environments other than the neighbourhood. That ability is a condition for self-esteem, which varies widely between the groups in the cohort. Indeed, the young people surveyed have extremely unequal educational, material, psychological and interpersonal resources for achieving recognition outside the neighbourhood. The young stable employed and the insecure graduates are the best equipped to do so.

This group now live their lives outside the neighbourhood. But, unlike the previous type, the stable employed think that living in the neighbourhood provided them with essential coping skills. Having achieved recognition in their daily and occupational lives, they are in a position to make that judgement because they know what that specific experience has contributed to their lives. While they differ from the image of banlieue youth in every way, they have an awareness of how much harder it was for them to find their place in society than for other young people of the same age. Thus, despite undeniable advantages (family support and broad extended sociability networks, facilitating integration into social groups outside the banlieue), their pathways reflect the specific experience of having grown up in the banlieue.

Now they belong to the category of the “workforce integrated” (Dubet 2000), who are much less vulnerable than the other four groups to rising inequality, even if downclassing is still possible in a society where the risks of social insecurity are increasing (Castel 2003).

The Intergenerational Effect... Accentuated in a Time of Crisis?

Compared with the occupational pathways of other family members, the modes of occupational integration of these young adults have an additional resonance. Despite having experienced the same residential environment, these families have different histories and lifestyles, and their aspirations and support for their children also differ.²⁸ Family aspirations and support can strongly influence the educational

²⁷ The concepts of “reference group” and “membership group” are useful for capturing this, particularly in relation to their urban mobility; see Santelli (2010b).

²⁸ This diversity can be seen in the different types of investment in their children’s education, which the study by Zeroulou (1985) showed as early as the 1980s, and which has since been validated by other research. See the following studies that focus on family socialisation processes: Zehraoui (1999), Boubeker (1999), Vatz Laaroussi (2001), Delcroix (2001) and Santelli (2001). More generally, the exploration of family environments offers insights into atypical success pathways in the working class (Lahire 1995; Laurens 1992).

pathway. The five types analysed indeed demonstrate the close link between type and level of qualification²⁹ and the occupational integration of these young adults. In French society, the school pathway often has a lasting impact on occupational integration (Van de Velde 2008).

Manual Worker Fathers, Differences and Similarities Between Siblings

There are many ways to describe the family environment. By focusing here on the employment status of parents and siblings, I hoped to find out whether there was any link between the status of the young adults and that of their family members.

Almost all the fathers worked in manual jobs since their arrival in France, which was at least 30 years ago for nine in ten fathers and seven in ten mothers.³⁰ Their long working lives and deindustrialization explains why the vast majority of fathers were no longer working at the time of the survey. However, they were all previously employed and—in nine cases out of ten—in manual jobs. Now, two thirds of fathers are either unemployed, on disability pensions, retired early or retired (the most common status). A high percentage of fathers (one in ten³¹) had died: high mortality and high unemployment are two significant features of the pathways of these male manual workers.

One quarter of mothers were working at the time of the survey. The increase in the rate of female workforce participation, although much lower than in the total French population,³¹ can be seen as a sign of emancipation, but also of pauperization. As fathers are no longer working, some mothers have been forced to enter the labour market. In the vast majority of cases, they are employed in unskilled jobs, especially cleaning. It should nevertheless be stressed that almost three quarters of mothers are “homemakers”. I therefore use the father’s status as the reference for social mobility.

When mothers do work, this seems to have an impact on their children’s employment because young adults whose mothers work are more likely to be in employment and more likely to have a skilled job. Conversely, there is an over-representation of unemployed young adults with homemaker mothers.³² The contrast is slightly sharper for girls. Children are also more likely to have higher education when both parents

²⁹ Although not developed here, this includes the type of school attended (academic or vocational, in the neighbourhood or outside it), streaming and dealings with the school administration, especially disappointment with practices perceived as unfair (Santelli 2010b).

³⁰ Some 53% of fathers and 36% of mothers have lived in France for more than 40 years. The number of non-responses to these questions is relatively high, with one respondent in ten not answering the question about the number of years his/her father has been in France. Either they do not wish to give out information about their families, or they do not have that information. It is also noteworthy that not knowing the year of immigration of the father varies strongly with the social status of the respondent at the time of the survey, with a very high non-response rate among the insecure: half of them could not say when their father arrived in France, whereas all the stable employed answered. In the families of the insecure types, probably for various reasons, that information was not passed on (or was withheld), which can be interpreted as a sign of “gaps” in inter-generational transmission in the most distressed families. That “family void” can be an indicator of problems within the family, which also have social repercussions.

³¹ The labour force participation rate of women aged 15–64 in the total French population was 63.4% in 2003 (working or seeking work; INSEE). In a narrower age range (25–49), it was 80.7%.

³² Galland (2000, p. 25) shows that “boys who do not have the baccalaureate but whose mothers work are clearly protected from prolonged dependency, as if the incentive to work and achieving independence are transmitted more effectively when the mother participates in the labour force”. Dependency is defined as not having a stable job, an independent home and a relationship.

participate in the labour force. The insecure are more likely to have a non-working father (unemployed, retired early or on a disability pension). A correlation can therefore be established between the parents' labour-force participation and the status achieved by their children.³³

It also seems that parental employment facilitates the occupational integration of their children, especially in helping them find a first job or seasonal work: parents are cited as a way to access employment. While parents only provide access to unskilled or low-skilled jobs, usually on insecure terms, these family ties are nonetheless mobilised. Like Marry (1992), who uses M. Granovetter's theory of the strength of weak ties to examine young people's employment situation, I found that although these "strong links" offer few opportunities for skilled work or jobs that could lead to a promotion, they nevertheless provide a buffer against exclusion and unemployment.

A further link can be established between the educational and occupational status of the young adults surveyed and that of their siblings. For example, the higher the percentage of siblings with no qualification, the less likely the respondents are to have a high-level qualification. The same applies to the employment status of siblings: the more unemployed siblings the respondent has, the more likely he/she is to have an educational qualification below the baccalaureate. Conversely, young people who have at least one sibling who is a manager tend to have higher educational qualifications than those who do not—the success of one sibling is indicative of a more conducive family environment. Lastly, young adults are under-represented among the unemployed when more than half of their siblings are employed.

Family configurations, which vary, affect children's social pathways and their propensity for social mobility. It is rare for all the children in one family to experience the same occupational destiny, especially in large families (the families in the survey have an average of six children). However, we find relative homogeneity between siblings (at least among the siblings close in age, the elder siblings or the youngest siblings, or the siblings of the same sex) and a link between the parents' employment status and that of their children. For both contextual reasons (year of arrival in France) and structural reasons (family composition and organisation), the families do not offer comparable environments and even less predispose the children from the cohort to similar pathways. Aside from the influence of family environment on social mobility, the economic restructuring in progress accentuates some inequalities and aggravates social downclassing.

Increased Social Downclassing

To address this aspect and link it to the empirical material, we need to take a detour via the macro-sociological data and look at structural conditions. The effects of deindustrialization are visible between the fathers' generation and that of their children: it is not possible for the same percentage of the second generation to be manual workers as their fathers. This is total mobility, which takes account of the changes in labour market structure.³⁴ At the same time, the possibility of obtaining

³³ Other research in the field of family sociology, which takes a biographical approach, attests to this. See Legros and Kellerhals (1991).

³⁴ This should be distinguished from net mobility, which measures the changing trend in the probability of accessing a given occupation.

educational qualifications in families where the parents often did not go to school, combined with the parents' aspiration to improve their living conditions by emigrating, also fosters a new occupational outlook (Santelli 2001). For some of the children from these families, the goal of upward social mobility was a goal towards which both the individuals and their families mobilised all their resources. But economic restructuring, the decline in industrial jobs and the increase in wage insecurity have made it more difficult to achieve the desired upward social mobility. It is becoming more common to observe children who are not managing to achieve even the same status as their parents. Rising above one's parents' position is also becoming increasingly difficult in non-migrant working-class families. The probability of becoming a manager appears to have decreased significantly (Peugny 2009; Baraton 2006; Monso 2006).

The second generation appears to have a higher risk of downclassing. That is obviously a hypothesis because it is too early to be sure: these young adults have not been in the labour market long enough for us to have any certainty about their future occupational pathways. More broadly, we have not measured all the effects of insecurity and unemployment on occupational and social mobility. Nonetheless, these young adults are clearly more frequently employed on insecure terms. It is for that reason that Peugny (2009, 32–40) finds the situation of the young generations is worsening, “An analysis of the trend of upward and downward mobility flows over the generations suggests a gradual decline in the prospects of upward social mobility (...) upward mobility is now more difficult for working-class children, while downward mobility is becoming more common among children from more privileged social groups”. He nevertheless qualifies his analysis by indicating that for the youngest generations, “the most recent available data suggest a slight improvement in the prospects for social mobility.” (p. 44). Other studies emphasise the acuteness of this social process in different social groups (Chauvel 1998; Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2001; Guibert and Mergier 2006; Chauvel 2007). All these scholars highlight the established link between the first years of working life and the whole career pathway.

The three post-war decades of prosperity known as the *trente glorieuses* fuelled the myth of continuous improvement between the generations, a hope shared by many migrant families. A survey of the pathways of second-generation migrants (Attias-Donfut and Wolff 2009) also indicates that parents are satisfied with their children's pathways on the whole and expect them to achieve a higher status than themselves. However, there is a stronger sense of potential or actual downclassing among individuals from Algeria and sub-Saharan Africa, specifically young men and residents of ZUS. The results of the survey cited above show that the opportunities for social mobility are not the same for all the young adults of working class and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The analysis presented here suggests that these young adults from working-class families must overcome bigger hurdles to rise above their parents' occupational status, because of downclassing and residential segregation. Residents of banlieue neighbourhoods indeed appear to be more penalised: the unemployment rate is two to three times higher in ZUS than in other areas (Mucchielli and Aït-Omar 2006, p. 24–25), particularly among young men with no or a low-level qualification; it can be as high as 50% for them in some ZUS. Inequality is therefore considerable, and fuels frustration and a sense of being discriminated against. Second-generation migrants of

Maghrebi origin are over-represented in ZUS, even if the vast majority of them live in other areas (Pan Ké Shon 2007). The conditions for their upward social mobility clearly depend on this residential factor.

Therefore, in addition to the conventional variables of gender, educational qualifications and family environment, residential status—whether a respondent still lives in a banlieue neighbourhood or has moved out—is now a factor to be considered in order to understand the modes of their occupational integration (insecure or stable, downward or upward). Because, despite common characteristics at the outset (having lived with the same neighbours, attended the same schools, and lived in an identical residential environment), the survey revealed highly differentiated modes of entry into the labour market, as well as considerable variation in the types of social mobility.

The social characteristics of the young men of the first type exclude them durably from the labour market; they only access the workforce sporadically through insecure contracts. The new configuration of the wage society now provides only temporary employment for them and does not give them any hope—at least in the short term—of reproducing the employment conditions of their fathers. The limited number of wage jobs and the mismatch between these young people's training and the skill level of the jobs available reduces the likelihood of large-scale recruitment of unskilled labour.

The second type is distinguished by a kind of social reproduction of a working-class status, since these young adults are employed at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy on permanent contracts. It is nevertheless worth noting that most of these young men hold slightly more skilled jobs (generally (highly) skilled manual jobs) than their fathers and in different economic sectors. This group is the only one that has a comparable status to the previous generation, despite the changes in the labour market. They thus differ strongly from the first type. However, despite having attended school in French society, they have not managed to improve their working conditions.

The characteristics of the third type are very similar to the first two types but, unlike them, these young adults refuse to continue putting up with the working conditions of unskilled workers and are attempting to improve their working conditions in another way. That quest is also motivated by a desire for social mobility and attaining a better occupational status than their fathers, who were exploited workers.

The fourth type clearly links education (up to higher education qualifications) and upward social mobility. In most cases, the families were mobilised behind these goals. However, the reality of labour market conditions has caused strong disappointment over insecure employment contracts and perceived deskilling. These young adults nevertheless hope their qualifications and work experience, backed by strong motivation, will enable them to achieve the upward social mobility they seek. Despite deskilling, they have achieved some social mobility because the types of jobs they hold (more skilled and in the service sector) distance them from the working conditions experienced by their fathers. That mobility mainly reflects the restructuring of the labour market because this group also suffers from job insecurity.

The fifth type has achieved considerable social mobility compared with the previous generation. These young adults have a very high occupational status compared with their fathers, jobs that match their qualifications and permanent contracts. Their upward occupational mobility is particularly remarkable as it has occurred in an overall context of social downclassing.

The diversity of occupational integration trajectories in this cohort of young French adults from a banlieue neighbourhood demonstrates the impact of structural employment conditions, which can facilitate or hamper social mobility depending on individual characteristics (qualifications, experience, skills, etc.). The biographical analysis highlights the ways in which individuals can escape from social determinants (through resources, mobilisation, opportunities, etc.). Social reproduction seemed unlikely, given the second generation's acquisition of educational qualifications and proficiency in the codes of the society of settlement, fuelling the expectation that they could do better than their fathers. However, the simultaneous restructuring of the labour market (a dramatic decline in manual jobs and downclassing) has altered the playing field: the labour market no longer offers the same "guarantees" of upward social mobility as in the past at comparable educational levels; an experience felt keenly by the insecure graduates.

In a group assumed to be homogeneous, the typological analysis has revealed the diversity of pathways of occupational integration of these young French adults of Maghrebi origin. This can be attributed to the variation in personal resources of the individuals (educational qualifications, family support, individual aspirations, etc.) and to changes in the labour market, which have profoundly altered the opportunities for a career. The pathways of second-generation migrants of working-class origin who grew up in the banlieue probably differ little from those achieved by young French adults of non-migrant background, because labour market entry is difficult for everyone now.³⁵ Ethnic discrimination is nevertheless an additional obstacle for these new labour market entrants in today's hourglass economy.³⁶ They feel excluded, which exacerbates existing social inequalities. More often insecure and unemployed, they do not have the same chances of achieving social mobility. The family's decision to migrate and the aspiration to do better than their fathers raised high hopes... but that was without factoring in the major changes in the labour market and the phenomenon of urban segregation.

To understand social mobility, we need to consider changes in the structure of society from one generation to the next, in order to assess their impact on individual pathways. These individuals nevertheless have a sense that their situation has improved compared with their fathers (who were illiterate, unskilled and on low incomes, given that most families had a single income, a portion of which may have been remitted to the home country).³⁷ The distribution of second-generation migrants in the socio-occupational hierarchy thus reveals a degree of upward social mobility and a diversification of occupational pathways compared with their fathers. As the experience of the *jeunes de banlieue* shows, the issue of social mobility is multifaceted.

³⁵ As Castel (2001) writes, the new generation faces bigger hurdles, not because they are young but because they are new entrants on the labour market. Because while a majority of people are still employed on permanent contracts, the numbers of those entering the labour market on insecure contracts are constantly increasing.

³⁶ This expression refers to an increase in jobs at the lowest and highest ends of the skills range, hollowing out the middle. Accessing the middle class represents upward social mobility. For an analysis of the phenomenon in relation to second-generation migrants, see Perlman and Waldinger (1997).

³⁷ This recalls the concept of "subjective social mobility" proposed by Attias-Donfut and Wolff (2001, p. 955): a sense of having succeeded or failed socially is an analytical tool for understanding the process of social stratification.

Acknowledgements I would like to thank the journal reviewers for their highly constructive criticism, as well as my colleague Corinne Rostaing at the Centre Max Weber for her invaluable assistance during the drafting of this article, and Madeleine Grieve, for her faithful translation.

References

- Amrani, Y., & Beaud, S. (2004). *Pays de malheur ! Un jeune de cité écrit à un sociologue*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Attias-Donfut, C., & Wolff, F.-C. (2009). *Le destin des enfants d'immigrés. Un désenchaînement des générations*. Paris: Stock.
- Attias-Donfut, C., & Wolff, F.-C. (2001). La dimension subjective de la mobilité sociale. *Population*, 56(6), 919–958.
- Avenel, C. (2004). *Sociologie des «quartiers sensibles»*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Baron, M. (2006). De la difficulté à devenir cadre par promotion. *INSEE Première*, 1062, 4.
- Bawin-Legros, A., Kellerhals, J. (Ed) (1991). *Relations intergénérationnelles. Parenté, transmission mémoire*. Actes du colloque de Liège 17–18 mai 1990.
- Beauchemin, C., Hamel, C., & Simon, P. (dir.), (2010). Trajectoires et Origines. Enquête sur la diversité des populations en France, *Documents de travail de l'INED*, n° 168.
- Boubeker, A. (1999). *Familles de l'intégration*. Paris: Stock.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1970). *La reproduction. Eléments pour une théorie du système d'enseignement*. Paris: Ed. de Minuit.
- Castel, R. (2003). *L'insécurité sociale: Qu'est-ce qu'être protégé ?* Paris: Le Seuil.
- Castel, R. (2001). Les jeunes ont-ils un rapport spécifique au travail en France? In L. Roulleau-Berger & M. Gauthier (Eds.), *Les jeunes et l'emploi dans les villes d'Europe et d'Amérique du Nord* (pp. 287–298). La Tour d'Aigues: Aube éditions.
- Chauvel, L. (2007). Les jeunes, victimes du déclassement. In L. Maurin & P. Savidan (Eds.), *L'état des inégalités en France 2007* (pp. 187–192). Paris: Belin.
- Chauvel, L. (1998). *Le destin des générations*. Paris: PUF.
- Crul, M. (2000). Breaking the circle of disadvantage. Social mobility of second-generation Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands. In H. Vermeulen & J. Perlmann (Eds.), *Immigrants, schooling and social mobility: does culture make a difference?* (pp. 25–44). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Delcroix, C. (2001). *Ombres et lumières de la famille Nour. Comment certains résistent à la précarité*, Paris, Payot.
- Dubet, F. (1987). *La galère. Jeunes en survie*. Paris: Fayard (version poche 2003).
- Dubet, F. (2000). *Les inégalités multipliées*. La Tour d'Aigues: Aube éditions.
- Galland, O. (2000). Entrer dans la vie adulte: des étapes toujours plus tardives mais resserrées. *Economie et Statistique*, 337–338(7/8), 13–36.
- de Gaulejac, V., & Taboada Leonetti, I. (1994). *La lutte des places*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer.
- Guibert, P., & Mergier, A. (2006). *Le descenseur social. Enquête sur les milieux populaires*. Paris: Plon.
- Journal of International Migration and Integration* (2001). Minority Elites in the Making, 2(2).
- Honneth, A. (2007). *La lutte pour la reconnaissance*. Paris: Éd. du Cerf (French version of The Struggle for Recognition).
- Lahire, B. (1995). *Tableaux de familles*. Paris: Gallimard-Le Seuil.
- Lapeyronnie, D. (2008). *Ghetto urbain. Ségrégation, violence, pauvreté en France aujourd'hui*. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- Laurens, J.-P. (1992). *1 sur 500. La réussite scolaire en milieu populaire*. Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail.
- Marry, C. (1992). Les jeunes et l'emploi: forces et faiblesses des liens forts. In L. Coutrot & C. Dubar (Eds.), *Cheminements professionnels et mobilités sociales*. Paris: La Documentation française.
- Merlié, D., & Prévot, J. (1991). *La mobilité sociale*. Paris: La découverte, coll. Repères.
- Meurs, D., Pailhé, A., & Simon, P. (2005). Mobilité intergénérationnelle et persistance des inégalités. L'accès à l'emploi des immigrés et de leurs descendants en France. *Documents de Travail de l'INED*, 130, 1–35.
- Monso, O. (2006). Changer de groupe social en cours de carrière. *INSEE Première*, 1112, 4.
- Mucchielli, L. avec la participation de Aït-Omar, A. (2006). Les émeutes de novembre 2005 : les raisons de la colère. In: V. Le Goazioui, L. Mucchielli L. (Ed), *Quand les banlieues brûlent... Retour sur les émeutes de novembre 2005* (pp. 5–30). Paris: La Découverte.

- Pan Ké Shon, J.-L. (2007). Portrait statistique des zones urbaines sensibles. *Informations Sociales*, 141, 24–33.
- Papademetriou, D. G., Somerville, W., Sumption, M. (2008). *Observations on the Social Mobility of the Children of Immigrants in the United States and United Kingdom*. Migration Policy Institute.
- Paugam, S. (2000). *Le salarier de la précarité*. Paris: PUF.
- Perlman, J., & Waldinger, R. (1997). Second generation decline? Children of immigrants, past and present. A reconsideration. *International Migration Review*, XXXI(4), 893–922.
- Peugny, C. (2009). *Le déclassement*. Paris: Grasset.
- Pitti, L. (2008). Ordre colonial, migrations de travail et expériences militantes: le cas des Algériens en France (1945–1975). In N. L. Green & M. Poinot (Eds.), *Histoire de l'immigration et question coloniale en France* (pp. 59–65). Paris: Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration/La Documentation française.
- Platt, L., (2006). Understanding ethnic group differences in Britain. The role of family background and education in shaping social class outcomes. In Delorenzi S. (Ed), *Going Places: Neighbourhood, ethnicity and social mobility*. Institute for Public Policy Research, www.ippr.org.
- Rouleau-Berger, L. (2004). Insécurité salariale, déscolarisation et compétences. In D. Glasman & F. Guvrard (Eds.), *La déscolarisation*. Paris: La Dispute.
- Santelli, E. (2010a). Une enquêtrice en banlieue. S'exposer à la précarité et aux rapports sociaux sexués. In C. Rostaing, J.-P. Payet, & F. Giuliani (Eds.), *La relation d'enquête. La sociologie au défi des acteurs faibles* (pp. 57–72). Rennes: PUR.
- Santelli, E. (2010b). L'empreinte du quartier. Parcours spatio-scolaires. In F. Lorcerie (Ed.), *Pratiquer les frontières. Jeunes migrants et descendants de migrants dans l'espace franco-maghrébin*. Paris: CNRS.
- Santelli, E. (2007a). *Grandir en banlieue. Parcours de jeunes français d'origine maghrébine*. Paris: CIEMI.
- Santelli, E. (2007b). Modalités d'insertion socio-professionnelle des jeunes français d'origine maghrébine d'un quartier de l'agglomération lyonnaise. In P. Eid, M. Potvin, & N. Venel (Eds.), *L'expérience sociale des jeunes de Deuxième génération. Une comparaison France-Québec* (pp. 89–102). Québec: Editions Athena.
- Santelli, E. (2001). *La mobilité sociale dans l'immigration. Parcours de réussite des enfants de l'immigration algérienne*. Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail.
- Santelli, E., & Legube, A. (2005). D'étranges paradoxes autour de la participation des «jeunes des quartiers» aux dispositifs sociaux. *Agora Débats/Jeunesse*, 38, 84–96.
- Sassen, S. (2009). *La globalisation. Une sociologie*. Paris: Gallimard (version française).
- Silberman, R., & Fournier, I. (2006). Les secondes générations sur le marché du travail en France: une pénalité ethnique ancrée dans le temps. Contribution à la théorie sur l'assimilation segmentée. *Revue Française de Sociologie*, 47(2), 243–292.
- Simon, P. (2007). La question de la seconde génération en France: mobilité sociale et discrimination. In P. Eid, M. Potvin, & N. Venel (Eds.), *L'expérience sociale des jeunes de Deuxième génération. Une comparaison France-Québec* (pp. 39–70). Québec: Editions Athena.
- The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2008). Exceptional Outcomes: Achievement in Education and Employment among Children of Immigrants, 620(1).
- Van de Velde, C. (2008). *Devenir adulte. Sociologie comparée de la jeunesse en Europe*. Paris: PUF, coll. Le lien social.
- Vatz Laaroussi, M. (2001). *Le familial au cœur de l'immigration*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Wacquant, L. (1996). La généralisation de l'insécurité salariale en Amérique. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 115.
- Zehraoui, A. (1999). *Familles d'origine algérienne en France*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Zeroulou, Z. (1985). Mobilisation familiale et réussite scolaire. *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 1(2).
- Zhou, M., Lee, J., Vallego, J. A., Tafoya-Estrada, R., & Xiong, Y. S. (2008). Success attained, deterred, and denied: Divergent pathways to social mobility in Los Angeles's new second generation. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 620(1), 37–61.