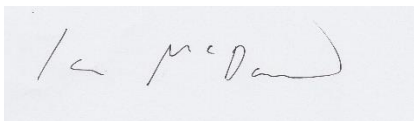


# Forging Careers in the Field of Architecture: The Salience and Silencing of Class

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the School of Management, Royal Holloway University London.

I, Ian McDonald, declare that this thesis, and the work presented in it, is entirely my own. Where I have referenced the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:



Date: 09/12/2021

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## Abstract

In response to political concern about rising inequalities, professions are expected to play a leading role in solving the problem of low levels of social mobility. The profession of architecture is a puzzling case. Although the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) centres issues of diversity and inclusion, architecture's professional workforce remains highly, and stubbornly, socially exclusive. Only one in ten practising architects is estimated to come from a working-class background.

Rather than theorising architecture as a coherent, singular profession, I employ the construct of a Bourdieusian field to show how individuals compete for different forms of capital - creative, public service and commercial – in order to accumulate material and status rewards. Thus theorised, I argue that architecture's social exclusion, clearly evident in its historical emergence as a 'gentlemanly' profession, continues to be integral to its contemporary professional dynamics.

By analysing the career histories of 55 individuals employed across architecture, I outline the ways in which class plays an important structuring role in relation to both access to and progression through the field. However, for the most part, this passes unnoticed. Individuals tell modest career narratives of luck and agency, which downplay structural enablers and constraints. While class is highly salient, it remains frequently silenced.

Further, I contend that two nominally progressive policy arenas developed largely outside the field of architecture, Equalities Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and 'social mobility', are unlikely to carry substantial positive effect. Arguing from a critical standpoint, I suggest instead that the neo-liberal formulation of these agendas runs the risk of obfuscating or even exacerbating social exclusion within architecture. However, progressive potential is also embedded in the field, in ways which point towards the possibility of more radical change.

## List of Abbreviations

AA	Architectural Association
ACE	Architects Council of Europe
AIA	American Institute of Architects
AJ	Architects Journal
ARB	Architects Registration Board
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CAD	Computer Assisted Design
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
EDI	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
EOB	Employee-Owned Business
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender +
MIPIM	Le Marché International des Professionnels de L'Immobilier
NS-SEC	National Statistics Socio-economic Classification
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PSF	Professional Service Firm
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SAW	Section of Architectural Workers
SMCPC	Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission
SMC	Social Mobility Commission
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UVW	United Voices of the World

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My thesis explores the interrelation of class and careers in architecture. Contemporary scholarship finds that class impacts occupational access, career progression and career outcomes (Friedman and Laurison, 2019; Atkinson, 2010). However, the detailed dynamics of how such processes operate in different professional contexts is under-researched. My research helps to fill this empirical gap. Specifically, I focus on architecture, one of the most socially exclusive professions (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). I explore how class relates to individuals' developing an early interest in architecture as a possible career, the experience of becoming an architect and career progression through the field of architecture.

My theoretical contributions spring from how I theorise class, both in relation to individuals and as an emergent facet of diversity management, in conjunction with my analysis of architecture as a Bourdieusian field.

I theorise class in two ways. In the main focus of my thesis, I analyse the consequences of class in relation to individuals. Drawing from contemporary developments in 'cultural class analysis' (Savage, 2003; Savage, 2015; W. Atkinson, 2015), I theorise class as a multi-faceted construct, which relates to background, identity and social relations. Class is rooted in conditions of upbringing as well as in the inheritance and mastery of economic and different types of cultural capital, which form a classed habitus (Bourdieu, 2006). Class is not independently consequential, but operates in intersection with other social identities, including gender (McCall, 2005). Whether individuals identify or disidentify with class as a social identity is highly contingent (Skeggs, 1997). Class identities are therefore protean rather than fixed. Finally, class is relational, inhering both in the social distance between others and in the classed judgements of others (Bourdieu, 2006; Tyler, 2015).

In relation to this definition of class, I make my principal theoretical contribution to the sociology of the professions. Against the classic sociology of the professions, which positions architecture as a unified actor, embarking on strategic professionalisation projects (Larson, 1977), with, at best, minimal success (Larson, 1983; Gutman, 1988), I contribute to the small body of critical literature which treats the profession as a Bourdieusian field (Stevens, 1998; Sahin-Dikmen, 2013). Thus theorised, architecture is a social arena of competing interests, driven by field-specific capitals, which govern architectural values and establish behavioural norms. For certain individuals and groups, the struggling profession of architecture provides a social setting which affords them considerable symbolic and material rewards. My contribution is to set out the different forms of capital which structure the architecture field and show that class, theorised in relation to individuals, is integral to the field's dynamics and distribution of rewards.

Second, I consider class as an emergent facet of diversity which may be subject to managerial interventions. In this light, I consider the evolution of diversity management as a neo-liberal ideal, which has largely supplanted earlier organisational approaches to equalities centred on social justice (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000; Oswick and Noon, 2014). Class enters diversity management, in depoliticised form, via the governmental policy arena of ‘social mobility’ (Ashley and Empson, 2013). In relation to this second definition of class, I show that theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field provides explanatory power as to why class fails to take hold as an aspect of diversity management. A neo-liberal ideal of diversity management clashes with dominant values in architecture, which spring from the primacy of creative capital. Creative capital emphasises design innovation emanating from an ideal professional identity, which transcends managerialism. As a result, holders of managerial power downplay or dismiss diversity management.

### Structure of Chapter

First, I introduce the academic debates which shape my research inquiries. I show how scholarship within cultural sociology, which draws principally from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, has reinvigorated class analysis. In relation to my research inquiries, this opens up new questions about the experience of mobility, the consequences of class for career outcomes and the relationship between class and career narratives. I then briefly introduce the literature where I make my own contribution, namely the sociology of the professions. I show architecture has been set out within the classic sociology of the professions as a failing profession. Instead, I critique and build on the small body of research which has analysed the profession of architecture as a Bourdieusian field, to show how class structures career successes as well as professional struggles.

Second, I situate my research within relevant developments in government policy and organisational practice. In particular, I outline the ascendancy of a neo-liberal business case for diversity and the parallel rise of ‘social mobility’ as a social policy arena. These agendas set the policy context for how professions and leading employers are expected to deal with class to become more socially inclusive.

Third, I introduce architecture as the empirical focus of my study. Architecture is a highly exclusive profession, both in terms of gender and class. Until recently, architectural professional leaders have paid scant attention to issues of classed exclusion, which are very apparent in architecture’s historical emergence and development.

Finally, I define my key terms – class, field and career - before outlining the structure of the remaining chapters of my thesis to answer my principal research question: *how does class structure careers in the field of architecture?*

## Academic Contexts: Class and The Sociology of the Professions

### The Renaissance of Class Analysis

Although foundational to sociological inquiry, class analysis fell somewhat out of academic favour towards the end of the twentieth century, such that influential theorists heralded the 'death of class' (Pakulski and Waters, 1996). In particular, Marxist analyses came under sustained critique. The primacy of class as structured by economic relations of production was rejected by feminist scholarship (Crompton, 1998: 92; Acker, 2000: 193-196). The labour theory of value was argued to be inadequate to account for contemporary forms of inequality in the world of work (Savage, 2000: 11). The Marxist ideal of class position producing first collective consciousness and subsequent action forged on relations of class solidarity was, at most, weakly evidenced (Crompton, 1998: 89).

In relation to my research interest in career progression, reflexivity theorists argued that class was a "zombie category" (Beck and Willms, 2004: 51-52), lumbering on beyond any analytic utility, failing to respond to the contemporary reality of individuals forging their own life-projects in a globalised, information society (Beck, 1997; Pakulski and Waters, 1996). According to this strain of thought, researching the consequences of class in relation to individual career progression, is, at best, a category error.

Against the critique of reflexivity theorists, class analyses are now, thanks largely to scholars inspired by Pierre Bourdieu, enjoying something of a renaissance (W. Atkinson, 2015). Bourdieu argued that an individual's class position is governed by relationships to different forms of capital, particularly economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2006). Capitals may take material form, for example as economic assets, but are more often converted into symbolic capital, in so far as they are recognised as legitimate in different social fields (Bourdieu, 1985).

In this conceptualisation, class is relational, inhering in the social distance between others. Individuals proximate in social space are likely to share a similar habitus; the term used by Bourdieu to denote a set of dispositions, which shape, but do not determine, individual action (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 115-140). The habitus is developed principally through "primary social experiences" and "early socialisation" (ibid:133-34), and is 'classed' through individuals' inheritance of different forms and quantities of capital. As this process is largely unconscious, there is no necessary correspondence between an individual's classed habitus and conscious class identity. Instead, class identities are protean, ambivalent and contingent (Skeggs, 1997; Friedman et al., 2021).

Following the 'cultural turn' in sociology, an important strain of class analysis draws from Bourdieu. Class is understood not solely to be structured by economic relations of production, but also in relation

to individual possession and deployment of different forms of cultural capital (Savage, 2000). Certain cultural practices are socially recognised as legitimate, such that consumption practices serve to signal and reproduce classed hierarchies of taste (Bourdieu, 1984). While this is not necessarily a conscious act on the part of the individual, cultural consumption is, therefore, intrinsically related to classificatory practices (Tyler, 2015).

While class identification, when defined as belonging to a collective, has atrophied (Tyler, 2015), and individuals may actively disidentify from negatively valorised class categories (Skeggs, 1997), individual identities are 'classed' through cultural consumption practices. Thus, personal "classed identifications" replace collective "class identities" (Bottero, 2004: 991). In this way, class is "individualized"; largely rejected as a collective identity leading to relations of solidarity, but structurally consequential through individualised identities forged in consumption practices (Savage, 2000: xii). Although individualised, the importance of class in establishing and reproducing hierarchies through classificatory and consumption practices is such that this form of cultural class analysis maintains a keen analytic focus on relations of power.

Scholars working in this tradition have found that class is highly consequential in terms of career outcomes. First, class of origin affects objective measures of career success, with professionals from working-class backgrounds suffering substantial penalties in terms of salary (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Second, career pathways and outcomes differ markedly by class, even as individuals from different class backgrounds tell similarly agentic career narratives (Atkinson, 2010). Finally, class backgrounds and identities affect the experience of career progression as a form of upward social mobility in different occupational contexts (Lawler, 1999; Hoskins, 2010).

While class is consequential, its relationship with different career pathways, forms of career success, as well as the ambivalences and ambiguities of career experiences, are highly context specific (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). The detailed dynamics of how class operates in different professional contexts is poorly understood. My overarching research question - how does class structure careers in the field of the architecture? – aims to fill part of that void.

### Architecture and The Sociology of the Professions

Against the classic sociology of the professions, which treats architecture as a singular actor, struggling to enact professionalisation projects (Larson, 1983; Gutman, 1988), I critique and contribute to the small body of literature which treats the profession as a Bourdieusian field, characterised by struggles for material and symbolic rewards (Stevens, 1998; Sahin-Dikmen, 2013). Thus theorised, I argue that class is integral to the dynamics of how the field operates and the rewards it provides.

The socio-historical focus of the classic sociology of the professions analyses the emergence of professions as projects of professionalization (Macdonald, 1995; Larson, 1977). This work positions evolving professions as collective actors, who enact conscious strategies to establish their own professional territory and set out criteria of membership. The sociology of the professions has productively delineated particular strategies – usurpation, exclusion and demarcation - that are used to mark out and defend a professional area of expertise (Larson, 1977; Witz, 1990; 1992).

Architecture is rarely centre stage in the sociology of the professions. When it is considered, it is generally theorised as a failing profession, which Larson (1983) attributes to its unusual foregrounding of aesthetics. In comparison with supposedly successful professions, such as law and medicine, architecture struggles to achieve success, whether defined as achieving monopoly (Larson, 1983), expanding its remit (Kaye, 1960), fending off professional interlopers (Saint, 1983) or garnering high public esteem (Kaye, 1960).

However, by theorising the professions as singular actors, operating in concert to achieve strategic goals, the classic sociology of the professions distracts from intra-professional struggles and conflicts, (Larson, 2018). Further, an ideal of singular professionalization projects implies that individuals are equally embedded within an emerging profession and are homogenous in terms of their personal characteristics. With regard to architecture specifically, an overarching framing of professional failure masks the possibility that particular individuals and organisations may accrue considerable rewards within the profession (Sahin-Dikmen, 2013).

My overarching research focus on how individual class structures career progression requires sensitivity to intra-professional struggles and the possibility of differential rewards and career outcomes. I, therefore, theorise architecture, not as a singular profession, but as a Bourdieusian field.

Bourdieu developed the concept of the ‘field’ to denote semi-autonomous spheres of social activity, including professional milieus such as law and academia (Bourdieu, 1987; 1988a). Certain features are common to all Bourdieusian fields. First, they do not function as level-playing fields. Early socialisation makes certain individuals more suited to specific fields. The classed habitus is paramount in this respect. As outlined earlier, early socialisation and the inheritance of different forms of capital forge the classed habitus; a set of dispositions which shapes individual action and self-presentation (Bourdieu, 1984: 257). When there is a strong affinity between early socialisation and field encountered in later life, the individual “is like a “fish in water”: it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127).

Second, fields are characterised by struggles between the dominant and the dominated. Dominance relates both to positions held within the field and resources that can be used to compete with others. Again, the classed habitus plays a pivotal role. Individuals adopt specific positions within fields according to their possession and mastery of different forms of capital, which they leverage to advance their position. Resultant rewards may take material form, for example as financial gain, but are also often symbolic in terms of increased status and prestige (Stevens, 1998).

Third, the field-specific unwritten rules of the game are neither wholly fixed nor equally understood by all: fields “follows rules, or better regularities, that are not explicit and codified” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98). However, players take the rules of the game as natural and are rarely aware of their social construction. This is particularly problematic for individuals whose habitus renders them ill-adapted to particular fields. Such individuals are subject to symbolic violence, which is all the more damaging as it seems “normal, fair and taken for granted” (Jones, 2011: 15).

Fourth, individual fields develop a unique logic according to their historical construction and evolution. Bourdieu uses the economic metaphor of capital to denote both rewards and “instruments of power” (Bourdieu, 1984: 315), which drive the field. Field-specific capitals represent the “energy which only exists and only produces its effects in the field in which it is produced and reproduced” (Bourdieu, 1984: 107). Parts of the field of housing, for example, reward technical capital (Bourdieu, 2005), while linguistic capital is more significant in the field of literary production (Bourdieu, 1991).

As fields evolve over time, shaped both by the struggles of actors, more or less embedded within the field, and by external pressures, they are never fixed or settled. In particular, the boundaries of fields are “imprecise and shifting” (Jenkins, 1992: 85).

Stevens (1998) and Sahin-Dikmen (2013) theorise the profession of architecture as a Bourdieusian field to argue, compellingly, that the symbolic domination of elite parts of the field towards those in subordinate positions are integral to the dynamics of architecture, rather than indicators of the failure of an overarching professionalization project.

However, Stevens is somewhat inconsistent in how he deals with borders and boundaries of the field, at times including all those who produce architectural discourse, while at others focusing only on those whose work constructs the built environment. Furthermore, neither study populates the field of architecture with particular institutions and organisations, nor takes empirical account of the class of individuals whose struggles and actions comprise the field.

My research aims, therefore, to outline the forms of capital which structure rewards in the field, to then map the field with the principal organisations and institutions through which individuals pass as



they progress their careers. Finally, by incorporating an empirical focus on the class backgrounds and identities of individuals, I show that class is integral to the dynamics of how the field operates and the rewards which are distributed.

#### Policy Context: The Emergence of Class Through ‘Social Mobility’

While class has been under-researched in architecture, it does now represent an emergent aspect of diversity management. One aim of my study is to investigate how class is managed in the field of architecture, and so I now outline the policy context of my research inquiries. Class has a highly ambiguous position in diversity management. On the one hand, class is rarely prioritised in contemporary organisational diversity management (Scully and Blakebeard, 2006). On the other, the emergence of a prominent social mobility policy discourse, and the resultant actions of the social “mobility industry” (Payne, 2017: 41) encourage professional leadership bodies and large employers to solve the problem of classed exclusion. However, this voluntaristic policy agenda is itself highly problematic (Lawler and Payne, 2017; Littler, 2018). As a neo-liberal agenda, it effectively tasks individuals with solving problems which are structural and systemic.

The status and position of class as a facet of diversity is complex and somewhat contradictory. Class is not covered by equalities legislation. In the United Kingdom, early equalities legislation covered ‘race’ and gender (Equal Pay Act, 1970; Sex Discrimination Act, 1975; Race Relations Act, 1976). Over the past half century, the legislative focus has expanded, somewhat unevenly, to encompass a far broader range of social characteristics. This culminated in the Equality Act (2010), which has genuine transformative intent (Hepple, 2014), and aims to protect individuals from direct and indirect forms of discrimination based on nine specific protected characteristics. However, despite the original intentions of the Labour Government which drafted the legislation, neither class, nor any related socio-economic measure, is included as a protected characteristic.

The evolution of the organisational diversity management agenda is also characterised by considerable expansion. Early organisational equalities practice, rooted in an ideal of social justice, focused on race and gender as historically disadvantaged social groups (Zanoni et al., 2010; Oswick and Noon, 2014). However, following an ‘economic turn’ in the last decade of the twentieth century, organisational diversity practice came to be centred on the ‘business case’ for diversity (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). According to this managerial logic, by no means straightforwardly supported by empirical evidence (BIS, 2013), increasing workforce diversity was argued to enhance organisational performance, leading to improved creativity, innovation and productivity (Kandola and Fullerton, 1998; Zanoni et al., 2010).

This shift from equalities to managing diversity altered the organisational focus from socially disadvantaged groups to a far broader range of individualised differences, including personality, attitudes, values and working styles (Zanoni et al., 2010; Oswick and Noon, 2014). In theory, any facet of individual difference could therefore be incorporated in this expanded definition of diversity (Kandola and Fullerton, 1998); all aspects of diversity are equally valued and social disadvantages are theoretically dissolved (Liff, 1996).

Viewing every employee as uniquely diverse and equally valued according to their individual characteristics served to depoliticise equalities management (Prasad et al., 2016; Zanoni and Janssens, 2003; Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). As critical scholars point out, this conceptualization does nothing to *resolve* inequitable power relations within organisations. Instead, it “hides power... by representing organizations as arenas where differences and competences are valued and individuals receive the same opportunities” (Zanoni and Janssens, 2003: 56-57). Class, as a stubborn signifier of inequalities and organisational power relations, fails to find a prominent position in the lexicon of diversity practice (Scully and Blakebeard, 2006).

However, class *did* enter organisational diversity discourse and practice via the political agenda of social mobility (Ashley and Empson, 2013), which gained prominence in the early years of the twenty-first century (Payne, 2017). In the United Kingdom, a mainstream political response to increasing material inequalities crystallised around improving social mobility, which was found to be static (Goldthorpe and Mills, 2008) or in decline (Blanden et al., 2005). In this political formulation, endorsed by all three principal Westminster parties (Payne, 2012), increasing social fluidity, and, in particular, increasing rates of upward mobility, forms a cornerstone of a socially just response to rising inequalities.

An influential government report, *Unleashing Aspiration*, (Cabinet Office, 2009), set the initial policy agenda. This report argued there was a growing need for professional expansion in a globalised, competitive economy centred on knowledge-intensive work. At the same time, professions were found to be highly and increasingly socially exclusive, composed largely of privately educated individuals from high income family backgrounds. The report tasked leading professional bodies with measuring the extent of social exclusion within their own profession, to examine underlying drivers and undertake programs of professional reform.

*Unleashing Aspiration* led to the establishment of The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC)<sup>1</sup>, which was set up to develop recommendations for action and evaluate policy and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC) was set up in 2010. It lost its responsibility for Child Poverty and was renamed Social Mobility Commission (SMC) in 2016.

Thereafter, the policy arena of social mobility flourished. A range of public bodies, charities and foundations now provide training resources and business toolkits to support professional bodies and employer organisations (e.g. CIPD, 2013; Bridge Group, 2020). Different accreditations and awards, including the Business Compact and Social Mobility Employer Index, aim to recognise best practice.

This social mobility agenda is highly controversial. Although social mobility policy discourse ostensibly developed in response to concern about material inequalities, its neo-liberal formulation, which foregrounds market-based logic, individual competition and hard work, acts more as a distraction than a solution (Littler, 2018; Nunn, 2012). In this light, public bodies who work on social mobility have been termed, somewhat disparagingly, a “mobility industry” (Payne, 2017: 41).

The historical development of the idea of meritocracy is germane in this respect (Littler, 2018). Originally a term used by Fox to critique occupational inequalities, it evolved through Young’s (1958) dystopian satire to become a straightforwardly celebratory term in contemporary social mobility discourse. In this formulation, individuals are tasked with achieving their own social ascent in a system characterised as fair competition. Such a positive positioning of meritocracy, embraced across much of the political centre-ground, circumscribes more radical changes to the social structure. Instead, it may ‘victim blame’, play to a notion of a dangerous underclass and stigmatise those placed at the bottom of the social order (Payne, 2017). Specifically, political social mobility discourse propagates unsubstantiated myths of a deficit of aspiration and poor parenting skills among the working class (Lawler and Payne, 2017).

Indeed, despite its centrality, class is rarely named overtly in social mobility discourse. Instead, the ‘mobility industry’ favours more technical language – social background, social disadvantage, socio-economic status – to position the United Kingdom as suffering a crisis of low social fluidity (e.g. Social Mobility Commission, 2016; Bridge Group, 2020). This can be understood as a way to depoliticise a potentially radical agenda. Euphemistic language renders the issue of social mobility less of a political problem, associated with struggle and antagonistic relations of power. Instead, and in clear corollary with the ascendancy of the ‘business case’ for diversity, ‘class-less’ social mobility becomes more of a technical problem, which requires managerial interventions.

This is the policy context which tasks professions with dealing with class in relation to diversity management. In sum, social mobility provides the impetus for professional leadership bodies, leading employers and managers to resolve the issue of classed exclusion. However, the discourse both individualises and depoliticises class, so that it does not necessarily require systemic and structural change. In the current study, I will investigate how this agenda plays out in the architectural field. I provide further information about this professional context next.

## Professional Context: The Social Exclusivity of Architecture

Architecture represents a compelling choice to explore the interrelation of class and careers. First, architecture is a somewhat unusual profession, at once highly technical and firmly oriented around art and design (Saint, 1983). Architectural professionals not only work to construct parts of the built environment, but also produce the critical discourse by which their outputs are valued (Gutman, 1988). In the light of substantial scholarship which has explored class in relation to the production of culture and symbolic discourse (Bourdieu, 1984; 1993), the profession of architecture, therefore, offers a particularly fertile ground to explore the complex machinations of class and career.

Second, class and career progression in architecture is under-researched. Although historical studies strongly signal the salience of class in shaping the position and status of practitioners as technically proficient craftsmen or art-artists within the emerging 'gentlemanly profession' of architecture (Saint, 1983; Kaye, 1960), contemporary research has focused more on issues of gendered exclusion and oppression (e.g. de Graft-Johnson et al., 2003; Fowler and Wilson, 2012; Spaeth and Kismola, 2012; Powell and Sang, 2015). Very little empirical research has investigated the detailed dynamics of class and career progression. In relation to accessing the profession, the evidence base consists of small-scale studies of architectural students and faculty (Payne, 2015; Iqbal and Roberts, 2019). As regards career progression, there is only a single case study, carried out in a practice, which was highly unusual in being led by an architect from a working-class background (Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

Third, the highly limited statistical evidence base suggests architecture is extremely socially exclusive as a profession (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). While one in three UK workers comes from a working-class family background, this drops to just one in ten practising architects. In governmental classifications, architecture sits in two very different professional comparator groups: 'construction' and 'creative and cultural' industries. In terms of class background, it is one of the least inclusive professions in both groups (Laurison and Friedman, 2016; O'Brien et al., 2016).

Fourth, architecture represents an intriguing profession in its response to the policy arena of social mobility. At first glance, architectural leadership bodies appear to have taken little action. While the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) has commissioned work on professional exclusion in relation to gender (de Graft Johnson et al., 2003), disability (Manley et al., 2011) and ethnicity (CABE, 2010), it has not carried out any studies of classed exclusion. The Architects Registration Board (ARB) publishes diversity data on the profile of registered architects by age, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion and nationality. However, it collates no information on class. No leading architectural employer has been recognised as a best practice employer by the Social Mobility Foundation.

On the other hand, the RIBA now positions professional inclusion as central to its core purpose<sup>2</sup>. Very recently, the RIBA has published a Social Mobility Action Plan (RIBA, 2018) and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (RIBA, 2019a). This puzzling change of heart from issues of classed exclusion being largely ignored by professional leadership bodies to suddenly being fundamental to their work sets the professional context for my exploration of class as an emergent diversity issue.

The final reason for my choice of architecture as a professional milieu to study is more personal. Initially, I had thought I would study class in relation to careers within the civil service, where I had spent a large part of my own career. My aim was to research a professional milieu, overtly founded on meritocratic principles, but which I strongly felt to be socially exclusive in terms of both access and career progression. However, near the beginning of my studies, I had the opportunity to work as a Research Assistant on a project which explored classed barriers to career success in different professional settings, which resulted in the publication of *The Class Ceiling* (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). I carried out my fieldwork at a small firm of architects. As a complete architectural outsider, with no knowledge of the profession, I was fascinated by how the architects I interviewed strove to negotiate and refashion their career ambitions in the face of considerable personal and structural challenges. More prosaically, I also enjoyed listening to career experiences which were very different to my own. While we found little evidence of a 'class ceiling' in that particular firm, I felt there was a lot left unresearched. In particular, my sense was that class may play a pivotal role in careers in the wider field of architecture. This thesis is the result of the happenstance of that opportunity in my own career history.

## Definition of Key Terms

My primary research question - how does class structure careers in the field of architecture? - demands working definitions of 'class', 'field' and 'career'. These are set out in turn.

### Class

First, I reiterate my ideal definition of class in relation to individuals. Following Bourdieu, I argue that an individual's class position is governed by possession and mastery of different forms of capital, in particular economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2006). The inheritance of different forms of capital in early socialisation classes the habitus; the set of dispositions, which shape individual action. As this process is unconscious, there is no necessary correspondence between the classed habitus and an individual's class identity.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Being inclusive...underpins all that we do' <https://www.architecture.com/about>

Class is formed and reproduced by consumption and classificatory practices (Savage, 2000; Tyler, 2015). Cultural practices serve to signal, reproduce and individualise classed hierarchies of taste (Bourdieu, 1984; Savage, 2000), while class is formed by the classificatory practices of others (Tyler, 2015; Morgan, 2018).

In sum, I define class, ideally, as a multi-faceted construct. Class relates to an individual's stock and mastery of different forms of capital, which form a classed habitus. Class inheres in the social distance from others and judgements of others, as well as in contingent class identities.

Second, I make use of the definition of class as an emergent aspect of diversity. The 'mobility industry' rarely draws from Bourdieu. Instead, in so far as it uses a sociological definition, class is derived from occupation, coded into the large classes of the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)<sup>3</sup>, which are widely used in government research.

According to the Weberian inspired NS-SEC schema, class denotes life chances through the labour market. Class is defined in terms of occupational aggregates, which relate both to an individual's "work situation" as an employer, employee or self-employed individual and "market situation", in terms of skill and qualifications, level of autonomy and supervisory responsibilities (Goldthorpe, 1980; Roberts, 2011: 23). The NS-SEC schema details eight classes as occupational groups, with higher and lower professionals forming part of the top two occupational aggregates.

Additionally, the policy arena of social mobility draws from a range of socio-economic indicators, including highest parental qualification, free school meal eligibility, and type of school attended, which are used to measure an individual's social background (Bridge, 2020).

I use these definitions and indicators of class in my empirical research, in interview discussions and the classification of individuals. I discuss the challenges and necessary compromises between class in relation to my theoretical ideal and the pragmatic demands of empirical research in my Methodology chapter.

## Field

In summary, fields are semi-autonomous arenas of social activity. They are characterised as highly differentiated sites of internal power struggles, driven by competition for material rewards and discursive battles to establish dominant values and legitimate norms of behaviour. Fields operate according to a unique logic, following their historical construction and evolution, which produces field-specific capitals. The social rules that govern the operation of fields are neither wholly fixed nor equally

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<sup>3</sup> See Annex C for details of NS-SEC categories

understood by all (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Individuals whose early socialisation affords them a more finely tuned “sense of the game” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 118) adopt dominant positions from which to accrue rewards and drive internal change. By contrast, those ill adapted for success are made to feel out of place.

## Career

Although my research does not make a theoretical contribution to career literature, I none the less need to situate my working definition of career in relevant academic scholarship.

In early academic work, a career was defined as a predictable and orderly ascent of positions of increasing seniority (Wilensky, 1961). In this ideal, associated with large, hierarchically ordered organisations in the middle decades of the twentieth century, (Evetts, 1992) individuals plan their ascent of structured career ladders in pursuit of status and material rewards.

Subsequent scholarship has rejected the ideal of a career as limited to upward progression within a single organisation. Instead, a career is defined to include any sequence of jobs, including horizontal or downward changes to position (Arnold and Jackson, 1997; Gunz, 1989). Scholarship termed “new career literature” (Cuzzocrea and Lyon, 2011: 1029) emphasises the agency of individuals to traverse organisational and professional boundaries, to enjoy ‘boundaryless’, ‘portfolio’ or ‘kaleidoscope’ careers (Hall, 2002; Handy, 1994; Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).

Theorising careers in relation to a Bourdieusian field, I temper the somewhat utopian voluntarism of ‘new career literature’, to try to take account of both individual agency and structural constraints. As I allow for the myriad spatial and temporal possibilities of individual careers (Gunz and Mayrhofer, 2018), which may be planned strategically or develop according to happenstance (Evetts, 1992), I theorise careers as driven by the agentic actions of individuals. However, actors are constrained (and empowered) by their own position and sense of fit within the field of architecture, the position and actions of other organisations, institutions and individuals, as well as the possibilities of leaving or expanding the field.

In this light, I draw from Gunz and Mayrhofer’s (2018: 70) definition of career in my research. The authors define career as “a pattern of a career actor’s positions and condition within a work-related bounded social and geographic space over their life to date”. This carries certain advantages over earlier scholarship.

First, against an early academic definition, Gunz and Mayrhofer emphasise that careers do not simply unfold within organisations, but play out within a much wider “social and geographic space”. Second, against the voluntarism of ‘new career literature’, the authors emphasise structural constraints to the

agentic actions of career actors. Third, the authors emphasise how careers may be patterned, such that the events and actions that constitute an actor's career are not solely random. Finally, the definition is self-consciously broad; the authors emphasise both the objective "positions" which career actors adopt, as well as the "conditions", which encompass a career as felt experience.

## Structure of Thesis

Below, I give an overview of the structure of the remainder of my thesis to answer my overarching question, broken down into four further subquestions, tackled in individual chapters:

### Overarching Question

- *How does class structure careers in the field of architecture?*

### Subquestions

- *How is the field of architecture organised?*
- *How does class structure access to the field of architecture?*
- *How does class structure progression through the field of architecture?*
- *how does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression in architecture?*

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

First, I situate my definition of class and approach to class analysis. Second, I review recent scholarship which has centred class in relation to professional career progression. Third, with the unit of analysis 'the profession' overall, I consider how architecture has been theorised within the sociology of the professions. In the fourth section, with individuals as the unit of analysis, I review evidence covering educational experiences and professional experiences of architects to show what can be gleaned in terms of the relation between class and careers.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

In this chapter, I set out my overarching epistemological position and my use of the three key Bourdieusian concepts of field, habitus and capitals. I outline my principal research method of semi-structured interviews. This is supplemented by analyses of naturally occurring discourse in the field of architecture: press coverage of architectural awards and EDI discourse produced by the RIBA and leading employers. I also discuss ethical considerations and my own positioning as a reflexive researcher.



## Chapter 4: Field

The subquestion I consider in this chapter is “How is the field of architecture organised?”

In this chapter, I delineate the field of architecture as the terrain through which careers are forged. This is a necessary first step in order to show how careers are structured by class. I propose that the dominant capitals are, in order of their symbolic value, ‘creative’, ‘public service’ and ‘commercial capital’. I outline the position of principal organisations within the field and highlight some key syntheses and tensions. I also show how individuals both accept and occasionally attempt to overturn the symbolic ordering as they navigate their careers.

## Chapter 5: Access

Chapters 5 and 6 are organised around the heuristic of access and progression. In relation to social mobility and the professions, policy discourse distinguishes between access (‘getting in’) and career progression (‘getting on’). Although this binary is messily entangled in architecture, with many individuals moving back and forth between education and practice throughout their careers as students, teachers, guest critics and practitioners, it is a useful heuristic to structure my findings.

The subquestion I consider in this chapter is “How does class structure access to the field of architecture?”

In this chapter, I set out the salience of class in relation to accessing the field. I show how class is relevant in three ways: first, in relation to deciding to study to become an architect, second, with regard to the experience of studying at university and third, in relation to differences in particular educational institutions. However, class is frequently silenced. First, a middle-class habitus which facilitates the adoption of an ideal architectural identity is naturalised in early upbringing, particularly for those with architects as parents. Second, becoming an architect entails losing markers of working-class identity. Finally, academics misrecognise architectural talent as a class-less entity.

## Chapter 6: Progression

The subquestion I consider in this chapter is “How does class structure progression through the field of architecture?”

Chapter 6 sets out the salience and silencing of class in relation to progressing through the field. I show how class is salient in three ways. First, class relates to objective position and subjective ‘fit’ in the most symbolically valued parts of the field. Second, class structures the possibility of doing one of the most symbolically valued activities in the field; running a successful ‘design-led’ practice. Third, class structures the forging and narrating of careers through the field, particularly at and beyond the traditional boundaries of architecture. I show how class is silenced in three overlapping ways. First,

agentic narratives of career underplay structural constraints and enablers. Second, the discomfort of class identities – both privilege and disadvantage – means they are rarely foregrounded. Third, individuals reject the salience of class in their career attributions, and narrate their careers in architecture largely according to the myth of a meritocracy.

#### Chapter 7: Class as a Diversity Issue

Architecture, theorised as a Bourdieusian field, is ‘semi-autonomous’, driven not only by internal dynamics, but also subject to external pressures. In relation to class and career progression, I analyse whether holders of managerial power - the RIBA, leading employers and small practice owners - have been activated by the social ‘mobility industry’. In relation to this agenda, the research subquestion I consider in this chapter is “how does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression in architecture?”

I argue that core architectural values and beliefs within the field militate against the management of class as a diversity issue. First, the positioning of design-talent as a natural entity suggests architecture can transcend the need to manage diversity. Second, architects reject equalities issues as a corporate managerial agenda, which is less highly valued than professionalism. Third, architects’ belief in their own inherent social progressiveness may lead to a rejection of the need for diversity management. However, the significance of public service capital within the field signals a desire to find organisational behaviours which carry genuinely progressive potential.

#### Chapter 8: Conclusions

I first consider the theoretical implications of my research. I outline how using Bourdieu to analyse classed rewards can productively be taken forward in the sociology of the professions. I also reflect on limitations and absences in my research, including the intersections of class and ethnicity, and consider potential new research questions and modes of class analysis. Finally, I explore the policy implications of my research. Against a neo-liberalism which permeates the social ‘mobility industry’, I outline progressive possibilities suggested by my research. I reflect on the generalisability of my research, in particular the extent to which architecture should be considered an exceptional or an emblematic profession.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

To review literature pertinent to my overarching research question – how does class structure careers in the field of architecture? - this chapter is divided in to four parts. The first two parts focus on class, while parts three and four centre architecture.

The first part focuses on definitional issues, which underpin my form of class analysis. Moving beyond Marxian and Weberian definitions of class, rooted in the economy, I review the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and contemporary Bourdieusian scholarship on cultural consumption, classed judgements and class identities. I outline how a cultural class analysis is a productive way of defining class as consequential to individual careers.

In the second part, I consider classed inequalities in relation to professional careers. I review scholarship which has focused on how class shapes career outcomes. This literature includes the experience of social mobility, career narratives and the long reach of class of origin in terms of career success.

In the final two parts, I shift the focus to architecture. In part three, with the unit of analysis the profession overall, I review how architecture has been theorised within the classic sociology of the professions, I highlight how issues of classed exclusion and intra-professional classed differences, although clearly apparent in the historical emergence of the profession, are rarely brought to the fore. I critique the work of scholars who have drawn from Bourdieu to theorise architecture as a field of cultural production. Their work provides a solid foundation from which to launch my own enquiries, but suffers from certain theoretical weaknesses, as well as empirical gaps in evidence in relation to individual class and career progression.

In part four, I review literature on architectural careers from initial interest to career progression. I review statistical evidence as well as studies drawn from various literatures, including vocational psychology, educational sociology, as well as the sociology of the professions.

## Part 1: Defining Class and Class Analyses

### Introduction

Defining class, in all its many varieties, is no easy task. At times, class is defined with considerable theoretical rigour. Indeed, the history of class analysis is characterised by grand theoretical battles, particularly by committed followers of Marx and Weber (e.g. Wright, 1987; Parkin, 1979). At others, class is invoked with scant attention to any theoretical underpinnings. In this light, class may be analysed in conjunction with a variety of loosely related categories, including status, wealth, education or occupational prestige (e.g. Côté, 2011).

Class is defined, on the one hand, as the outcome of on-going historical processes rooted in the political economy (Marx, 1974). On the other, class is considered in relation to individuals, resulting from broader social relations and cultural processes (Bourdieu, 2006). An individual's class may be defined by their parental background and/or current life situation (Goldthorpe et al., 1980). Class is also theorised as social identity, which individuals embrace or reject (Skeggs, 1997).

Class may be defined wholly by the social scientist, independently of public consciousness (Althusser, 1969). Alternatively, social scientists *use* lay perceptions to underpin their own definitions (Goldthorpe et al., 1980) or analyse the social currency of class (Savage et al., 2001).

Class may be afforded analytic primacy. Alternatively, it may be considered in intersection with other social categories and identities, particularly 'race' and gender, with no assumed hierarchy of analytic value (Anthias, 2013).

It is beyond the scope of my thesis to delineate and critique all definitions of class and related forms of class analysis. However, I do need to maintain a critical awareness of the myriad ways in which class is invoked in literature relevant to my research inquiries. Further, I clearly need to situate my own definition of class and theoretical approach to class analysis. In this section, therefore, I very briefly outline the history of class analysis, from the foundational work of Marx and Weber to the theories of Bourdieu and contemporary Bourdieusian scholarship, which informs my own approach.

### Class as Economy: Marx and Weber

Marx and Weber are two foundational theorists of class analysis. Although often positioned as oppositional, there are important overarching similarities between how Marx and Weber theorised class. Both defined class in relation to the economy, and maintained a historical analysis of issues of class formation. Neither devised a particularly sophisticated class schema, which was not their primary focus.

### *Marx and Class as Exploitation*

Marx's historical theories posit that classes are derived from economic relations of production (W. Atkinson, 2015: 20-23). In the transition from feudalism to capitalism, classes are grounded in exploitative relations between the owners of capital and those forced to commodify their labour for survival. Capitalists extract labour from workers, which forms the basis of surplus value. This, in turn, creates profits which fund further investments in capital. As history unravels, the two oppositional classes – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat - are predicted to polarise. As capitalism is inherently contradictory (Harvey, 2014), it contains the seeds of its own self-destruction. A scientific Marxism suggests that the structural contradictions inevitably bring about the end of capitalism, while a humanist Marxism argues that the awakening consciousness and collective action of the proletariat will achieve the same end (Crompton, 1998: 29-32).

Over time, Marx's theories came under sustained critique. First, Marxist analyses were argued to hit fundamental analytical dead-ends. For example, the construct of 'surplus value' failed to underpin the complexity of class formation (Savage; 2000: 11), while the key distinction between 'productive' and 'unproductive' labour was ill-equipped to take analytic account of non-manual forms of professional labour (Parkin, 1979). Second, scholars questioned the primacy of class over other social cleavages, including gender and 'race' (Crompton, 1998: 92; Acker, 2000: 193-196). Finally, history did not unravel as a crude Marxism had predicted. Changes to the nature of capitalist relations of production, termed post-industrialism, were argued to run counter to a Marxist understanding of history (Bell, 1973). In this logic, the proletariat, rather than forming one half of a polarised extreme, had become more integrated into capitalism. There was little evidence of class position leading to collective consciousness and revolutionary action (W. Atkinson, 2015). Instead, it was argued that individuals were increasingly tasked with forging their own life-projects. In this light, scholars argued for the 'death of class', alive in name only, but with no analytic utility (Pakulski and Waters, 1996).

### *Weber and Class as Life Chances*

Although the 'death of class' thesis targeted both Marx and Weber, Weber's theories were somewhat more resistant. Unlike Marx, Weber's historical analyses were not predictive. Against the agonistic relations of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, Weber's conception of class as market-centred opportunities (Crompton, 1998:33) chimed more readily with the integration of the working classes into a post-industrial society. Further, a Weberian analysis does not assume the primacy of class in driving historical change.

Weber theorised class as an individual's 'life chances' within markets (Gerth and Mills, 1948: 181). Social mobility is integral to a Weberian definition of social class. Classes become 'social classes' when

inter- or intra-generational social mobility between particular class situations is “easy and typical” (W. Atkinson, 2015: 45). Weber maintained a tight analytic distinction between social classes and ‘status groups’, a complex construct which suggests prestige, life-style and “consciousness communities” (Crompton, 1998: 35).

John Goldthorpe and colleagues in the Nuffield school develop Weberian class analyses of social mobility which resist ‘death of class’ critique. This scholarship finds that class, defined as occupational aggregates based on individual market and work situations (Roberts, 2011: 20-27) remains highly consequential for various life outcomes, including “political partisanship” (ibid: 27) and educational attainment (W. Atkinson, 2015: 133). Goldthorpe’s Weberian formation of class is widely used across governmental quantitative research. As outlined in my previous chapter, it forms the basis of the NS-SEC, widely endorsed by the ‘mobility industry’.

This definition of class, therefore, is highly apposite to my research question. It is designed to facilitate questions about how far class is individually consequential in relation to various social outcomes, including career outcomes. However, this wholly quantitative programme of research is itself rather narrow, focusing on ever more technical questions about the measurement of rates of social mobility across time and between countries (W. Atkinson, 2015: 54-56). While this programme of work effectively kept class analysis alive, its definition of class was rather sterile and lifeless.

Defining class solely in terms of occupational aggregates for use in a positivist research programme effectively shut down productive areas of interest, which are highly relevant to my research focus. These include the felt experience of social mobility, the lay meaning of class and issues of class identities (Savage, 2003; Friedman, 2014).

### Bourdieu and ‘Cultural Class’ Analysis

Instead, ‘cultural class’ analysis (Savage, 2003) allows class to be considered as individually consequential, in ways which do not negate class as subjective experience and identity. Cultural class analysis draws principally from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. The centrality of culture to his definition of class and forms of class analysis differentiates Bourdieu from both Marx and Weber.

Bourdieu’s (1984) seminal work on cultural taste – *Distinction* – entailed primary research and secondary analyses of French cultural life in the 1960s and 1970s. Against both Weber’s analytic separation of class and status and the economism of a reductive strain of Marxism, Bourdieu explores how class structures highly differentiated cultural practices and lifestyles. These, in turn, form the culture through which classed inequalities are reproduced across generations.

Bourdieu set out a sharp division between the cultural practices and tastes of the dominant and dominated class. Indeed, it is through cultural practices that the dominant class assert their authority over the dominated. The dominant class legitimate high culture, whether in the form of visual arts, music or literature, as “practices designated by their rarity as distinguished” (Bourdieu, 1984: 171).

The appreciation of high culture requires a very particular habitus; an unemotional disposition of “self-imposed austerity, restraint, reserve” (ibid: 172). That such a habitus is developed unconsciously during early upbringing makes such cultural appreciation seem a mark of a refined personality rather than a product of socialisation. By contrast, mass-produced cultural products, which carry immediate, emotional appeal, are open to those in the dominated class. They are “socially identified as vulgar because they are both easy and common” (ibid: 171).

### Contemporary Bourdieusian Scholarship

Many scholars have drawn from Bourdieu to develop contemporary forms of cultural class analyses. Below, I review relevant work in relation to three broad areas: cultural consumption, classed judgements and class identities. These both shape my theoretical definition of class, and provide important empirical evidence on class issues in a contemporary British context, which informs my own primary research.

#### *Cultural Consumption*

Since the publication of *Distinction*, it is argued that divisions between different forms of culture have become rather more nuanced. Further, cultural omnivorousness – the ability to appreciate both traditionally high and low forms of culture - is itself socially valued (Bennett et al., 2009; Peterson, 2005). However, notwithstanding this anti-elitist veneer, cultural consumption remains highly class-inflected and discriminatory (Savage, 2015). As Bourdieu (1984: 279) himself noted, symbolic value assigned to cultural practices may emanate from “liking the same things differently”. When consumed knowingly by the intellectual fraction of the dominant class, “‘vulgar’ artifacts abandoned to common consumption, Westerns, strip cartoons, family snapshots, graffiti” are themselves transformed “into distinguished and distinctive works of art”.

In a contemporary British context, Savage (2015: 115) finds that middle-class individuals enjoy such “ironic and playful” appreciation of low culture, while at the same time making snobbish judgements of working-class taste. What distinguishes the middle classes from their working-class counterparts is the confidence, ease and self-assurance with which they recall their cultural activities, whether these are traditionally high- or low-brow. In this way, class hierarchies emerge and are reinforced through cultural practices, including expressions of everyday tastes and the development of cultural competences (Tyler, 2015; Savage, 2015).

### *Classed judgements*

In relation to classed judgements of others, Morgan (2018) reviews the 'snobscape' of contemporary British life. He concludes that snobbery, structured principally by possession and mastery of cultural capital, has intensified. Rather than emulating those higher up the social hierarchy, there has been a notable growth in the shaming of those in lower positions. Such individuals are held to be of lesser moral worth, and therefore kept at a distance (Lamont, 1992; Shildrick and Macdonald, 2013).

As Tyler (2015) argues, the promotion of an individualist ideology, which problematically posits that all individuals can succeed, provided they adopt an entrepreneurial mind-set, results in stigma for those at the bottom of a social hierarchy. Negative valorisations are amplified by media representations of those living in poverty as "workshy malingerers" (Tyler, 2015: 495), who merit only contempt (O. Jones, 2011b).

Paradoxically, however, this intensification of extreme classed judgements has occurred at the same time as overt snobbery and self-identification as a snob has become socially unacceptable (Morgan, 2018). Snobbery, therefore, goes underground; it is denied at the same time as it is widely practised (Morgan, 2018; Savage, 2015).

### *Class Identities*

Measured by quantitative survey research, class identification, when defined as the extent to which an individual feels an affinity with a class collective, is rather weak (Heath et al., 2013). In Britain, the initial response of as many as half of adults is to say they personally *never* identify with any social class. When pressed to choose, more select a working- than middle-class identity (60% vs 40%, Heath et al., 2013). There is frequently a mismatch between this prompted class identity and an individual's 'objective' class position according to their own or their parents' occupation (Friedman et al., 2021).

Qualitative research adds considerable nuance and understanding. Personal class identities are highly contingent; on class position, social situation and in relation to other social identities. On the one hand, contemporary British working-class identities "are increasingly positioned as 'valueless'" (Loveday, 2014: 721). Working-class people are pressured by "hegemonic discourses that 'blame the poor' to dissociate themselves from "a pathological underclass" (Tyler, 2015; Shildrick and Macdonald, 2013). Working-class women, in particular, disidentify from a working-class identity, painfully aware of the stigma and negative judgements of others (Skeggs, 1997; Reay, 1998).

On occasion, however, individuals lay claim to a working-class identity, in order to benefit from positive values of authenticity and lack of pretention (Savage et al., 2001), rooted in a mythologised past of collective community (Lawler, 2014; Loveday, 2014). Working-class men, in particular,



knowingly play with such nostalgic identities as a way to critically contest dominant middle-class norms (Loveday, 2014). By contrast, middle-class individuals draw from their longer family histories to lay claim to a working-class identity in order to deflect accusations of privilege and tell a personal life history of merited success (Friedman et al., 2021).

Individuals are frequently ambivalent about their own class identity, preferring the more flexible label of 'ordinary' (Savage et al., 2001). This can be explained in three different ways. First, social reference theory suggests that individuals tend to evaluate themselves in sideways comparisons with peers of similar status, wealth and backgrounds. Thus, 'ordinary' is always a valid label, irrespective of one's objective class position (Irwin, 2015). Second, emphasising ordinariness is a tactical way to avoid accusations of snobbish judgements and elitist pretensions on the one hand, and maintain a distance from the negative valorisation of working-class identities on the other (Savage et al., 2001). A final explanation is provided by the contemporary dominance of an ideology of individualism. In so far as class is understood as a collective identity, an "individualistic ethic" leads to the rejection of class as personally salient (ibid: 882). Savage argues further that class is understood as important part of the "social fabric", which can be used to make sense of patterns of social inequality: it would, therefore, be a "category mistake" for people to embrace class as a personal identity.

### Summary

In sum, I position my approach to class analysis within the emerging paradigm of cultural class analysis. Following Bourdieu, I define class as a multi-faceted construct. Class relates to an individuals' stock and mastery of different forms of capital, which form a classed habitus. Class inheres in the social distance from others and judgements of others, as well as in contingent class identities.

Carrying out a cultural class analysis, therefore, allows me to define class as consequential so as to explore its relationship with architectural careers in a way that does not reify class as an ahistorical, fixed characteristic of the person.

My review of the contemporary British class landscape brings to light important tensions in how class operates. In particular, democratic and egalitarian veneers – consumption as a free-for-all life-style choice and the social unacceptability of overt snobbery – stand in stark opposition to the persistence of class-inflected modes of cultural consumption and intensification of classed judgements. As a result, class identifications are highly ambiguous and ambivalent, and do not straightforwardly correspond to an objective position in a social hierarchy.

## Part 2: Class and Professional Careers: The Consequences of Class

### Introduction

In this section, I review literature which has considered the consequences of class in relation to my research focus on individual careers. Much of this literature draws from Bourdieu and fits well within the emerging paradigm of cultural class analysis.

In relation to professional careers specifically, contemporary research has explored the felt experience of social mobility (Lawler, 1999; Brine, 2006), the relationship between class and individual career narratives (Atkinson, 2010; Miles et al., 2011) as well as the long-term impact of class of origin on career success (Laurison and Friedman, 2016; Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

This research, which rarely has architecture as an empirical focus, highlights the emotional turmoil and ambivalences of upward social mobility. It also reveals the continued salience of class, which plays both a restrictive and facilitative role in structuring career progression.

### The Experience of Upward Social Mobility

As my research inquiries focus on career progression into and through a professional field, the mobility experience of individuals from working-class backgrounds is highly salient. A body of qualitative research explores the subjective experiences of upward social mobility in different occupational settings. Upwardly social mobility is theorised in the intersection between gender and social class (Skeggs, 1997; Lawler, 1999; Brine, 2006) as well as both gender and minority ethnicities (Puwar, 2001; 2004; Higginbotham and Weber, 1992; Kenny and Briner, 2010).

Scholars emphasise the emotional pain of upward mobility, which may entail a necessary rejection of personally valued resources (Skeggs, 1997) and the leaving behind of friends and family (Brine, 2006). As the embodied self is 'class-marked,' upward mobility can never be fully realised (Skeggs, 1997; Lawler, 1999). The self is conflicted, torn and fractured (Lawler, 1999; Brine, 2006). In Bourdieusian terms the habitus is split (*clivé*); divided in ways which deny the possibility of an untroubled professional identity. Upwardly mobile professionals remain critically conscious of their difference. They may feel a deep sense of imposter syndrome due to their classed backgrounds. Working-class identities maintain a ghostly presence, returning to haunt individuals, who both dread a return to their earlier lives and fear exposure, such that they will never be wholly at ease in professional environments (Lawler, 1999).

In intersection with ethnicity, scholars find that the performative requirements of upward social mobility are troubling and exhausting. For black professionals, the need to perform in 'Whiteworld' is inauthentic and can be experienced as a form of betrayal (Rollock et al., 2011). Puwar (2001; 2004)

explores the intersection of gender, ethnicity and class in the context of the UK government. In this elite space, the privileged white male body remains the “somatic norm”, such that women and black MPs are made to feel out of place as “space invaders” (Puwar, 2001: 651). Their presence in senior positions causes dissonance and disorientation. To ‘succeed’ in these contexts requires painful assimilation: “slowly [to] whitewash bodily gestures, social interests, value systems and speech patterns” (Puwar, 2004: 76).

While qualitative research on the experience of upward mobility finds most evidence of painful and disturbing effects, some more ambivalent or positive aspects are apparent.

In addition to material reward and intrinsically interesting work (Jones, 2004; Hoskins, 2010) upward mobility chimes with dominant cultural norms of self-improvement, aspiration and social ascent (Newman, 1999). As a corollary to painful disassociation of abandoning one’s class of origin, upward mobility may involve an escape from oppressive gender norms (Jones, 2004). It may, therefore, be experienced as a process of self-discovery or self-realisation. Lawler (1999) finds that British women from working-class backgrounds create a differently classed ‘real self’ which is in the process of becoming, rooted in the memory of always being different and aspiring for more.

In contrast to shame or fear of exposure, upwardly mobile individuals may feel able to present their working-class roots as a badge of honour in particular professional contexts (Hey, 1997). Relatedly, individuals at times play creatively with the fractured identities which spring from upward social mobility, bringing forth different aspects of their identity depending on the social situation (Friedman, 2014). Having a foothold in different social classes can be helpful professionally. Martin and Côté (2019) argue that the intra-generationally socially mobile may be able to bridge class-based differences between groups within organisations. For McLeod et al. (2009), advertising creatives from working class backgrounds act as cultural intermediaries, translating the communication goals of the middle-class commissioning client into culturally appropriate campaigns and messages.

### Class and Career Narratives

My research inquiries focus equally on how individuals interpret their careers as successful or otherwise. A small body of qualitative research has explored the relationships between class and career narratives (Atkinson, 2010; Miles et al., 2011).

Atkinson (2010) pits himself against ‘reflexivity theorists’ – Archer, Baumann, Beck, Giddens - associated with the ‘death of class’ hypothesis. These influential scholars argue that seismic changes associated with globalisation, to the world of work, systems of welfare and education, as well as the proliferation of information provided by advanced communication technologies, effectively task

people to be the reflexive authors of their own life-projects. Each individual is compelled to be the “actor, designer, juggler and stage director of his or her own biography” (Beck, 1997: 95).

Atkinson (2010) sets out to test the hypothesis of classless voluntarism implied by the work of these reflexivity theorists. He explores career histories and narratives in a qualitative study of individuals from different class backgrounds employed in a cross-section of occupations to argue that class continues to play an important structuring role.

In outlining individual career histories, Atkinson (2010: 109-111) highlights many examples of what appear, at first sight, evidence of reflexivity. Individuals frequently react to changing life circumstances to re-plan their careers taking stock of available information in ways which foreground their agency. For example, redundancy is positioned in accounts of career histories as an opportunity, while motherhood becomes a chance to reassess career priorities. There is a preponderance of the language of personal career choice in individuals from both middle- and working-class backgrounds. However, while these ‘I decided’ narratives could be taken as strong evidence of agency, Atkinson concludes compellingly that these are signs of “a faux reflexivity, that is, nothing more than mundane consciousness operating within the subjective field of possibles given class positions and dispositions but masquerading at the narrative level as action without limits or history” (ibid: 114).

Instead, Atkinson outlines how career decisions are heavily structured by individuals’ possession and mastery of different forms of capital. Most obviously, economic capital accumulates more in the dominant sector of social space, through higher redundancy pay, access to family wealth and rises in house prices. This affords individuals from more privileged backgrounds the space to plan career moves. Second, the privileged have access to better positioned ‘weak tie’ contacts, who can provide different occupational opportunities. Third, institutionalised cultural capital, in the form of prestigious qualifications, are leveraged by middle-class employees to advance their career.

Atkinson concludes that real changes in the labour market have indeed made individual careers less stable and structured. Individuals in both the dominant and dominated sector of social space use similarly reflexive language to provide some narrative order to their career histories. However, the largely unconscious class habitus continues to provide highly differentiated opportunities. Class continues to play an important structuring role, but this process is superficially hidden as individuals from different class backgrounds employ similar narrative frames to outline their career choices.

Miles et al.’s (2011) life history interviews with men who have been intergenerationally stable buttresses this finding. Individuals who have remained in the professional social classes of their upbringing typically tell ‘modest stories’ and underplay their achievements. Instead, they emphasise

that they have been lucky, counterbalance career success with problems in their personal lives, and qualify their objective career success with subjective ambivalence. In so doing, they anticipate and deflect accusations of snobbery and elitism. The authors argue that these modest stories ironically draw attention to their career success, as only those with successful careers are in a position to understate.

### The Long Reach of Class of Origin

In this section, I review evidence which highlights how class may be consequential to career progression and career outcomes. I consider both 'supply-side' factors, which centre the actions and experiences of individuals as career actors, as well as the 'demand-side' actions of managers.

In relation to the long-term impact of class on career success, a privileged background has long been shown to have a positive association with increased career incomes (Erikson and Jonsson, 1998; Hallsten, 2013; Mastekaasa, 2011; Torche, 2011).

More recent evidence suggests the relatively few professionals who come from working-class family backgrounds suffer considerable pay penalties, even after taking statistical account of human capital and demographic factors (Britton et al., 2016; Friedman et al., 2015; Laurison and Friedman, 2016). The pay differential is greater depending on social distance travelled, with the long-range intergenerationally mobile suffering the greatest pay penalties (Laurison and Friedman, 2016).

An emerging body of qualitative research has been marshalled to try to provide an explanation for this 'class ceiling'. 'Supply-side' explanations which centre on the actions of individual professionals emphasise the emotional pain of mobility, feelings of guilt, and a perceived lack of fit in particular professional contexts.

In broadcast media and professional service firms, working-class professionals cite instances of avoiding particular work events, organisations and networking opportunities due to an instinctive feeling that such places are 'not for them' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Critically, the authors conclude that such actions should be seen neither as deficits of aspiration nor tactical 'mistakes', given the reality of class-privileged cultures at the top of the professions they study.

'Demand-side' explanations, which focus more on professional access than progression, emphasise the role managers play in recruiting candidates from privileged backgrounds. Recruitment goes far beyond an assessment of human capital. Following the 'cultural turn' in management, recruiters assess candidates on their organisational fit (Hansen, 2001; Rivera, 2012). Recruiters admit to looking for shared cultural interests and social activities, and recruit by homophily (Moore et al. 2016; Rolfe and Anderson, 2003).

Employers provide different justifications for adopting such recruitment strategies. Recruitment from a narrow range of institutions is argued to be efficient and effective (Ashley et al., 2015), meritocratic, and therefore fair (Moore et al., 2016), or client-driven (Ashley and Empson, 2013). Clients are argued to favour a certain calibre of 'polished' individual associated with attendance of prestigious educational institutions.

Ashcraft (2013) argues that identities of professions and the social identities of professionals are interdependent; the status of professions is underscored by recruiting privileged professionals, who benefit in turn from their association with high status professions. Recruiting socially privileged candidates can, therefore, increase firms' 'reputational capital' and improve their brand image (Ashley, 2010).

Once professional access has been attained, more socially exclusive professions may reward the 'correct' performance of specific cultural codes, which require forms of embodied cultural capital associated with middle-class socialisation (Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

Career progression in different professional contexts is found to be facilitated by one-to-one sponsorship relations, which create strong bonds between individuals of similar class backgrounds. Early career professionals and their informal sponsors tend to share leisure and cultural interests, which have no direct relevance to their professional focus, but which none the less ease career ascent (Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

In sum, therefore, an emerging body of evidence finds that class is consequential in terms of objective career success, driven by the actions of individual employees, managers and employers.

### Summary

In this section, I have reviewed literature which considers the structuring role of class in relation to the felt experience of social mobility, individual career narratives and objective measures of career success. This literature shows that class continues to play important structuring effects. Upward mobility is found to carry profound emotional consequences for individuals, which are principally, but not exclusively, negative. By contrast, a middle-class background facilitates career success and allows for greater choice and career opportunities. However, this is often underplayed in modest accounts of individual careers.

## Part 3: Architecture and The Sociology of The Professions

### Introduction

In this section, I focus on architecture within the sociology of the professions. I argue that Larson's compelling work on architecture as a professionalization project of monopoly control is useful to understand the development of the profession in relation to class formation. Her positioning of architecture as struggling is supported by other scholarship, as well as contemporary developments in the profession.

However, I argue that this theoretical work is also problematic. By theorising the profession as a unified actor, Larson's work downplays intra-professional divisions, including those relating to class, which are very apparent in the historical development of the profession. An emphasis on professional projects of closure, which act to establish and police boundaries, problematically implies that individuals are equally contained and embedded in the profession. In my review of historical and sociological literature, I foreground issues of class to unsettle the idea of the profession of architecture as a collective and unified actor.

I also review literature which has theorised architecture as a Bourdieusian field. I argue that this is a more constructive way to theorise architecture in relation to my interest in class and career progression, as it draws attention to intra-professional struggle and competition. However, I show that this small body of work also suffers from certain theoretical weaknesses as well as empirical gaps in evidence with regard to the class composition of actors who constitute the field.

### The Evolution of The Sociology of The Professions

Early sociological treatment of the professions was largely functionalist (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933). Scholars within this paradigm held a broadly positive view of the professions as providing moral authority. Professions serve as a bulwark against the destabilising forces of modernity. In such a view, professionals command respect by acting with integrity and collegiality.

In the light of this evaluation, 'traits theory' scholars aimed to distinguish professions from other occupations by outlining key definitional features (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933). These include the need for lengthy training, the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge, and adherence to an agreed code of conduct, in order to provide an altruistic service. However, distinguishing features proved difficult to pinpoint with any degree of consensus. As the contested definitional features of the professions multiplied – Hickson and Thomas (1969) outline 14 traits provided by 20 theorists – the core definitional question as to what constitutes a profession became somewhat stale and was found to be ultimately irresolvable.

Instead, sociologists began to focus on how professionals acted in practice. In this work, ethnographic research detailing professional lifeworlds unsettled the largely positive picture painted by functionalist sociologists. A study of medics (Becker, 1961) found that notions of public service and altruism were convenient social constructs rather than ideal standards that professionals actively strived to adopt. Instead, doctors could be quite cynical in their accumulation of prestige and personal power.

While traits theorists grappled with definitional questions, functionalists with the societal purpose of professions, and symbolic interactionists with meaning-making, all could be criticised for paying scant attention to issues of power. These different approaches neglect both the political economy which gave rise to the emergence of professions and the way that professions came to exert their influence as collective actors.

Accordingly, a new paradigm, termed 'professional power' (Macdonald, 1995), came to dominate the sociology of the professions. In this body of work, scholars theorise professionalisation as a historical process (Parkin, 1979; Murphy, 1988; Johnson, 1972; Larson, 1977; 1983).

Class formation is central to this body of work. The establishment of professions coincided with and was intrinsically related to the emergence of the modern class structure (Macdonald, 1995). The development of professional associations, rudimentary forms of credentialism and embryonic forms of state regulation occurred through the course of the nineteenth century, concurrent with the early emergence of industrial capitalism. In short, the emergence of professions is intrinsically related to broader processes of societal class formation.

A principal distinction within this work was between Marxist theorists, whose structural accounts argued that the evolution of professions resulted from "the external logic of capitalist development" and Weberians who emphasised the collective agency of professions as emerging social groups (Crompton, 1987: 414). However, neither Marxist nor Weberian accounts of professionalisation foregrounded individual differences in the distributions of rewards, which is the prime focus of my research interest.

Within this 'professional power' paradigm is found one of the few sociologists of the professions to focus on architecture throughout her academic career: Magali Sarfatti Larson (Larson, 1983; 1994; 1995). Larson's seminal work – *The Rise of Professionalism* (1977) – effectively straddles the principal point of distinction between Marxist and Weberian theories. Her historical accounts situate the birth of modern professions within the logical constraints of industrial capitalist development. At the same time, by theorising the rise of professionalism as a strategic project, she underscores the collective agency of professions as emergent social groups.



In theorising professionalisation as a strategic project, Larson argues that professions act to leverage specialist skills to gain both material and social rewards. To achieve this, they aim to monopolize the market for their services and to limit occupational access. There are three fundamental requirements to fulfil this goal. First, professions must establish a formal base of knowledge, in which their members are experts. Second, an established system of formal educational credentials is needed to reproduce professional members. Third, this requires state support in relation to regulation and official licensing to establish and police borders. With the realisation of these three aims, professions can effect professional closure.

A key requirement of professionalisation projects is that professions successfully insert themselves into an evolving class structure, which, historically, is structured by the emerging logic of industrial capitalism. For Larson, professions are integral to the class system, and are not, despite how they may elect to present themselves, made up of socially unattached intellectuals (Macdonald, 1995: 9). Professional closure, therefore, goes hand in hand with social closure.

#### The Historical Emergence of the Profession of Architecture

Larson's sociological work on professionalisation drew largely from historical accounts. In the United Kingdom, the work of architectural historian Andrew Saint (1983) and sociologist Barrington Kaye (1960) sit well within theories of professional and social closure, to reveal a complex relationship between emerging social classes and early stages of architecture's professionalisation.

In the eighteenth century, much of the practice of architecture, before the term itself had gained social currency, was led by amateurs from a social elite. An appreciation of architecture, gained in part through travel abroad, was considered a core part of a liberal education for the upper classes. There was a fashion for young upper-class men to design their own country houses, although such designs could be 'ghosted' by competent professionals as necessary. Indeed, too much technical knowledge of the "minute and mechanical" aspects of construction was considered unseemly and unbecoming of the upper class (Kaye, 1960: 46). In this light, we see the roots of an ideal of architecture as a 'gentlemanly profession'.

In addition to the upper-class amateurs who designed their own country seats, early professional architects, such as they existed, worked under a loose system of patronage. Saint (1983) distinguishes between two types of professional architect who differed markedly by social background and technical expertise. Firstly, there were a few independently wealthy "talented amateurs" who relied on a second, more numerous, group of craftsmen for technical expertise (ibid: 57). While this latter group has come to be termed architects in retrospect, their contemporary classification was as "surveyors, builders, measurers, house agents, carpenters, masons, suppliers of materials and so on"

(ibid: 57). Sir Christopher Wren, who turned to architecture without formal training, is an example of the first group. Nicholas Hawksmoor, who worked under Wren, is an example of the second.

Kaye's (1960) history of the development of the profession of architecture in Britain divides the nineteenth century into three overlapping periods: 1800-1832, 1825-1870 and 1865-1900. The first period is chaotic. As society shifted awkwardly from status ascription to capitalist production, architects lose the system of patronage which previously provided a degree of order. The nascent profession of architecture was entirely unregulated. There was competition from unqualified 'quacks', which resulted in low levels of prestige for architecture among the general public.

This initial period of embryonic professionalisation first witnessed a degree of social closure. Analysis of the Dictionary of National Biography finds sizeable minorities of architects who enter the profession until 1819 originate from working-class backgrounds (Kaye, 1960: 47-53). Kaye attributes this possibility of social mobility to uniformity of style such that talented builders could also take on design work.

In the second period, architecture began to professionalise in earnest. From around 1820, the vast majority of architects were trained through apprenticeships or pupillage at an architect's office. This method served the emerging middle classes, while closing off the route from builder to architect. Professionalisation gathered pace with the growth of provincial architectural societies, the emergence of rudimentary forms of training, and public architectural competitions. Notable clubs, journals, societies and other institutions are formed. These include the Architectural Association (1847) and Institute of British Architecture (1834), which gained its Royal Charter in 1837 to become the Royal Institute of British Architecture (RIBA). In this period of conflict and struggle, the initial goal of the RIBA was to provide respectability for the profession (Macdonald, 1995). Membership of the RIBA was limited to those with no links to the building profession so as to reassure clients that they would not be overcharged.

This period of professionalisation was marked by a reduction in what was considered as architectural work. In the early part of the nineteenth century, successful architects divested themselves of low status tasks - "arranging leases, assessing rents, measuring property" - which were instead carried out by surveyors or estate managers (Saint, 1983: 57). The elite of the profession were happy to focus on design, which provided greater status rewards.

Architecture also suffered encroachment from different 'competitor' professions. These included builders offering prototype 'design and build' services; craftsmen becoming interior decorators happy

to take on refurbishment and extensions; and engineers of high technical skill and public renown who had developed some competence in architectural design.

This encroachment was more troublesome. For architecture to survive as a profession, it needed to find a niche area of expertise. Art fulfilled this function. Saint (ibid: 66) argues that architects consciously promoted “the idea of art in building as the special province of the architect.....as a means of professional self-defence”. The professional vision, championed by John Soanes, invoked a status hierarchy between the Art Architect, responsible for design, and the practical architect whose role was to supervise construction.

In the final period of the nineteenth century, increased wealth allowed the emerging elite of the profession to work as ‘Art Architects’. This elite emanated from the middle and upper-middle classes, including some men of “private means...able to sustain themselves as gentlemen, limiting their practices to what they felt befitted the true dignity of an architect” (ibid: 62-63). While economic growth and urbanisation provide increased professional opportunities and security, elite architects mistakenly attribute their professional success “to art and the propaganda for art” (ibid: 66).

A key area of contestation during the development of the profession in the nineteenth century was the idea of the architect as a trusted intermediary between client and construction professionals (a position championed by Soanes) versus the architect as speculative developer (championed by Nash) (Saint, 1983). However, after Nash’s public disgrace in 1830, following parliamentary scrutiny of the escalating cost of construction of Buckingham Place, the idea of architect as developer slowly diminished “and remained in disrepute in Britain for more than a century” (ibid: 59). As was the case with Art Architects, the respectable vision of Soanes, won out.

The final decades of the nineteenth century signalled the establishment of the profession of architecture, which was increasingly regulated and controlled. There was further development of rudimentary architectural education and examination. Calls for registration of the profession were first made in Parliament around 1880. Principal opposition came both from the champions of Art Architects, who argue simply that that art and professionalism were incompatible, and from the RIBA who had yet to gain meaningful control of the profession (Saint, 1983).

The early decades of the twentieth century marked professional consolidation. Education was increasingly provided by universities. The position of the RIBA towards registration changed as its membership grew. Ultimately, Parliament passed two Registration Acts. The first, in 1931, allowed for voluntary registration. The Architects Registration Council of the United Kingdom was established to maintain the register. It set up three boards to govern architectural education, admission and

discipline. The second Act, passed in 1938, protected the use of the title architect to those on the register. Thereafter, these professional architectural bodies self-regulated by stipulating fees, restricting advertising and setting clear demarcationary boundaries between architects and developers (Button and Fleming, 1992). Finally, architecture had effected professional closure.

### Architecture as a Failing Profession

While Larson argues that professional closure provided architects with high social status and positions of class privilege - “the professionalization movement had assured architects of positions that were always securely located in the middle class (Larson, 1983: 70)” – architecture’s professionalisation project as a whole remained highly problematic.

Architecture failed to achieve monopoly control, as only a small fraction of the built environment was architecturally designed. Speculators played the lead role in developing the built environment. It was engineers, rather than architects, who came to lead on required technical knowledge to construct buildings of greater size and complexity (Larson, 1983).

By contrast with ‘successful’ professions, architecture failed to expand its area of professional remit. While medicine expanded to incorporate emerging social problems including public and mental health, architecture tended to exclude. By limiting its professional jurisdiction to a design-focused core, other professions were able to encroach and carve out distinct areas of more technical expertise.

State support often entails the establishment of an effective regulator to police professional entry. The history of the professionalization of architecture is characterised by on-going and bitter disputes about the desirability of compulsory registration (Macdonald, 1995; Kaye, 1960). This, coupled with the multitude of representative bodies which have competed to represent the profession, led to the “balkanisation of architecture which has bedevilled the occupation from the outset” (Macdonald, 1995: 108-109).

Architecture’s professionalization is characterised by strained relationships between the academy and professional practice (Stevens, 1998). Architectural histories chart the uneasy shift from a practice-based apprentice model to the establishment of independent educational institutions (Kaye, 1960). The academy was frequently found wanting. No sooner was it established, then there emerged calls for it to be reformed.

While most of these difficulties are experienced to some degree in any professionalisation project, architecture’s preoccupation with art is argued to be unique (Larson, 1983). Architecture is contrasted with foundational professions, in particular law and medicine, and is found to be weaker, struggling due its unusual foregrounding of aesthetics.

The artistic foundations of architectural knowledge stand in stark contrast to the scientific evidence base of medicine or engineering (Larson, 1983). As artistic judgement is plural and contestable, the profession remains open to challenge from external competitors. Intra-professionally too, the extent to which architectural knowledge is codifiable as scientific or indeterminate as artistic remains a consistent source of dispute (Macdonald, 1995; Svensson, 1990; Pinnington and Morris, 2002). Architecture is further subject to lay resistance. A sceptical public may reject the profession's aesthetic expertise as superfluous, preferring functionally equivalent buildings, constructed without any input from an architect.

### Professional Reform

This positioning of architecture as a profession in crisis from the moment it effected professional closure is underscored by subsequent developments. Architecture's limited professional power was further weakened later in the twentieth century as professions came under sustained critique from the New Right. Drawing from Monopolies Commission reports which argued that market liberalisations of the professions were in the public interest (Monopolies Commission, 1970; 1977), Margaret Thatcher attacked professions as inefficient, unaccountable "little republics" (Muzio and Ackroyd, 2005: 622).

The diagnosis was market liberalisation, which diluted professional power. Despite some opposition from the RIBA, market reforms won the day. Advertising for architectural services was deregulated throughout the 1980s and mandatory fee scales were abolished in 1982. Architects were then able to form Limited Liability Partnerships and work in organisations with developers and contractors, so long as such arrangements were made transparent to clients (Button and Fleming, 1992).

The characterisation of architecture as, at best, a partially 'successful' professionalisation project, which is subsequently weakened by deregulatory reforms, provides some explanation for the number of sociologically informed studies which aim to bolster the overall commercial viability of the profession (Gutman, 1988; Symes et al. 1995; Blau, 1984). In both the US and the UK, sociologists analysed the workings of architects and architectural practices to provide recommendations to try to assure the profession's future success.

In addition to these sociological studies, a plethora of reviews have aimed to diagnose problems in the failing architectural profession and propose effective reforms (Latham, 1994; Egan, 1998; RIBA 1992; 1993; 1995; Foxell, 2003; White, 2005; RIBA, 2010; Farrell Review, 2014).

While each of these substantial reviews was the product of a unique set of circumstances and constraints, and each promotes different policy recommendations, recurrent themes are apparent.

Architects are assigned individual responsibility to lead professional reform. They are encouraged to develop business-related skills, including financial expertise and in the realm of Information Technology. Equally, they should improve their interpersonal, communication and leadership skills, so as to become more effective project managers. In this way, architects should retain their primary responsibility for issues of design, while working flexibly to become more collaborative leaders in the construction industry.

None of the sociologically informed consultancy provided an effective roadmap to commercial success that proved workable to 'the profession'. None of the reviews reported substantial progress. A failure to reform begets the need for further reforms. To reframe architecture's history in the language of early sociological enquiry into the professions, a state of turmoil and commercial crisis appears to be architecture's most enduring and defining professional trait.

### Critique of the Sociology of the Professions

In relation to my overarching research question – how does class structure careers in the field of architecture? - there are a number of theoretical issues which spring from Larson's seminal work in architecture.

First, theorising professions as collective agents who carry out strategic professionalization projects downplays internal divisions within each profession. Sahin-Dikmen (2013) highlights that intra-professional turmoil is frequently noted in studies of architecture. However, it is positioned as a curious, extraneous feature, which prevents the profession from achieving success in its overarching strategic project. As such, architecture's frequent positioning as a 'failing profession' distracts from a very different possible reading of the social reality of the emerging profession; for certain individuals and groups, the struggling profession of architecture provides a social setting which allows them to accrue considerable symbolic and material rewards. From this perspective, professional struggles can be seen as a feature to exploit, rather than a bug to be fixed.

Second, theorising professions as collective entities which enact exclusionary strategies, and the boundary work this entails – membership, registration, regulation – distracts from the possibility that individuals may not be wholly contained within the profession or fully committed to the professionalisation project. Instead, individuals may choose to move in and out of developing professional boundaries, and may not feel equally embedded within the profession. Further, the nominally hard boundaries suggested by professional closure may be particularly porous in architecture. Individuals receive recognition (and criticism) for the design of iconic buildings, even if they are not qualified architects. In the UK, the contemporary works of the designer Thomas Heatherwick are a prime example. Furthermore, architecture draws its symbolic value from discourse

about the built environment; from the writings of critics, journalists and academics. There is no need for architectural critics to carry out any of the formal training required of registered architects.

Third, the assumption that professions act as unified actors implies a homogeneity of individuals and sub-groupings within the profession. Historical accounts, by contrast, reveal conflict between the rank and file and the elite of the profession, who emanate from very different social strata (Kaye, 1960). Further, the emergence of Art Architects, who come from and associate with the upper classes, become the professional elite, over the less valued ideas of architects as speculators, technical experts and project managers. By theorising professions as unified actors, these relationships between social background and position within the emerging profession of architecture are downplayed.

Of course, Larson's seminal work on professions does not represent the endpoint of the sociology of the professions. Indeed, Larson has published her own critical reflections on her early work, which includes an acknowledgement of the problem of assumed unity of the profession as an actor (Larson, 2018), while her later work provides considerable nuance as to the nature of elite architectural careers (Larson, 1995).

However, I argue that much of the subsequent development in the sociology of the professions does little to address these theoretical issues. The seminal contribution of Abbott (1998) develops, rather than unsettles, the idea of professionalisation projects. Abbott argues, rather like Larson, that professions are competing for the right to practise; in his terms they are competing for a specific jurisdiction. Abbott emphasises the centrality of abstract knowledge, which requires evaluative judgement for professional practice. Abstract knowledge enables professionals to carry out diagnostic work and propose appropriate treatments. Abbott's work draws attention to the need for professions, in addition to making a regulative bargain with the state, to define themselves against other professions who are themselves caught up in evolving processes of staking out their own jurisdictions.

The ecological system of interdependence which Abbott proposes is taken a step further by neo-institutionalists, who argue that professions should be theorised as processes within systems (Muzio et al., 2013). From a neo-institutional perspective, professionalization is broader than Abbott's system of professions struggling for jurisdiction within an ecology of other professions. Instead, professionalization is "a negotiated settlement which emerges from interactions between different actors pursuing their own institutionalization projects (e.g. nation building or the development of public university)" (ibid: 705). As the examples in parenthesis show, interactions are not solely with projects of professionalisation per se. Neo-institutionalists emphasise equally that professionalisation may be expansive as professions both create new areas of expertise and "populate existing social spaces with new actors" (ibid: 707).

However, neither Abbott nor the work of neo-institutionalists develop a focus on internal divisions and schisms within emerging professions, nor on the relationship between the social identities of individuals and the nature of the professions. In this light, therefore, that contemporary developments in the sociology of the professions are ill equipped to help theorise the structuring role of social class in relation to individual career progression.

#### Architecture as a Bourdieusian Field

Instead, I argue that theorising the profession of architecture as a Bourdieusian field allows me to resolve these theoretical weaknesses. By conceptualising architecture as a Bourdieusian field, I am open to the possibility that architecture is a social arena, which allows certain actors to accrue material and symbolic rewards. Field analyses are highly sensitive to intra-professional struggle and competition.

The empirical focus of much of Bourdieu's work was on areas of social life which could be deemed professional. This includes literary and cultural production, academia, science, journalism and law (Bourdieu, 1981; 1987; 1988; 1993; 1998).

Bourdieu rarely focused on architecture in his empirical work, with only passing mention of architects as a component of the 'state nobility' whose elite status is supported by state accreditation of higher education (Fowler and Wilson, 2012: 203), and in his empirical study of the French housing market (Bourdieu, 2005). However, later scholars have drawn from Bourdieu to research architecture. These studies include the commissioning of iconic architecture (P. Jones, 2011), the practice of architectural competitions (Lipstadt, 2003) and gendered oppression in architectural practice (Fowler and Wilson, 2012; Powell and Sang, 2015).

In a work which is highly salient to my own inquiries – *The Favored Circle* - Garry Stevens (1998) draws from Bourdieu's extensive work on fields of cultural production to theorise the practice of architecture. This largely theoretical work provides numerous insights on the class background and class relations of professional architects.

Architecture is conceived by Stevens as a cultural field of production in which actors struggle for recognition and reward (ibid: 67-121). In this arena, as in all cultural fields, practitioners strive for autonomy. The ultimate goal is to produce architecture independently of external pressure. However, this is highly problematic in architecture, given construction costs, the needs of commissioning clients as well as various forms of state regulation.

As cultural producers, architects are situated in the dominant class due to their possession of high volumes of legitimate forms of cultural capital. However, they find themselves in a subordinate



position, lacking the vast economic capital of the most powerful fraction within the dominant class. They, therefore, have “an ambivalent relationship with both the dominant and subordinate classes” (ibid: 81).

Arguing against the ideal of architecture as a singular, coherent profession, Stevens proposes that architects work across two fundamentally divided subfields: the mass and the restricted (ibid: 83). The subfields reproduce themselves differently, are subject to different internal dynamics and compete for different forms of capital.

According to Stevens, the mass subfield produces for the subordinate class. In this space, architects compete for material rewards and professional status (ibid: 88). Running a profitable practice, enjoying membership of a national association and participation in official committees are indicators of success. Stevens terms this earthly concern for commercial success “temporal capital” (ibid: 89). His historical analysis suggests that the mass subfield reproduces itself principally through the university system.

The restricted subfield is dominated by a numerically small, but highly influential architectural elite, who have the power, derived both from their position in relation to others in the field and a privileged social background, to shape debates over issues of design, style and practice, which constitute legitimate architectural discourse (Stevens, 1998; Larson, 1995).

The restricted subfield produces for the dominant class. A central function of the restricted subfield is to produce the built environment in ways which sanctify the interests and values of a social elite located outside architecture, whilst disguising this function (P. Jones, 2011). In this subfield, an architectural elite reproduces itself chiefly through a series of master-pupil sponsorship relationships (Stevens, 1998).

Architects situated in the restricted subfield compete for what Stevens terms “intellectual capital” (Stevens, 1998: 90). In the battle for status as thinkers or creative designers, the ultimate goal is recognition as “great creators or thinkers”; even as an architectural “genius” (ibid: 88-9). Stevens distinguishes between established leaders - the “priests” who “control the important consecrating institutions in the field” - and the “prophets” with a “vision that subverts the existing orthodoxy” (ibid: 101-2). While prophets may wish to revolutionise the current rules of the architectural game, they never denigrate architecture as a game that is inherently not worth playing.

Stevens argues that architectural prophets originate from a higher social class background than those working to conserve architecture’s symbolic capital. Specifically, only the privately wealthy can afford to try to launch a symbolic revolution in the discipline as failure is not personally consequential. More

fundamentally, he argues that “it is only from within the habitus of the dominant class that it is possible to pose a symbolic revolution in architecture” (ibid: 100). A socially privileged background which allows for an appreciation of contemporary aesthetics is pre-requisite to challenge the orthodoxy.

Stevens argues that intellectual capital effectively squeezes out potential competitor values such as social progressiveness. He provides historical evidence to support this claim, outlining the development of the Modern Movement in architecture. While the Modern Movement was initially grounded in the “avowed socialism” of William Morris, its evolution within the field of architecture effectively depoliticised it. For Stevens, the Modern Movement was “swiftly rendered harmless, transformed into a socially innocuous aestheticism by the logic of the architectural field” (ibid: 96). Stevens argues that an architectural elite successfully depoliticized the social goals of the Modern Movement so that it became a purely artistic *International Style*. The competition for intellectual capital effectively renders politically motivated action illegitimate; such action is deemed ‘un-architectural’.

Of course, the practice of architecture in relation to constructing the built environment remains highly subject to political pressures external to the field. In this sense, therefore, the ‘depoliticization’ of architecture is wholly illusory. However, as an ideal logic in the restricted subfield, which favours autonomous cultural production, Stevens argues that architecture rejects politically motivated action.

In both subfields, as in all cultural fields, actors aim to increase their autonomy. However, this is a more viable undertaking in the restricted subfield. The pursuit of intellectual capital, as an immaterial form of reward rooted in peer recognition, is relatively autonomous. By contrast, the pursuit of temporal capital is far more subject to externalities over which architects have little control, including the whims of clients, the construction market and broader business environment.

Stevens proposes that the two subfields do not constitute “a unified social entity” (ibid: 88). In addition to the differences outlined above, the two subfields are only loosely related. The mass takes design ideas from the restricted, but lacks the symbolic mastery to employ an architectural discourse with confidence. It is therefore open to ridicule for its inarticulate mimesis. In Bourdieu’s terms, it suffers symbolic domination and symbolic violence (P. Jones, 2011: 15-16). Beyond this professional sneer, the restricted subfield rarely bothers to look to the mass at all.

Theorising architecture as a relational field (or subfields) of conflicts provides a resolution to the apparent paradox of the continual failure of professional reform, which I outlined earlier in this chapter (Stevens, 1998; Sahin-Dikmen, 2013). The constant crises of architecture are integral to the

structure of the field rather than external issues which may be resolved by professional bodies or practitioners. Stevens (1998: 214) provides the example of the architectural university education system, whose “backwardness, mediocrity or incompetence” is continually critiqued by the prophets of the avant-garde. However, this does not mean that the education system simply needs to reform. On the contrary, it serves a necessary function as intellectual punchbag, allowing avant-garde prophets to increase their own symbolic capital through pointing to the academy’s persistent mediocrity.

In her PhD research, Sahin-Dikmen (2013) interviews practising architects to broadly endorse the field of architecture as theorised by Stevens. While she acknowledges a lack of attention to class backgrounds and identities of practising architects as an omission in her own research, her study allows for important qualifications to Stevens’ theoretical framework.

First, Sahin-Dikmen suggests that there may be more movement between the ‘restricted’ and ‘mass’ subfields than Stevens’ conceptual framework would suggest. Some individuals oscillate between the two as their careers unfold. Larger architectural firms may structure their work so that they effectively practise in both subfields at once, organising their office to offer both high-end design work and more formulaic architectural solutions for a less elite market.

Second, she does not just find evidence of unconscious playing of the architectural game. Instead, contra Stevens, she finds that there is a great deal of “critical reflexivity” (ibid: 214) as players in the field of architecture pose substantive questions and challenges to dominant values in the field. The field is characterised by discursive struggle of actors who show a critical awareness of architecture’s dominant values.

Third, a public service ethos proves more resistant than Stevens’ historical examples of the phoney depoliticization of architectural practice would suggest. Similarly, Cohen et al.’s (2005) qualitative research among UK architects finds ‘public service’ to be one of the three principal discourses which structure architectural practice (the other two – ‘creative endeavour’ and ‘business activity’ broadly map against Stevens’ temporal and intellectual capital). In this discourse, (Cohen et al., 2005: 788-791), architects emphasise “social accountability”, with architecture positioned “as being for the good of the public” and the “architect as a public servant”.

In sum, Sahin-Dikmen (2013: 213), finds an architectural field that is “more complex, varied and fluid” than Stevens’ conceptual model. These are very important qualifiers, as my focus on career progression clearly benefits from a nuanced and considered understanding of the social space through which architectural careers are forged. They also direct attention to the possibility of critical reflection

within the field. This is vital given my desire to hold in tension the balance of class as a command of material resources, a largely unconscious inheritance of economic and cultural capital, and a consciously held identity. Finally, the salience of a public service ethos points to the possibility of meaningful political resistance and critique by individuals within the field.

In addition to the critical response offered by Sahin-Dikmen, I would add three further critiques of Stevens' work, as relevant to the framing of my research questions.

First, and most obviously, although Stevens makes some compelling propositions in relation to class and the structure of the field, these are largely theoretical, rather than being rooted in detailed empirical research. Beyond a historical analysis of prominent architects whose biographies are given in the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architecture*, Stevens has not carried out empirical research to underpin his theoretical positions.

Second, by theorising architecture as a field of cultural production, drawing largely from Bourdieu's works on literary and artistic fields, Stevens may somewhat misrepresent the reality of architectural practice. The distinction between a mass and elite subfield may well hold true in the production of literary and artistic forms of culture, with elite subfields producing for the dominant class fraction, while the mass produces for the dominated. However, architecture does not have monopoly control over the built environment, so that much of the built environment is not architecturally designed at all. Even the lowliest architecturally designed house is *culturally* (rather than functionally) superior to mass produced buildings with no architectural involvement. Therefore, I argue architects working in the mass subfield none the less produce for the dominant class rather than the subordinate class, albeit for the least elite class fraction of the dominant class. This, potentially, has implications both for the class composition of architects, as well as whether and how class structures who is made to fit within the architectural field.

Finally, I argue that the approach taken by Stevens in his analysis of the architectural field is somewhat ambiguous with regard to its boundaries, a common problem when employing Bourdieusian field theory (Grenfell, 2012).

Specifically, Stevens draws a clear distinction between architecture as a field of cultural production and what he terms the discipline of architecture (Stevens, 1998: 203-211). The discipline of architecture refers not just to academics, but also to critics and commentators, who tend to be situated outside academia:

*A large number of disciplinarians work as media critics, in galleries, museums, in the private sector, historical conservation, and in various cultural organizations that contribute to the work of the area (ibid: 208)*

The discipline produces “the intellectual instruments by which “architecture” is valorised” (ibid: 206). The pronouncements, debates, critiques and commentary made within the discipline generate intellectual capital; for Stevens the key form of symbolic capital, which structures the position of actors within the field. And yet, Stevens’ overall conceptual map of the field does not include all those who work to produce such architectural discourse. While this has the advantage of producing a clear conceptual framework, in his analysis it appears that the discipline is at the same time central to the production of the symbolic capital of the field of architecture and positioned outside of architecture as a field of cultural production.

### Summary

In this section, I have considered the interrelation between class and architecture theorised as a singular actor. Architecture is rarely centre stage within the classical sociology of the professions. When it does feature, it is often positioned as a troubled or failing profession, due, in large part, to its unusual foregrounding of aesthetics. The work of sociologists Magali Sarfatti Larson and Barrington Kaye is helpful in considering the key parameters of architecture’s historical processes of professional and social closure.

However, theorising the profession as a unified actor, underplays intra-professional divisions, including those relating to class, which are clearly evident in the historical emergence of the profession. An emphasis on professional projects of closure, which act to establish and police boundaries, problematically implies that individuals are equally contained and embedded in the profession. While later developments in the sociology of the professions help expand an understanding of the nature of both professional work and professionalisation projects, they do little to address this specific theoretical weakness.

Stevens (1998) draws from Bourdieu’s theories of fields of cultural production to provide a useful theoretical framework in relation to architecture. However, his work suffers from a dearth of empirical evidence and is somewhat ambiguous in how it deals with the borders and boundaries of the field. Sahin-Dikmen (2013) carries out detailed empirical research which adds considerable nuance to develop the theoretical model outlined by Stevens. However, her work takes little account of class and does not populate the field with actual organisations and institutions.

## Part 4: Architecture and Careers

### Introduction

I now change the unit of analysis from the profession overall to individuals who forge their careers within architecture. I review evidence on the relationships between class and architecture as a career choice, experience at university and career progression.

There is relatively little evidence to review. Much of the literature on career choice neglects issues of individual class background or identity, while scholarship on class and the experiences of students does not focus on architecture as a subject of study. The small body of research on architectural careers very rarely considers issues of class directly. On the other hand, statistical evidence on the composition of architectural students and architects – itself an extremely limited evidence base – clearly suggests that the contemporary profession is highly socially exclusive.

### Architecture as Career Choice

To outline what is known about architecture as a career choice, I turn from sociology to psychology. Vocational psychologists lament the historical inattention paid to the relationship between social class and choice of career (Lapour and Heppner, 2009; Gottfredson and Osipow, 1981). Although class is understood to be foundational to vocational aspirations, such that “if one were permitted only a single variable with which to predict an individual’s occupational status, it would surely be the socioeconomic status of the individual’s family” (Schulenberg, Vondracek, & Crouter, 1984: 130), class is infrequently operationalised in career psychology scholarship (Lapour and Heppner, 2009: 478). Issues of class privilege, in particular, are absent from the literature (Lapour and Heppner, 2009). Instead, vocational psychologists have concentrated their attention on “weaker predictions of aspirations – usually values and interest of youngsters and their parents” (Gottfredson and Osipow, 1981: 545).

Certainly, this observation appears valid in relation to architecture. Sporadic investigations of architecture as a career choice in different national and cultural contexts (Boyer and Mitgang, 1996; Lewis, 1998; Navarro-Astor and Caven, 2012, Olweny, 2017) tend not to foreground the structuring role of class background or identity. For example, Nelson’s (1974) early investigation of the decision to study architecture among American students reports that their fathers overwhelmingly held professional occupations. However, this is considered a “background factor” to the study’s primary focus on informational drivers and the “value-goal orientations” of aspiring architects (ibid: 84).

Olweny’s (2017) review of how individuals come to decide to study architecture, which is typically based on very limited knowledge of what practising architects actually do (Navarro-Astor and Caven,

2012), outlines myriad different factors. These include the influence of career's advisers, family members and other social contacts, the prestige of the profession, anticipated salary, improving the built environment and quality of life of others. His own research among Ugandan architecture students finds a self-assessed aptitude for art and technical drawing, a desire for creative self-expression, and a belief that architecture is a prestigious career among principal motivating factors. While many, if not all, of these extremely disparate factors could well be argued to be class-structured, studies do not foreground the classed nature of such diverse incentives.

One recurrent theme in this small body of work, which points strongly towards the reproduction of class privilege, is a positive correlation between choosing architecture as a career and having parents and family members who practise as architects (Nelson, 1974; Navarro-Astor and Caven, 2012).

More generally, empirical research finds that children follow in the specific professional footsteps of their parents in a variety of professional settings (Weeden and Grusky, 2005; Weeden et al. 2007; Friedman and Laurison, 2019). However, little research has attempted to explore the micro-sociological processes by which children come to adopt the very same profession as their parents.

#### Class at University

The principal route to a career in architecture is to study the subject at university. Indeed, to use the legally protected term 'architect' in the United Kingdom, individuals must complete all three parts of an architectural education. It is useful, therefore, to review what is known about the role played by social class in relation to the experience of an architectural education.

There is limited evidence in relation to architecture specifically, but some insights are provided by examining the literature on university participation more generally. This tells us that, despite the huge expansion of Higher Education over recent decades, the UK student body overall remains heavily skewed towards individuals from middle-class backgrounds (HEFCE, 2016). Furthermore, there are large differences by social background in relation to attendance of specific institutions, with higher status universities particularly dominated by the middle classes (Archer, 2007; Guardian, 2010).

Research has established different, interwoven, factors to explain the continued dominance of universities by students from middle-class backgrounds. In relation to the student body, these include parental wealth, student evaluations of risk, as well as issues of identity and cultural fit.

Working-class students are more likely to perceive the costs of higher education as a burdensome debt rather than an investment in their future (Archer and Hutchings, 2000; Callender and Jackson, 2008). Lacking parental wealth as both tangible resource during studies and security in case of 'failure',

participation in Higher Education represents a riskier endeavour, such that finding employment after leaving school is a more rational decision (Goldthorpe, 2000).

For middle-class students, brought up to expect to attend university (Walkerline et al. 2001), and whose socialised dispositions align well with university culture, the process of becoming 'the real me' through higher education appears natural, even if somewhat stressful (Reay et al., 2001; Bradley, 2017). For working-class students, by contrast, a lack of cultural fit at university is particularly associated with feelings of homesickness and loneliness (Bradley, 2017). Working-class students' fear of identity loss affects whether to attend university (Archer and Hutchings, 2000) as well as where to study (Ball et al., 2002). Working-class students' initial desire to 'fit in' is associated with choice of lower status institutions (Reay et al., 2001).

Once at university, the middle-class ideal of finding oneself entails feelings of guilt for working-class students, particularly those who want to escape their social backgrounds (Leathwood and O'Connell, 2003). Working-class students struggle to adopt middle-class values of their university (Bamber and Tett, 2000) or may 'drop out' as an act of resistance (Quinn, 2004).

Of course, some individuals from working-class backgrounds do manage to find their way in and negotiate their way through even the most 'elite' universities. Working-class students draw from the resilience they developed through adversity at school, to develop a critical consciousness of their social difference at elite universities, and to succeed academically. Such success, however, is predicated on "almost superhuman levels of motivation, resilience and determination" (Reay et al., 2009: 1115).



## Architectural Education

None of the above literature has focused specifically on architecture students. However, it is likely that the length of time needed to complete all three parts of an architectural education, as well as high direct costs for materials and fieldtrips will exacerbate financial concerns of students who do not come from a privileged background.

An architectural education differs markedly from standard undergraduate study. The three-part architectural education is a lengthy commitment. The minimum time required to qualify and register as a practising architect in the UK is seven years. Instead of the lecture hall, the central place of learning is the design studio. From early in their architectural education, students present their work to their peers and studio leaders for critical review, known informally as 'crits'.

Students are encouraged to spend long hours in the design-studio, forming close-knit groups. Their work is subject to the judgement eye of studio leaders, whose searing critique is both revered and feared (Cuff, 1992). The presentation of a student's work to a panel of experts in the final architectural review is criticised as frightening, humiliating and coercive from the perspective of students who suffer it (Cuff, 1992; Webster, 2005).

Beyond the pedagogic requirements, the goal of an architectural education is arguably personal transformation (Stevens, 1998). Students must come to embody a very specific architectural habitus if they are to complete an architectural education. There is a fundamental requirement to work hard on the self; to transform oneself from the first-year student who enters the academy and develop an architectural 'gaze' (Sahin-Dikmen, 2013: 132). This requires the incorporation of both a generalised, professional identity – the gaze must be architectural – as well as a unique, personal design style, which needs to be robustly defended against external critique.

A hierarchy is apparent in terms of the different forms of knowledge valued in an architectural education. Design sits at the apex. Architectural work finds its highest form in the sketch phase, which is considered the 'truest' form of architectural work, requiring knowledge positioned as intuitive (Svensson, 1990). After design, comes technical knowledge, with the commercial skills needed in practice given lesser priority, even though business skills are core parts of the curriculum (Nicol and Pilling, 2000).

Cuff (1992: 129) argues that an integral part of an architectural education is an acknowledgement that talent, linked to aesthetic judgement, is natural: "In school, students also learn that only skills and

knowledge can be acquired; certain qualities essential to the architect – talent, passion, good aesthetic judgement – must come naturally”. In this way, the ideology of an innate meritocracy itself is taught.

Architectural students are encouraged to adopt a socially progressive outlook. While they are taught to defend aesthetic integrity against both commercial pressures and uneducated masses, they are encouraged to work in the best interests of the public. Architectural students are driven by a desire to work for the collective good in ways which are socially accountable (Sahin-Dikmen, 2013; Cohen et al., 2005).

Architectural pedagogy emphasises hard work. In the run up to a ‘crit’, tutors habitually make demands which require substantial change to design work (Webster, 2005). In addition to the need to rack up long hours in the design studio, students are encouraged to embrace architecture more fundamentally as a vocation or calling. Architectural work is in some ways all-encompassing (Cuff, 1992).

As a result of the twin imperatives to work in a way that is socially responsible and consider architecture as a vocation, an architectural habitus is not straightforwardly careerist. The encouraged ambition is not to rapidly ascend a career ladder or prioritise financial reward.

While arguments could be made to ‘class’ each of these elements - the high public-minded orientation of the social progressive, the nobility of work as vocation and the economic resources needed to disavow careerism - academic literature on the architectural education tends not to do so.

#### *Diversity and Architectural Education*

A small body of research provides compelling evidence of effective discrimination by both gender and ethnicity. The architectural curriculum, teaching practices and pedagogic rituals are found to carry more negative consequences for women and minority ethnic students (Groat and Ahrentzen, 1996; Ahrentzen and Groat, 1992; Groat, 1993; Fowler and Wilson, 2012).

The gendered nature of design studios, juries and reviews comes under particular critique (Ahrentzen and Antony, 1993; Frederickson, 1993; Webster 2005; 2006). A macho culture of the design studio is highlighted, with its “arrogance, bullying, misogyny”, which renders professional identification particularly problematic for women (Spaeth and Kismola, 2012: 219).

Men dominate as studio leaders and in architectural juries, and crassly sexist attitudes are reported in relation to teaching practices and the assessment of female students’ capabilities and potential for career success (Fowler and Wilson, 2012; de Graft-Johnson et al., 2005).

This qualitative body of research detailing oppression and discrimination by gendered and ethnicity is borne out by statistics: architecture students' completion rates are lower at every stage of the educational process for women, and, in particular, minority ethnic students (RIBA, 2019b). There are no data available on completion rates by class background.

Although official data on the class composition of architectural students are not routinely collated and reported, ad hoc research commissioned by the RIBA (2016) finds that architecture students are much more likely to come from privileged backgrounds. Comparative analysis of Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) data suggests 'Architecture, Building and Planning' students come from similar class backgrounds as the United Kingdom student body overall (Guardian, 2010). Again, this reports a notable skew towards a middle-class background. The bias towards students from privileged backgrounds may be even more pronounced at the most prestigious architectural schools. Overall, there is evidence that 'elite' universities are particularly dominated by middle-class students (Sutton Trust, 2004; Guardian, 2010).

While the issue of class in relation to an architectural education is less extensively researched, Stevens (1998: 189) provides a theoretical account of the exclusion of socially disadvantaged groups in the academy. He argues that a middle-class upbringing may instil an appreciation for culture deemed legitimate (Stevens, 1998). Architectural schools fail to recognise the classed nature of such cultural competence, and favour candidates who show the early signs of a confident appreciation of architectural design at interview. Architectural schools ignore privilege, accept the "ideology of giftedness", and remain ignorant of how processes of socialisation within the academy favour "the cultivated habitus" (ibid: 189).

Stevens (1998) argues that the studio system of education operates as a process of enculturation rather than an unearthing of natural talent. Charismatic studio heads present themselves as the epitome of good architectural taste, which students need to come to embody. As successful students begin to take on similar dress, taste and deportment, they, in turn, mistakenly accept the privileged game of architecture as natural and class-neutral.

While Stevens' ideas are grounded in his own experiences as a teacher, small-scale empirical studies are broadly supportive. Architectural faculty have different expectations of students from different social class backgrounds (Payne, 2015; Iqbal and Roberts, 2019). Further, it is easier for students from privileged class backgrounds to enculturate themselves into the academy and achieve success in their education (Iqbal and Roberts, 2019).

In sum, the piecemeal quantitative evidence and small-scale qualitative studies strongly suggest that class plays an important role in structuring early interest in architecture as a possible career as well as experience in the academy. What is lacking, however, is a more detailed exploration of how these effects occur and how they are experienced by individuals of different class backgrounds.

### Architectural Careers

I now review literature on architectural careers. As outlined in my introduction, my working definition of career - “a pattern of a career actor’s positions and condition within a work-related bounded social and geographic space over their life to date” (Gunz and Mayrhofer, 2018: 70) - is intentionally broad. It encompasses both ‘progression’, which is not necessarily linear, but understood instead as patterns of positions, and more subjective measures, or conditions, under which careers unfold.

I therefore consider literature which explores ideal architectural values and professional identities, against which individuals evaluate their subjective experience of careers (Cohen et al., 2005; Ahuja et al, 2017; 2018; 2020), as well the small body of research which explores career progression (Cuff, 1992; Larson, 1995; Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Finally, I review evidence around how diversity affects careers. While my focus is, of course, on class, only one study has this a direct object of study (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). As my definition of class is mindful of possible intersections with gender, I also consider the slightly greater body of work which has focused on gender and architectural careers (e.g. Fowler and Wilson, 2012; Matthewson, 2012; Powell and Sang, 2015).

### *Being an Architect: Values and Identities*

Summarised from the previous section, academic literature emphasises that architecture students are taught to value design-creativity, hard work, and public mindedness at university, with commercial interests and personal financial gain downplayed. Scholarship which considers architects in practice reveals the tensions created by these values as they run up against the reality of work in practice.

Cohen et al.’s (2005) qualitative research among UK architects in the private and public sector find that architects orientate themselves around three competing, but overlapping discourses: creative, commercial and public service. Creativity is the prime way in which architects distinguish themselves from others in the construction industry. A distinction is made between ‘real architects’, for whom aesthetics and design integrity is core, and commercial practices, who are told what to do by clients. In response to commercial pressures of practice, architects may orientate themselves to a business discourse but do not feel this reflects their ‘true’ professional identity. A business discourse jars, competes and is less highly valued than design-oriented aspects of architectural work.

The need to show a lack of interest in personal financial reward, encouraged initially at university, is a recurrent theme in architectural literature (Cohen et al., 2005: 778). As Cuff (1992) argues, the greatest insult that can be levelled at an architect is to have 'sold out' integrity for financial gain. On the other hand, more prosaic surveys of architectural job satisfaction tell a somewhat different story. Sang et al.'s (2009a) survey of registered architects finds pay is the aspect of an architectural career which receives the highest level of dissatisfaction. There is a clear disconnect between what is permissible within an ideal architectural identity, which should rise above concerns for remuneration and what is permissible within an identity as a working professional, where knowledge of and disappointment with low rates of pay is acceptable.

While there is a clear tension between the design integrity inculcated at university and the later need for a more commercial orientation, other aspects of the ideal architectural identity show greater continuities in practice. The idea of architecture as public service remains strong (Cohen et al., 2005). The notion of architecture as a totalising profession, akin to a calling, continues in practice: "Architecture is a vocation – you can't do it half-heartedly. To be a good architect, you have to live the architectural life" (Fowler and Wilson, 2012: 207). This can translate into a perfectionism which goes beyond client requirements and serves as a point of status distinction with others in the construction profession (Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

Sumati Ahuja's research explores the professional identities of architects working in large, prestigious, multi-disciplinary firms (Ahuja et al., 2017; 2018; 2020). Her work foregrounds the professional struggles of architects, who battle to reconcile their identities as architects, cultivated during their lengthy education, with the reality of professional practice. In particular, they struggle to accommodate a desire for creative freedom with the constraints of demanding clients (Ahuja et al., 2020), their diminished role in interdisciplinary teams (Ahuja et al., 2017), and working in large professional service firms (Ahuja et al., 2018).

In the case of early career architects, the way to manage such emotional turmoil is either to dream of future creative freedom as 'wannabe starchitects'<sup>4</sup> or reframe accusations of nerdiness as cool 'tech-heads' who playfully embrace cutting-edge technologies. In less guarded moments, the 'reality' of their early career as 'CAD monkeys'<sup>5</sup> asserts itself.

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<sup>4</sup> A 'starchitect' combines professional acclaim with public recognition, and is often associated with high profile, 'iconic' buildings

<sup>5</sup> 'CAD (Computer Assisted Design) Monkey' is a common term used by early career architects used to denote repetitive work of little creativity

Ahuja suggests that other professional groups manage to mitigate such professional turmoil by adopting meta-identities or hybrid identities (Ahuja et al., 2017). Thus, creative workers invoke the meta-identity of being 'practical artists' (Gotsi et al., 2010), while the hybrid identity of the 'medical director' keeps at bay the negative connotations of managerialism for clinical professionals (Joffe and Mackenzie-Davey (2012). Architects, by contrast, stubbornly hold on to their professional identities as architects, despite the anxieties and stresses this entails. In a parallel with architecture's positioning within the sociology of professions as a failing profession, in Ahuja's research, architects themselves appear as failing, or at least permanently struggling, in their professional identity work.

### *Career Progression*

Cuff (1992) draws on her background as a trained architect to carry out ethnographic studies in three architectural firms on the west coast of America in the 1980s. Her research incorporates participant-observation, as well as semi-structured interviews with practising architects and clients.

Cuff (1992: 111) describes the career of an architect in the United States in the 1980s as, ideally, a straightforward and linear process of upward progression: "The evolution from student to draftsman to full-fledged architect entails first gaining knowledge, then gaining experience, after which comes increasing responsibilities, and finally assuming leadership".

Early career architects experience a difficult shift from the design-focused academy to the humdrum reality of work in practice. In stark contrast with the creativity demanded by studio leaders at university, architectural practices require their most junior recruits to work quickly and accurately on repetitive tasks. In this initial phase, work is argued to be more akin to a labourer than designer, as early career architects need to learn "the humility of practice" (ibid: 134). The contrast between the prominence of design at architectural school and the lack of opportunity for creative expression in early practice is a recurrent theme in more contemporary literature (Styre and Gluch, 2009; Cohen et al. 2005; Sang et al. 2009b). It is frequently found to be a source of disillusionment.

Cuff argues that a small number of mavericks successfully skip this phase as humble labourer and instead set up their own practice as early career architects. This accelerated career path is facilitated by having "a single client, a teaching appointment, family money, an established partner" (ibid: 135). While Cuff does not highlight class overtly, the importance of family wealth suggests that these lucky few benefit from leveraging their social and economic capital.

Cuff charts the shift from entry-level positions through the middle years of the career. Such progress is less predictable in terms of pace and variety of role: "specialists emerge, along with upstarts, administrators, loyalists, and so on, and the rate and direction of professional development are

established” (ibid: 138). A typical rite of passage in late middle years is to try to start one’s own office. Two very different ideal-types emerge from Cuff’s research: “the starving artist and the young entrepreneur” (ibid: 143). The former commands only a small salary, which is supplemented by part-time teaching; the latter chases lucrative government contracts more bullishly.

Towards the later stages and upper reaches of an architectural career, a hierarchy of prestige is apparent. Managers and specialists are less highly regarded, while those architects who have maintained a focus on design have the highest status. It is design quality which wins architectural awards. The most successful architects aim for prestigious, publicly visible and higher budget commissions, in part by recruiting further talented designers. They also seek greater influence, by obtaining both early career disciples and powerful client patrons.

Cuff finds that even in the few larger practices where there may be a formal hierarchy, promotional criteria are often vague and unspoken. Partners use their subjective judgement alone. Cuff provides the examples of four individuals – all men – who are ostensibly promoted for different reasons: “experience, talent, dedication, and personal connections” (ibid: 140). Again, Cuff does not draw attention to the possibility that these criteria are class-structured. Instead, she suggests that “there are two qualities that neither employers nor educators can instil and without which, it is assumed, one cannot become a “good” architect: dedication and talent” (ibid: 153). The idea that talent is a natural, hereditary trait is fully endorsed by one of the partner’s responsible for promotion, who argues, of the most talented of his recruits “you can see he really has architecture in his blood. Maybe that’s because his father was an architect” (ibid: 140).

Larson (1995) interviews an architectural elite comprising the most successful and publicly acclaimed practitioners in the United States to gauge how to reach a professional summit. Her research emphasises two different routes; either intra-organisational progression or setting up one’s own practice.

If the former route is chosen, the firm in question is almost always one of a few larger practices which are renowned for their innovative design ideas. Sponsorship by a senior executive, organisational fit, bringing in business via a network of personal connects and winning design awards to improve the reputation of the practice are routes to intra-organisational advancement.

The latter route, setting up one’s own practice, normally comes after serving an initial ‘apprenticeship’ at an established prestigious firm. Setting up a successful firm is facilitated by having a senior mentor, who may initially passport projects to help the practice establish itself.

Larson emphasises that such one-to-one mentoring reproduces social exclusion in the profession, such that it continues to be male-dominated. Although she does not focus on the issue of classed reproduction in any detail, she emphasises the importance of an 'old boy networks' developed in high school, as well as training at an elite school of architecture.

Larson also underlines the value of practising architects teaching at elite schools and using such academic positions as stepping-stones to further their careers as practitioners. By having teaching positions, they develop new networks of contacts and establish their design reputation via their critical writings and the production of 'paper architecture'.

#### *Diversity in Architectural Careers: Class and Gender*

Only one study explores the dynamics of social class and individual career progression in architecture (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Friedman and Laurison use mixed methods to investigate the relationship between class and career success in different professional settings. In the architectural firm of their study, it is gender, rather than class, that is found to play a pivotal role in limiting career progression.

First, eschewing instrumental careerism, architects progress through what the authors term "patient diligence" (ibid: 143). They report taking a 'wait and see' approach to assess their fit within the practice. In this way, their career progression appears slow, organic and natural. At the same time, and in line with an architectural habitus which values perfectionism, promotion requires full-time work, long hours and continuity of service to complete lengthy architectural projects. This mode of progression within the practice was found to discriminate more clearly by gender than by class, as it sits uneasily with the actual gendered division of work required to raise a family.

Second, career progression is linked to informal one-to-one sponsorship relations. These are typically cemented by "homophilic bonds of class-cultural similarity", by which privilege is effectively reproduced (ibid: 119). In the context of media and professional service firms, this works in favour of individuals from middle-class backgrounds. However, in the architectural practice of their study, the managing partner, pivotal in shaping the organisational culture, was himself from a working-class background. In this instance, therefore, homophily works against a 'class ceiling'. By contrast, in a practice with no female partners, gender is found to be a principal barrier to sponsored progression.

The single case study approach inevitably begs a question of exceptionalism with regard to the relative lack of classed barriers, particularly given the highly atypical class background of the Managing Partner, who plays a lead role in shaping the culture of the firm.



Further the research pointed to the possibilities of classed barriers to progression beyond the practice walls. First, parental economic capital was found to be important in more precarious professions, in which periods of low or no-pay are commonplace. The high and increasing cost of an architectural education and clustering of opportunities in London are both germane in this respect. Second, individual architects from working-class backgrounds reported self-excluding from certain networking events due to feeling 'out of place'. Finally, some architects reported that that they felt that classed progression may be more evident in 'design-led' practices where they had spent parts of their earlier career.

A slightly greater body of research, as well as statistical evidence, has a more direct focus on gender and architectural careers.

Adams and Tancred's (2000) historical work highlights gender discrimination as women begin to gain professional entry into architecture. The testimonies of women architects in the latter half of the twentieth century report precarious employment contracts, sexist attitudes and behaviours to provide "an overall view of our respondents as struggling within a 'male-coloured' architectural work world, where they are largely devalued, accorded little dignity as professionals, and subjected to various forms of sexism" (ibid: 106). While the authors emphasise the productive roles played by women to reshape the profession, both in terms of forging new areas of practice and in working to redefine working practices and career paths, this work is rarely carried out from positions of power within architecture.

More recent literature highlights different forms of prejudice, discrimination and oppression experienced by women in architecture. Women are subject to prejudicial gender-typing as regards spatial awareness, leadership abilities and potential for career development and success (Fowler and Wilson, 2012; Matthewson, 2012; Powell and Sang, 2015).

Sexism is experienced in practice, on site, and from clients (de Graft-Johnson et al., 2003; Fowler and Wilson, 2012). In response to the latter, the unhelpful paternalism of managers means women are less likely to find themselves in the client-facing roles, which are associated with intra-organisational career progression (Powell and Sang, 2015; Navarro-Astor and Caven, 2012).

The quasi-religious dedication required of architecture as a vocation translates into a more mundane 'need' for hard work in the profession (Navarro-Astor and Caven, 2012; de Graft-Johnson et al., 2003; Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Friedman and Laurison argue that career success in architecture is predicated on a particular conception of employment: full-time, long-hours, without career breaks and to the completion of lengthy construction projects. The lack of flexibility to allow for part-time

working (de Graft-Johnson et al., 2003) effectively discriminates against women given the actual gendered division of labour involved raising of families. Further, sexist attitudes towards raising a family persist in architecture (Fowler and Wilson, 2012).

Statistical evidence buttresses this body of work. Only one in four (26%) registered architects in the UK are women (ARB, 2017). While this situation is improving, such that 45% of new registrants in 2016 were women, obviously this still does not represent parity.

In terms of pay, there are profound gender differences (Britton et al. 2016; RIBA, 2016; Architects Journal, 2018). Britton et al.'s (2016) analysis suggests architecture has one of the largest gender pay gaps among graduates up to 11 years post-graduation. RIBA (2016) reports that, up to six years after graduation in architecture, women earn less and are more likely to be working part-time and outside of the profession. Surveys of practising architects report pay gaps by gender, which are particularly large at the more senior positions (Architects Journal, 2018). In 2018, the first year in which large firms were required by the Equality Act to publish data on gender pay gaps, architectural practices reported pay-gaps ranging from 10%-30%.

What little data are available on seniority within architecture also shows profound differences by gender. In the US, American Institute of Architects (AIA) research reports that, after 10-14 years in practice, 57% of men were partners, compared with 33% of women (Cuff 1992: 145). In the UK, Symes et al. (1995) analyse 1992 RIBA data to report that only 4% of principal architects are women. Women are over-represented in less prestigious and less well-paid para-professional roles. They are more likely to carry out architectural work, without being officially registered (Adams and Tancred, 2000).

Neither the Architects Registration Board (ARB) nor the RIBA collect data on any measure of the class background of practising architects. However, secondary analyses of the UK Labour Force Survey (Laurison and Friedman, 2016; Friedman and Laurison, 2019) finds that architecture is highly socially exclusive as a profession. Only one in ten architects come from working-class backgrounds, defined as growing up in a household whose chief income earner carried out a routine occupation or was long-term unemployed (NS-SEC 6-8). Architecture is one of the least inclusive professions in both its very different governmental comparator industries: 'construction' and 'creative & cultural industries' (Laurison and Friedman, 2016; O'Brien et al., 2016).

There are no statistical analyses of the intersection between class and gender in architecture. Historically, women considered professional pioneers emanate from privileged backgrounds (Fowler and Wilson 2012; Adams and Tancred, 2000). Adams and Tancred (2000) also report major differences

in the social background of their sample of deregistered architects, with women much more likely to come from a professional background than men.

### Summary

In this section, I have reviewed evidence, drawn from different academic literatures, to outline what is known about architectural careers, from initial interest and experience at university to career fulfilment and progression.

In relation to the former, it is clear, first of all, that the evidence base is rather thin. Scholarship which compellingly details processes of classed exclusion at university (e.g. Reay et al., 2001; Bradley, 2017) does not have architecture as a focus of study, while the principal exception (Stevens, 1998) is not substantiated with empirical data.

In relation to the latter, literature suggests architects struggle to enact fulfilling careers. Architectural values encouraged at university, in particular a design-focused creativity and social progression, clash with the commercial reality of life in practice (Cuff, 1992). In a corollary with architecture theorised as a failing profession within the sociology of the professions, career scholarship finds architects struggling to enact core values and maintain their professional identities as architects (Ahuja et al., 2020).

Literature which focuses on career progression, emphasises two overarching pathways. The first is intra-organisational career progression, predicated on hard work, organisational fit and bringing in business (Larson, 1995; Friedman and Laurison, 2019). The second, which aligns well with the value placed on creative self-expression, is to set up one's own practice (Laurison, 1995; Cuff, 1992). In some ways, therefore, this is more entrepreneurial, although the encouraged disinterest in commercialism is such that this is positioned more as an opportunity for fulfilment than financial reward.

While careers scholarship outlines how architectural careers may exclude and oppress by gender (Adams and Tancred, 2000; de-Graft-Johnson et al., 2003), it tends only to hint at the possibilities of classed exclusion.

## Conclusion

In this literature review, I first outlined my approach to class analysis. By drawing from Bourdieu, I define class as a multi-faceted construct, encompassing the inheritance and mastery of different forms of capital and highly ambivalent and contingent class identities. This allows me to address how class may be individually consequential for careers, in ways which do not reify class as a stable individual trait.

Bourdieuian scholarship highlights the ambivalences and emotional turmoil produced by upward social mobility, as well as the consequences of class on career success, which may be submerged in narrative career accounts. It also brings to the fore tensions in the contemporary British class landscape, which sets the scene for my research enquiries. In particular, there is a marked contrast between a veneer of democratic egalitarianism and highly class-inflected consumption practices and the intensification of classed judgements.

Although the classic sociology of the professions sets out the parameters of academic debate which are integral to my research, including the historical interrelationship between social and professional closure, this work is also problematic. In particular, a conceptualisation of architecture as a homogenous, unified, agentic profession distracts attention from intra-professional conflicts over class related material and status rewards, which are very apparent in the historical development of the profession.

In this light, conceptualising architecture as a Bourdieusian field is more productive. Thus theorised, the symbolic domination of more elite parts of the field towards individuals and organisations in a subordinate position are integral to how architecture functions rather than extraneous business problems to be resolved (Sahin-Dikmen, 2013). A field approach broadens the scope of inquiry to consider all actors who struggle to achieve authority, irrespective of their formal position in the profession. The work of Stevens (1998) provides a helpful theoretical framework, albeit with certain weaknesses and empirical gaps.

My contribution, therefore, comes from bringing together a cultural class analysis with theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field. In contrast with the classic sociology of the professions, my analysis aims to bring to light more subtle forms of closure, exclusion and oppression within the field. In this light, the professional identities required for a successful architectural career, the ambivalences of the felt experience of social mobility, as well as the structuring role class may play in career progression, all largely unexplored in the field of architecture, are paramount. Literature on core architectural values, as well as educational and work-place practices, explores issues of gendered

exclusion and oppression. However, this work provides, at best, tantalising glimpses of the machinations of class. My thesis sets issues of class centre stage.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed relevant literature in relation to my overarching research question - how does class structure careers in the field of architecture? – highlighting theoretical weaknesses and empirical gaps in evidence.

In summary, I argued that the classic sociology of the professions problematically positions architecture as a singular, collective agent, struggling – and frequently failing – in attempts to forge professionalisation projects. This literature masks a possible reading of architecture as a site of intra-professional struggles, structured by internal power relations and subject to external pressures, which produce winners as well as losers.

Instead, I argued that scholars who have drawn from Bourdieu to theorise architecture as a field of culture production provide a solid foundation from which to launch my own enquiries. I also highlighted some theoretical weaknesses in this research, in particular an inconsistent and under-theorised approach to field boundaries, as well as empirical gaps in evidence in relation to class and careers.

In this chapter, I focus on methodology. It is structured in three sections.

The first section establishes my research strategy and design. I begin by setting out my epistemological standpoint, which leads to my adoption of Bourdieusian field analysis. This epistemological position and analytic approach, in conjunction with practical considerations of what is possible within a single PhD, drive my overarching research design. This is based on principles of breadth of inclusion throughout the field, a flexible approach to recruitment and the need to gain insight into the ‘elite’ of the field.

In my second section, I report on how I carried out my fieldwork. In particular, I detail how recruitment evolved in practice to generate sufficient material to answer my specific research questions. I reflect on the necessary compromises between how I theorised class ideally and how this was operationalised in practice. I set out the sample profile of achieved interviews. In particular, I show how the breadth and inclusion of actors throughout the field allowed me to carry out comparative analysis to unearth the structuring role played by different facets of class.

Finally, I outline my approach to analysis. After discussing my own positioning as a reflexive researcher, to argue that my empirical findings are a co-production between myself and my interviewees, I set out my approach to analysis of fieldwork material. In particular, I outline how I

carried out detailed coding to analyse transcriptions of interviews, and the different techniques I used to unearth the structuring role played by class.

## Part 1: Research Strategy and Design

### Overall Position

Aiming to carry out a critical analysis, I centre relations of power which structure architectural careers. Theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field requires an examination of the relational position of actors who struggle to accrue both material and symbolic rewards. This critical approach also requires me to reflect on the power relations which inhere in the research process itself, in relation both to research methods I employ and how my own social identities interact with those of my interviewees. Finally, my research is critical in that I examine the impacts of external policy arenas on the field of architecture, in particular social mobility and EDI, in terms of their progressive potential.

In terms of epistemology, Bourdieu's overarching sociological project has been characterised as an attempt to overcome a fundamental and unhelpful dichotomy, which structures much social scientific inquiry, between subjectivism and objectivism (Bourdieu, 1990; 1993). As a highly simplified ideal type, subjectivist knowledge, as found in phenomenology, gives primacy to the "experience and perceptions of individuals", with no attempt to analyse the "objective structures and internalized structures" (Bourdieu, 1990: 26) which shape the lived experience. Objectivist knowledge, on the other hand, such as found in forms of structural Marxism, emphasises role of objective conditions which "structure practice independent of human consciousness" (Bourdieu, 1993, editor's introduction: 4).

Bourdieu critiques subjectivism for failing to understand the social structures that shape human consciousness, while objectivism takes insufficient account of the role of individual action in forming those social structures. In short, the 'either/or' approach of naïve objectivism and subjectivism are both dismissed.

It is some way beyond the scope of this thesis to evaluate the success of Bourdieu's overall sociological project and the fairness with which he critiques particular strands of theoretical work (for a largely negative assessment see Jenkins, 1992; for a more generous critique see Susen, 2011). However, I merely emphasise the simple point, largely uncontroversial to anyone working in a critical tradition, that it is more productive to theorise research into any aspect of social life dialectically. In this light, I choose to investigate my research questions by undertaking a Bourdieusian field analysis.

### Bourdieuian Field Analysis

There are many strengths to carrying out a Bourdieusian field analysis. First, it can unsettle unhelpful binary thinking (Thomson, 2008: 67), emphasising the interrelationship between social structures and individual agency. Second, it centres relationships of power overtly, which structure both material and immaterial forms of reward. Third, it requires a critical examination of lay concepts such as profession, which may carry positive ideological connotations. Fourth, it does not presuppose that the prior existence of a field as a fixed and stable category. Finally, it does not assume all individuals are equally embedded in the field in question.

While it is easy to delineate very briefly the considerable strengths of a Bourdieusian field analysis, it is important to reflect at slightly greater length on potential weaknesses and challenges, and how these may be countered in research design.

A Bourdieusian field approach is based on certain presuppositions which remain open to question. There is an emphasis on actors competing individually to accrue rewards. This may distract from the possibility that agents may, at times, cooperate and align to form strategic alliances to meet particular goals.

Relatedly, there is an assumption that actors aim to maximise personal rewards with little consideration of moral standards (Sayer, 2017). Instead, self-consciously ethical behaviour may operate internally within the field (to do 'good' architectural work) or beyond the field (to act in a way that is in the public interest). Field analysis may take insufficient account of how ethical reflections underpin social action.

A field approach assumes that struggles are largely unconscious and unreflexive, particularly for those actors who have a natural 'feel for the game'. Arguably, actors are not allowed the critical capacity to consciously reflect on their position with the field of architecture, and potentially modify their behaviour. There is an untested assumption that even the most revolutionary of actors within a field never conceive of abolishing the game itself, rather than simply overturning the current rules of the game.

Finally, a Bourdieusian field approach may prioritise class over other social identities including gender. It proposes a priori that the capitals which structure classed social relations are the prime determinants of the social space of fields, with gender of secondary importance (Emirbayer and Johnson, 2008: 21). This downplaying of gender is echoed in the work of Stevens (1998: 24), who is aware of this limitation. Given what is known about the history of gendered exclusion in architecture, as well as compelling evidence of contemporary gendered oppression and differential occupational outcomes (e.g. Fowler and Wilson, 2012; ARB, 2017), this is an important omission.



While these are potential weaknesses, they are by no means insurmountable. The first three - potential for cooperation, for ethical behaviour and critical reflexivity on the part of actors in the field - demand an openness to alternative readings on the part of the researcher. The fourth, the assumed primacy of class over gender may also underpin different approaches to both analysis and sample design. In my case, as I explain shortly, I deliberately over-sampled women in architecture.

In addition to these acknowledged weaknesses, it is useful to discuss more double-edged challenges in undertaking a Bourdieusian field analysis.

The first challenge is, primarily, a straightforward question of scale and ambition. To fully examine any particular field requires several investigative studies, which Bourdieu described as “a protracted and exacting task that is accomplished little by little” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 228), in an on-going back-and-forth between theoretical constructs, empirical observations and reflexive self-analysis.

The second challenge relates to the ontological status of a field. Fields are ever changing. As they evolve over time, shaped both by the actors embedded within the field and by external pressures, they are never fixed or settled. In particular, the boundaries of fields are “imprecise and shifting” (Jenkins, 1992: 85), and it is never straightforward to delineate where one field ends, and another begins (Bathmaker, 2015).

Furthermore, there is a paradoxical ontology at the heart of Bourdieu’s conception of fields. On the one hand, fields are defined by the consciousness of actors, such that they exist in so far and to the extent that individuals embedded within them lay claim to their status as actors within the field. On the other, fields emerge from the actions of all who produce effects in the field in question, irrespective of their conscious claims to membership. Thus, fields have a paradoxical dual ontology as at once sites of conscious struggles (“battlefield of contestation”) and loci of social effects (“field of relational forces”) (Bathmaker, 2015: 65).

These two very different challenges are critical to how I shaped my research design.

In response to the pragmatic issue of ambition, I maintained a critical awareness that I could not hope to fully accomplish delineate every aspect of the field of architecture within a single research project. My research design needed to take account of the limitations of what could be achieved by a single researcher within the confines of a PhD, in order to best facilitate my investigation of the structuring role played by class in relation to architectural careers.

As regards researching an entity – a Bourdieusian field – which is not known a priori, I chose to adopt a flexible approach, so that I remained open to modify and adapt my sample design in the light of emerging findings. My initial research design and approach to recruitment was therefore not set in stone.

Finally, I could not aim to resolve the paradoxical dual ontological status of fields in my research design. Instead, it was something I was critically aware of, and aimed to work with, as I carried out my empirical research, and in relation to my specific research investigation.

In particular, I chose to be open to individuals who may be differentially embedded, and uncertain or ambivalent as to their status and position within the field of architecture. This initial research design was important, as it allowed me to investigate the status of belonging, and the confidence to traverse the traditional boundaries of architecture, both of which may themselves be class structured. By adapting a generous definition of field membership, therefore, I aimed to benefit from this unresolved ontological paradox.

#### Overall Methodology

Bourdieu offers no blueprint as to how to carry out field analyses. In a brief account, written as an interview with a key collaborator, he suggests that there are three principal elements of a field approach (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 104-105). First, the field in question needs to be considered in relation to the ‘field of power’, which signals the relationship between the field under analysis and external pressures from the political and economic spheres. Second, the structure of relations between positions of actors competing for legitimacy within the field needs to be considered. The third element of the analysis is the trajectories and of agents within the field, which are informed by their habitus. While these requirements are all necessary, they need not be carried out in linear fashion.

With no restrictive instructions, scholars have been free to use a wide range of methods. These include biographical analysis (Davis, 2010), content and discourse analyses of historical documents (Wright, 2009), as well as bespoke discussions and interviews (e.g. Savage and Silva, 2013; Ashley and Empson, 2013).

The two theorists who have analysed the ‘profession’ of architecture as a Bourdieusian field have taken very different approaches. The first, Garry Stevens, an architectural insider, drew from his personal experiences teaching architecture in academia. He also carried out a historical analysis of the biographies of famed architects. The second, Melahat Sahin-Dikmen, like me an outsider to the field of architecture, carried out semi-structured interviews among practising architects as the empirical fieldwork for her PhD research.

### Overarching Research Design

I chose to carry out different qualitative methods to answer the specific research subquestions, which make up my overall investigation into class and architectural careers. Table 1 sets out different methods which make up my overall research design, in conjunction with three different elements of a Bourdieusian field analysis as well as my specific research subquestions.

The principal method I chose for my initial research design was semi-structured in-depth interviews. These interviews would form the bedrock of all subsequent empirical chapters. While these interviews provided material which informed all my research questions, in particular, they provided empirical data on classed trajectories through the field.

Additionally, at smaller scale, I analysed material produced within the field of architecture, independently of my research interventions. This includes coverage of architectural awards in the architectural press as well as material developed by leading architectural employers and the RIBA on issues of EDI and social mobility.

**Table 1: Overview of Research Design in Relation to Bourdieusian Field Analysis**

Research Questions	Empirical Data	Mode of Analysis	Bourdieusian field analysis
How is the field of architecture organised?	Press coverage of Architectural Awards	Evaluative coding to derive field-specific capitals	Structure of Relations
	Life history interviews	Contestations, positioning, evaluations of organisations/institutions	
How does class structure access to the field of architecture?	Life history interviews	Comparative analysis of working- and middle-class individuals by different facets of class (background, identity, habitus)	Trajectories of actors into the field
How does class structure progression through the field of architecture?	Life history interviews	Comparative analysis of working- and middle-class individuals by different facets of class (background, identity, habitus)	Trajectories of actors through the field
How does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression?	RIBA Diversity Documentation	Analysis of EDI policy documentation	Relation to field of power
	Employer Websites	Analysis of EDI	
	Life history interviews	Attitudes, actions and orientations of managers in relation to EDI	

I now discuss the rationale behind choosing each of these methods in my initial research design.

*Principal Method: Life history Interviews*

The principal component of my initial research design was semi-structured interviews with actors positioned across the field of architecture. These interviews had two elements. Firstly, in ‘life history’ interviews, subjects narrated their family background, upbringing, education and career histories. Secondly, interviewees were prompted with specific questions about class as a personal identity and issues of diversity and inclusion in architecture.

Life history interviews (Musson, 2004) foreground the subjective narrative accounts of individuals, who serve as lenses to socially constructed social worlds. Life histories provide a “narrative integration of past, present and anticipated future which provides lives with a sense of unity and purpose” (McAdams, 1989: 161 in Musson, 2004: 34).

Given Bourdieu’s reservations about a reliance on narrative accounts, this may appear an unlikely choice of method. In *The Biographical Illusion* (1986), Bourdieu suggests that life history interviews wrongly posit a notion of the self as coherent, purposive, and integrated. The self is effectively forced to become narratable. In so doing, there is a danger that life history accounts smooth over the complexities of the social world under investigation, revealing little of its doxic nature, and serving merely to reproduce inequitable power relations.

This is a notable risk in relation social class, given the ambivalence and ambiguities inherent in class identification (Skeggs, 1997; Savage, 2005). In particular, class is rarely foregrounded in professional contexts, where it may engender substantial embarrassment (Ashley et al., 2015).

However, as Barrett (2015) argues, Bourdieu’s critiques of life history interviews may be overly totalising. Rather than uncritically adopting voluntarism, leading practitioners of life interviews such as Plummer (1983) have grappled with the complexity of the interdependence of structure and agency. Accordingly, and in line with my overarching epistemological position, life history “specifically locates itself in the nexus between deterministic structures and individual agency, between those factors that might be described as relatively objective, and the subjective interpretation of the individual” (Musson, 2004: 35).

This debate helpfully highlights the need to be aware of, and potentially disrupt, overly smooth narrative accounts of career progression. My research design included different techniques to unsettle the idea of a purposive self whose narrative accounts provide a transparent window onto the lived reality of class and carers. Firstly, a pre-interview self-completion questionnaire recorded ‘objective’ career history, including dates and periods outside architecture. Secondly, after interviewees provided their own career accounts, I asked specific questions about their class identities, which, in line with much contemporary research (e.g. Skeggs, 1997), were rarely held straightforwardly. Discussions of personal class identities, whether rejected, embraced or held more ambiguously, did serve to disrupt smooth career narratives.

#### [Life History Interviews: Sample Design](#)

A common approach to designing a research sample is to try to replicate, albeit in smaller scale, the population under investigation (Bryman, 2008). If that had been my intention, there is some material that I could have drawn from.

There are industry estimates on the structure and size of architectural employers (Architects Council for Europe, 2016 in Annex B). Architecture is unusual as a profession due to the persistent high volume of micro-practices and self-employed individuals.

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) maintains a database of architects, who have completed all three parts of an architectural education and who may therefore use the protected title of architect in professional practice. As of 2016, this consisted of 38,511 architects (See Annex B for details). The ARB also publishes diversity data on different characteristics, including age, gender and ethnicity, (although nothing on class or any related socio-economic data).

However, the ARB register certainly does not include all those who provide architectural services in the UK. Missing are those employed in senior positions at architectural practices, who have not completed their architectural education. Also absent are many junior Architectural Assistants who have yet to finish their education. Missing, too, are those who work in support roles in architects' practices.

As I theorised architecture to include those who produce architectural discourse as well as the built environment, I aimed to include critics and academics within my sample. The links between architecture schools and architectural practice are extremely strong; the boundaries are somewhat porous. Practising architects frequently teach at universities and directly recruit students into their practices. Architectural Assistants take up employment positions within practices in between completing all three parts of their education. Indeed, even senior practitioners may spend many years in practice before finally completing their final Part 3 qualification. Therefore, to exclude this part of the field would mean excluding key actors who play important roles in its functioning and reproduction.

There are no reliable estimates of those whose position in the field of architecture relates to their role in pedagogy and/or producing the discourse of architecture, including academics, critics, editors, journalists and curators.

My aim, in any case, was not to represent the field in relation to the size of its component parts, many of which, as outlined above, are not known or debatable. Rather, in line with the challenges of carrying out a Bourdieusian field analysis, and my specific research questions, my goal was for inclusion in terms of class and breadth of experience in terms of architectural career. I aimed to ensure my overall sample could provide insight across and throughout the field of architecture. In addition to breadth of occupational experience, I also sought to ensure my sample included individuals from different class backgrounds and identities. In this light, in line with a Bourdieusian field analysis, I aimed to explore

both the structure of relations of actors differentially embedded within the field, as well as individual classed trajectories through the field.

By carrying out in-depth interviews across the field of architecture, I could explore the structuring role of class in a series of comparisons and intersections. My approach to sampling and recruitment, therefore, was to pursue different avenues to recruit a multiplicity of actors spread across the field of architecture. In particular, I planned to interview individuals with current and past experiences of the following parts of the field:

#### Practising architects

- ARB registered and unregistered architects
- self-employed individuals
- managers, practice owners and employees
- experience working in the private and public sectors
- experience working in different practice types
- experience working in different practice sizes
- experience of working beyond London

#### Broader field of architecture

- architectural critics and journalists
- academics in architecture

At the same time as I aimed for breadth across the field as a whole, I also wanted to recruit purposively, in order to ensure I had representation from groups who are less numerous in the field of architecture; women and architects from working-class backgrounds.

Finally, in response to the challenge of theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field, i.e. researching something which is continually evolving and is discovered, in part, through the process of the research to be carried out, my initial sample design of actors within architecture was not set in stone. Rather, I aimed to evolve this through fieldwork itself, in response to insights generated by the process of sampling and recruitment and in the light of emerging findings.

### Secondary Methods: Material Produced within the Field

In addition to the principal component of life history interviews, my research design also included analysis of material produced within the field, independently of my research interventions.

### Press Coverage of Architectural Awards

In order to discover and explore the field-specific capitals which structure the relations of actors within the field, and the resultant distributions of material and symbolic rewards, I needed to gain insight into the field's elite.

An architectural elite is made up of a tiny number of highly influential individuals – 'starchitects', leading critics, designers, curators etc. - who dominate the production of architecture's symbolic capital (Larson, 1995; Stevens, 1998). While I could anticipate that many people I would interview would have objectively and subjectively successful professional careers, it was unlikely that many would form part of this elite, who are notoriously reluctant to participate in research studies (Lee, 1993).

To supplement my interview material, therefore, my initial research design included a focus on architectural awards. As Larson (1995: 136) argues, architectural awards are one of the principal mechanisms through which individuals accrue prestige in the form of peer recognition. Analysing press coverage of awards, therefore, provided insight into how an architectural elite shaped what is symbolically valued in the field. This showed what is feted within architecture, and brought to light who and what is celebrated and whose voices are heard and legitimated as principal architectural commentators.

Architecture celebrates its successes with dizzying frequency: a published annual timetable details 140 awards which are relevant to the construction and architecture industry (Boost Awards, 2021).

I selected those awards which are most prestigious within the industry to gain insight into the architectural elite. In line with my empirical focus, I have considered UK awards rather than global prizes such as the Pritzker. I therefore considered the following awards:

- *RIBA Gold Medal*: Awarded annually as a life-time recognition award
- *Stirling Prize*: Awarded annually for the UK's best new building
- *AJ 100*: Annual celebrations of best performing practices

I sourced material from the architectural press on the above awards. Specifically, I used two publications which are very widely read: *Building Design* (a weekly publication launched in 1970) and *Architects' Journal* (the most commonly read press publication for the profession, set up in 1895 and published in print form every fortnight).



Lexis Nexis houses published articles from both publications. Using the awards themselves as search terms, and discounting duplicates and very short, factual articles, provided the following total numbers. Analysis was carried out in relation to understanding principal forms of capital in the field of architecture and is discussed in more detail in the subsequent chapter.

**Table 2: Articles on Awards**

	<b>Articles Selected</b>
<b>Architectural Awards</b>	
RIBA Gold Medal	49
Stirling Prize	61
AJ Top Practices/AJ 100 Awards	23

Source: Lexis/Nexis (Architects Journal and Building Design)

I discounted press coverage which was largely factual, for example about the history of the prize, nature of the awards ceremony and information about previous winners. I carried out a content analysis of material used to justify or critique the award. This came from the perspectives of the judges and jury members, prize winners and nominees, as well as the reflections of architectural journalists and editors.

[Policy Documentation on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

The final element of my research design responds to Bourdieu’s inculcation to analyse a field not as a wholly autonomous entity, but as something that is partly structured by extraneous forces from the ‘field of power’.

In line with my specific research focus, my research design considered how actors in a professional leadership role were responding to pressures emanating from the ‘social mobility industry’ to make architecture more inclusive by class, defined largely as the socio-economic background of individuals.

In part, I aimed to tackle this question in my life history interviews, by asking questions of those individuals with managerial responsibility about their response to the external pressure to make the profession more inclusive and facilitate social mobility.

However, I predicted that many of the managers I interviewed would work for micro-firms, in line with market estimates of architectural practices (ACE, 2016). In contrast to large firms with separate Human Resources departments, I anticipated that it may be rare for such managers and practice owners to have engaged substantively with issues of diversity management.

In parallel to my desire to research the ‘elite’ of the field through press coverage of awards, I wanted to scope how the professional leaders, particularly those with greatest power and influence, were responding to pressures from the social mobility industry.

In order to explore whether and how class is constructed as a management issue in architecture, therefore, I analysed material produced by the RIBA as the professional leadership body as well as material published on the websites of the largest architectural practices.

I sourced various material produced by the RIBA. Specifically, I considered their Social Mobility Action Plan (RIBA, 2018) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (RIBA, 2019a).

Additionally, I reviewed the websites of the top 30 architectural practices according to AJ100, to gauge whether and how they promote their own approach to diversity and inclusion generally, and issues of class, in particular.

Analysing the EDI and social mobility policies and practices of the RIBA and leading architectural employers provides insight into my last research subquestion as to how class is constructed as an issue worthy of management in the field.

## Part 2: Implementation: Carrying out the Research

### Introduction

In this second section, I report on how I carried out my interview research. I detail my approach to sampling and recruitment, highlighting how this evolved as fieldwork progressed. I reflect on the necessary compromises between my ideal theorisation of class and its operationalisation in empirical practice. I comment in some detail on the sample profile of achieved interviews to show how they meet the requirements for my research focus. In particular, I show how the breadth and inclusion of actors throughout the field allows me to analyse the structuring role played by class.

### Fieldwork

Fieldwork took place between November 2018 and January 2020. I carried out fieldwork in two tranches (November 2018 – April 2019 and September 2019 – January 2020). The pause, in line with my strategy to allow some flexibility in carrying out a field analysis, allowed me to review my recruitment strategy, in conjunction with my initial sample profile emerging findings.

In the first phase of research, my principal mode of recruitment was to use the Architects Registration Board (ARB) database of all UK registered architects. This allowed me to target women directly, but did not allow any targeting by class, as no relevant information is collated by the ARB.

In order to broaden both the class composition of interviewees, and to recruit individuals active in the field of architecture but who were not registered with the ARB, I also re-contacted architects whom I had interviewed previously in the '*Class Ceiling*' project (Friedman and Laurison, 2019) and asked them to nominate friends and colleagues. Additionally, in order to broaden the class background, I recruited two personal contacts; one of mine and one of my supervisor.

After my first phase of fieldwork, with 28 interviews completed, I paused to reflect on emerging findings in relation to my research questions. It was apparent, first of all, that interviewees had rarely given much prior consideration to the issue of class in relation to their own careers. A common response to my raising the issue of social class was for participants to focus solely on professional access, rather than progression. In particular, interviewees raised the issue of high student fees, which are particularly salient in architecture given the length of the course and associated costs for materials and fieldtrips. Although I certainly did not subscribe to a mono-focus on access as the sole class issue within the profession, I none the less felt that access bore further consideration. I was thus doubly keen to interview academics in the field of architecture, who could discuss their assessment of the student body, as well as early career architects who had experienced university education under the relatively recent regime of student fees.

Few of the architects I interviewed in the first tranche of interviews had given much consideration to managing class as an issue of diversity and inclusion. In part, this was because only a minority were current practice owners with responsibility for recruiting and managing staff. More generally, it appeared that class and social mobility were not particularly 'live' diversity issues in the profession. While this was an important headline finding in itself, I did want to explore the management of class as a diversity and inclusion issue in so far as it had been considered anywhere in the field of architecture. I determined, therefore, to target potential interviewees who were more likely to have given the issue prior consideration. I targeted practices celebrated by the RIBA as diversity champions, as well as members of RIBA's *Architects for Change* committee on Diversity and Inclusion. More broadly, I contacted larger employers – the top 50 employers of architects by size - to try to gain interviews with employees with lead responsibility for Human Resources. Additionally, I contacted architectural recruitment consultants to gain their perspective on EDI issues within the field.

As I had originally planned, in the second phase of fieldwork, I also looked to recruit those in the field of architecture who are not actively involved in creating the built environment, but were more focused on pedagogy and criticism. I recruited academics of two different London architectural schools, one of which would be considered more 'elite' than the other, using publicly available contact details. To target critics and journalists, I contacted the editorial team of five principal UK architectural publications as well as architecture critics in the mainstream press.

Throughout both phases of fieldwork, at the end of the interview, I gave interviewees the opportunity to nominate other potential candidates in order to snowball recruitment. This allowed respondents to consider their lay perceptions of class background when nominating other potential interviewees, to increase interviews of architects from working-class backgrounds. Snowballing is a respected way of recruiting interviewees, particularly when they exist only in small proportions. There is a danger that interviewees recruited via snowballing share certain attitudes and experiences due to their being effectively a single network or friendship group (Seale, 2004). This did not prove to be the case in my research, given that there were so many different strands to my recruitment.

Table 3 below summarises the rationale for using multiple different avenues across the field of architecture, together with the actual numbers of interview successfully recruited.

**Table 3: Recruiting Across the Field of Architecture**

Avenue	Principal target group/Rationale	No.s achieved	% total sample
ARB	Registered practising architects as the core of the field	23	42
Editors/journalists	Producers of discourse/symbolic value	3	5
Academics	Producers of discourse/symbolic value	9	16
RIBA's 'Architects for Change'	Managers of diversity	4	7
Large architectural employers	Managers of diversity	4	7
Recruitment consultants	Managers of diversity	2	4
Personal contacts	Broaden class background and include unregistered 'architects'	2	4
Snowballing	Broaden class background and include unregistered 'architects'	8	15

As regards deciding when to finish fieldwork, I needed to ensure that I had sufficient breadth across the field of architecture in order to answer my specific research questions. I felt I had achieved this goal, when I carried out a further 26 interviews with 27 interviewees, giving a final total of 54 interviews with 55 interviewees (in one instance, an interviewee who worked as a Business Director in a large practice suggested I interviewed her together with the Operations Manager).

All except two interviewees were currently practising in the field of architecture in the UK. One had recently retired, and I was happy to interview her about her career experiences until retirement. The

other had worked extensively in the UK, but had since moved to Paris. Again, I was happy to interview her about her experiences as an architect in the UK, especially as she was striving to return to London to work.

On completion of fieldwork, I had garnered sufficient interviews to explore the structuring role of class in regard to actors spread throughout the field of architecture, whose career experiences could offer insight into different occupational roles within architecture, including as managers, practice owners, self-employed individuals as well as in various types of practice. Table 4 below illustrates the breadth of my interviewees, by professional status, career stage and various facets of career experience.

**Table 4: Experience Throughout the Field of Architecture**

	No.s	%
<b>Professional Status:</b>		
ARB registered architects	39	71
<b>Career Stage:</b>		
Early career (aged up to 34)	15	27
Mid-career (aged 35-49)	21	38
Late-career (aged 50+)	19	35
<b>Career Experience<sup>6</sup></b>		
Self-employed individuals	20	36
Practice managers/owners	12	22
Managerial responsibility (as practice owners or employees)	27	49
In micro-practices	35	64
In 'design-led' studios <sup>7</sup>	8	15
In 'starchitect'-led practices <sup>8</sup>	10	18
Public sector	6	11
Architectural critics/journalists	6	11
Academics/teachers	12	22
Beyond London	30	55

<sup>6</sup> The rows below do not sum to 55 as many interviewees had careers which encompassed substantive experience of more than one of these roles and job functions. Indeed, many individuals carried out multiple roles at the same time.

<sup>7</sup> There is no objective definition of a 'design-led' practice. This table reflects interviewees who have used the term 'design-led' to describe practices where they had worked in their career narratives

<sup>8</sup> Similarly, there is no 'objective' definition of 'starchitect'. Again, this table reflects interviewees who have used the term 'starchitect' to describe practices where they had worked.

### Interviewing in London

Almost all my interviewees worked in and around London at time of interview. One of a handful of elite global cities (Sassen, 2001), London is acknowledged as a leading world hub for architecture, acting as a magnet for ‘talent’ from across the globe.

Although there is no symbolic centre for the architectural profession in London, akin to ‘The City’ for high finance, many of its dominant institutions are situated in London. This includes the RIBA, and many of the most prestigious architectural schools or universities: The Architectural Association, University College London/The Bartlett, and the Royal College of Arts. Many of its most influential publications, including the Architectural Review, Architects Journal and Dezeen, are housed in London. Architects talk of a ‘London school ethos’ to suggest a highly creative, design-centred architectural education, or ‘the London scene’ to connote a small network of influential critics and commentators.

Many of the UK’s largest architectural employers have their headquarters in London. Fosters, by far the largest UK based practice, is based in Battersea. As well as larger practices, many boutique architectural practices, which are argued to lead the way in terms of design innovation, are situated in the capital.

London’s standing as a global centre of ‘elite’ professionalism has acknowledged implications for social justice and social mobility. It attracts those from more privileged backgrounds who are more able to take the risk of finding a professional footing in an expensive world city (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). And, overall, it provides material rewards: architects in London enjoy considerably higher salaries than the UK average (Hays, 2017 in Annex B).

As my research does not aim to be straightforwardly representative of UK architects as a bound geographical entity, this concentration of fieldwork in London is not wholly problematic. Indeed, the ‘elite’ nature of London architecture is itself productive for understanding what is valued and rewarded in the field (field-specific capitals and the structure of relations) and how this may be related to issues of class. Equally, however, my research aims ideally generate insight throughout the architectural field. In this light, it is important to emphasise that many of the people I interviewed had careers which encompassed substantial periods of employment throughout the UK and in many other national settings (Table 4 above). By focusing on narrated career histories, rather than just the location of current occupational role, they were in fact ideally placed to provide insights into the field of architecture well beyond the specific locus of my fieldwork.

### Operationalising Class: Classifying Individuals

In addition to professional status, career stage and occupational role, I also aimed to ensure inclusion by class and gender.

As outlined earlier, I theorise class as a multi-faceted construct, which relates to social origins, identities, the classed habitus and judgements of others. Inevitably, any operationalisation of such a complex construct involves compromise from theoretical ideals. My conception of class as a protean construct does not lend itself straightforwardly to easy operationalisation in empirical research. I chose to collate a broad range of individual class indicators, not for greater classificatory *precision*, but to allow a fuller exploration of the dynamics of the structuring role played by class.

My research is situated in a specific social context where certain indicators of class have greater currency in policy discussions. I, therefore, measured class as derived from parental occupation (NS-SEC), in accordance with official guidance (ONS, 2020), as well as different indicators of social disadvantage – tenure, free school meals, first generation to attend university – in common use in contemporary social policy.

I also classified individuals according to their inherited economic and cultural capital, which has less currency in contemporary policy debates, but aligns more closely with my Bourdieusian ideal. I derived my subjective assessment of inherited economic capital from questions on a pre-interview questionnaire (see Annex A) on standards of living, supplemented by open questions during interviewing on family wealth and housing.

To gauge inherited cultural capital, following recent empirical research by cultural class analysts (Friedman and Laurison, 2019; Savage, 2015), I asked about childhood hobbies, family outings and holidays, as well as legitimate forms of cultural capital practices, including trips to museums, theatres and art galleries. I also took analytic account of how individuals related their relationship with different forms of cultural capital of their childhood. I considered both whether they recounted their childhood hobbies with the easy confidence associated with a privileged habitus (Khan, 2010), and whether their cultural activities were recounted as a sign of social distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Annex E details the code-frame I developed, and includes examples from my life-history interviews.

My pre-survey questionnaire (Annex A) also covered personal class identification. I adapted the question used in the British Social Attitudes survey (National Centre for Social Research, 2016) for self-completion. The questionnaire also covered perceptions of intergenerational and intra-generational social mobility. Again, these are clearly not straightforward fixed measures of class identity, but acted as a springboard for discussion during the interview itself.

Overall, I interviewed architects from a mix of class origins (Table 5 below). In total, 15% of my sample came from working-class backgrounds, when defined as a household whose Chief Income Earner was employed in routine, manual occupations (NS-SEC 6-8). This is higher both than the 10% incidence



found in the Labour Force Survey (Friedman and Laurison, 2019) and the 5% incidence in the organisational case study research which informed *The Class Ceiling*.

A further 24% of my interviewees came from intermediate class backgrounds (NS-SEC 3-5), while half (51%) of architects came from professional/managerial family backgrounds (NS-SEC 1-2). More specifically, I recorded whether interviewees had a close family connection to architecture. Overall, 11% had at least one parent who had trained or practised as an architect - the expected number in a general population survey would be less than 1% – and 20% had a close family member who was an architect.

I evaluated nearly one in five interviewees (18%) as having low inherited economic capital and around one in seven (15%) low cultural capital. Despite the very different theoretical underpinnings between Bourdieusian and Weberian conceptions of class, I found a very strong correlation between interviewees' inheritance of different forms of capital with measurement of class according to NS-SEC. I assessed all bar one of the 28 interviewees from NS-SEC 1-2 backgrounds to have grown up in a household with medium/high economic capital, and all bar one of the 8 interviewees from NS-SEC 6-8 backgrounds did not grow up in a household with low economic capital (Table 6).

As regards class identification, half (49%) said they were middle-class, while 13% (7 individuals) claimed a working-class identity. There was a broad correspondence between individuals self-affirmed class identity and their class of origin as measured by NS-SEC. In total, 20% of interviewees rejected any class identity, and many others, particularly those who had experienced upward social mobility to now work as professional architects, held ambivalent and ambiguous class identities.

Many of my interviewees (44%) were brought up outside the UK, most frequently in Ireland or Continental Europe. This adds another layer of complexity to the analysis of class. Some class indicators such as the childhood receipt of free school meals are specific to the United Kingdom, while housing tenure and the status and consequences of private education are also notably different in mainland Europe. By contrast, occupational measures of class background, which are similar to NS-SEC, are used in cross-European research (e.g. ISER, 2021). Further, I found that my subjective assessments of class as inherited economic and cultural capital - the latter, of course, rooted in a study of French cultural tastes - worked equally well in the context of individuals brought up outside the United Kingdom.

I interviewed equal proportions of men and women (51% vs 49%). This is very different from the actual proportion of ARB registered architects (74% men vs 26% women) and so reflects success in my recruitment strategy. In terms of the intersection of class and gender, women I interviewed were even

less likely to emanate from working-class backgrounds than are men (Table 7). Even with multiple channels for recruitment and the use of snowballing, it was particularly difficult to find women from working-class backgrounds for interview. Previous research among architects has also found that women architects may emanate from more privileged backgrounds than men (Friedman and Laurison, 2019; Adams and Tancred, 2000).

Table 5: Achieved Sample – Class Indicators

	Numbers	%
<b>Class of Origin: Chief Income Earner when aged 14</b>		
NS-SEC 1-2 (Professional/Managerial)	28	51
NS-SEC 3-5 (Intermediate)	13	24
NS-SEC 6-8 (Routine)	8	15
Unclear/not asked	6	11
<b>Micro-class Reproduction</b>		
Any parent trained/practising architect	6	11
Any close family member trained/practising architect	11	20
<b>Self-identity</b>		
Middle-class	27	49
Working-class	7	13
Reject class identity	11	20
Unclear/not asked	10	18
<b>Educational Socio-economic Indicators</b>		
Any private schooling	13	24
First generation to attend university	22	40
<b>Inherited Forms of Capital: Economic</b>		
High	17	31
Medium	23	42
Low	10	18
Unclear/not asked	5	9
<b>Inherited Forms of Capital: Cultural</b>		
High	13	24
Medium	29	53
Low	8	15
Unclear/not asked	5	9

Table 6: Correlation of Class Indicators: Interviewees’ NS-SEC of Origin by Inherited Capitals and Class Self-Identification

		<i>Economic Capital</i>			<i>Cultural Capital</i>			<i>Self-identification</i>	
		High	Med	Low	High	Med	Low	Middle	Working
	<b>Totals</b>	17	21	10	13	28	8	27	7
<b>NS-SEC 1-2</b>	28	15	11	1	12	16	0	18	0
<b>NS-SEC 3-5</b>	13	2	9	2	1	10	2	6	4
<b>NS-SEC 6-8</b>	8		1	7		2	6	3	3

Table 7: Class Background of Architects Overall and by Gender

	Labour Force Survey (All, N=62) %	My sample (All: N=55) %	My sample (Men: N=28) %	My sample (Women: N=27) %
NS-SEC 1-2	47	51	46	56
NS-SEC 3-5	43	24	32	15
NS-SEC 6-8	10	15	21	7
Not known	0	11	0	11

Source for Labour Force Survey: Friedman and Laurison (2019)

### Sample Profile

Beyond issues of class, the overall sample profile of my 55 interviewees is shown in Table 8 below. This shows current occupation in the field of architecture, as well as key demographics; gender, age and ethnicity.

I made no attempt to recruit respondents from minority ethnic communities specifically as this was not the prime focus of my research. The notable underrepresentation of minority ethnic architects in the profession of architecture is apparent in published statistics on registered architects (ARB, 2017). Relatedly, statistical analysis reveals the extent to which non-completion of an architectural education is higher among minority ethnic students (RIBA, 2019b). Only two out of fifty-five of my interviewees were from a minority ethnic community.

Table 8: Achieved Sample – Professional and Demographic Indicators

	Numbers	%
<b>Principal Current Role in Field of Architecture</b>		
Self-employed/sole practitioners	7	13
Practice owners	10	18
Heads of HR/Practice Managers	4	7
Recruitment consultants	2	4
Employees (mainly architects in practice)	19	35
Academics	10	18
Editors/Journalists	3	5
<b>Principal Place of University Education</b>		
UK	39	71
Elsewhere in Europe	12	22
North America	2	4
Asia	1	2
No Higher Education	1	2
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	28	51
Female	27	49
<b>Age</b>		
20-29	3	5
30-39	12	22
40-49	21	38
50-59	9	16
60+	10	18
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
White British	31	56
White Other	22	40
Minority Ethnic	2	4

### Ethics

All research projects require ethical considerations on the part of the researcher. While one cannot anticipate every possible ethical issue that may arise, my aim was to consider most pressing issues to allow for informed consent and to minimise possible harm to individuals in interviewing what was likely to be sensitive issues.

A project background information sheet, given to interviews on recruitment, explained the rationale for my research in the context of concerns about meritocracy, diversity and inclusion in architecture (Annex A). In this way consent was informed by an understanding of my research interests. Two interviewees were based far outside London. I carried out these interviews by Skype. Otherwise, fieldwork took place at an individual's place of work or a 'neutral' public space such as a café if this

was not possible. Although I chose never to suggest this, a few respondents invited me to interview at their homes, always around a large kitchen table, and I was happy to do this. None of the individuals who form part of the field of architecture were from groups considered inherently vulnerable.

All but one interviewee was happy for the research to be audio-recorded and transcribed. Audio recordings and transcriptions did not include personal details and were kept on a password protected personal computer. In reporting, I gave individuals pseudonyms and anonymised their work organisations. I also modified very specific biographical details and names of some educational institutions attended by interviewees so as to ensure that individuals cannot be identified by people who work in architecture.

On the other hand, I chose not to anonymise the actors in the field of architecture who are referenced by my interviewees. Thus, named references to particular practices and universities are left to stand, provided they do not allow my interviewees themselves to be identified. They have a validity as perceptual judgements in a research context.

As regards the ethical implications of interviewing, it is important to recognise that any intrusion into the research subject's private world is potentially emotionally charged (Lee, 1993). While work histories and career progression are in some way everyday subjects, they are also highly sensitive. There was the possibility that individuals could become distressed, particularly when considering instances of discrimination and prejudice, which may have thwarted their career advancement. Further, literature suggests that discussions of class are potentially more painful for people from working-class backgrounds, who are critically aware of the negative valorisation of their identities (Skeggs, 1997).

My approach was one of measured sensitivity during the interview process itself. I did not want to shy away from emotionally difficult subjects; including the perception that classed identities have hindered progression. As Lee (1993: 106) advises: "All that may be possible in these situations is for the interviewer to undertake the difficult task of enduring and sharing the pain of the respondent". In practice, I was guided by the interviewee as to the emotional tone of the interview and how much they were prepared to reveal of themselves during our interview. This varied considerably; a small minority of interviewees revealed intimate details of personal trauma, including past abusive relationships, and mental and physical health issues. My aim was always to manage the interview so that my interviewee could control how much (or little) of their inner lives to reveal to me. Although the interviews could, at times, be somewhat intense, with a couple of interviewees jokingly likening them to therapy, nobody appeared distressed during the research. Nobody revealed anything which made me feel that they were currently in a vulnerable situation.

## Interview Coverage

Below, I set out the main areas of the discussion guide. I covered career history in depth in all interviews. Ideally, I wanted to explore whether interviewees invoked the idea of class without prompting to anchor their career narratives and experiences (Atkinson, 2010). However, this was not straightforward given the need to relay the objectives of my study to potential participants to allow for informed consent (see Annex A for Project Information Sheet). As I informed potential interviewees that I was interested in issues of meritocracy, diversity and inclusion, this inevitably involved some degree of priming participants to consider their class backgrounds in relation to their career histories. Indeed, one interviewee came prepared with very apposite pages from a popular social science book – David Graeber’s *Bullshit Jobs* – which she felt perfectly illustrated how class had impeded her own career progression. She was, however, a rare exception. Most interviewees did not name class directly to anchor their spontaneous career narratives. On the other hand, in line with contemporary research (Irwin, 2015), they often foregrounded closely related issues – material inheritance, social capital, cultural competence, snobbery and social status – as they recounted their personal career stories. Class as a “system of typifications” (Atkinson, 2010: 198) formed an integral part of my approach to analysis, as I set out later in this chapter.

In outlining careers, the content and flow of each interview was driven by largely by individuals themselves. I also prompted individuals with specific questions about their class identities and issues of EDI in architecture. The specific lines of questioning also depended on interviewees’ position and experience of the architectural field. This is shown in the Table 9 below.

Table 9: Discussion Guide - Overview of Coverage

Sample	Topic	Detail
All	Background	Parents' occupation Experience at school Economic and cultural capital (standard of living, family holidays, hobbies, cultural activities)
All	Career history	Consideration of architecture as a career, experience at university, employment history, reasons for changing jobs
All	Current position	Evaluation of current occupational roles
All	Career trajectory	Expectations vs reality, positive and negative experiences, aims and ambitions
All	Progression in Architecture	Skills and attributes needed to progress Perceptions of progression as fair, inclusive, meritocratic
All	Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	Attitudes to EDI in architecture. Awareness and experience of initiatives and training.
All	Class	Class background, identity, changes over time, impact on career
Self-employed	Employment status	Reasons for career choice, benefits and disadvantages
Practice owners	Practice management	Reason for setting up practice, challenges and ambitions
Managers	Managing progression	Recruitment, pay and promotion processes, EDI attitudes and activity
Academics	Academia and architecture	Reasons for career choice, perceptions of EDI in relation to the student body
Journalists	Journalism and architecture	Reasons for career choice, perceptions of the discourse of architecture as socially exclusive
Recruitment Consultants	Recruiting into architecture	Reasons for career choice. Perceptions of EDI in the field of architecture

Interviews ranged in length between 30 minutes and 3 hours. The average interview length was one hour and a quarter, and most interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and a quarter. All bar

one interview was audio-recorded, due to the interviewee's reluctance. In this instance, I took contemporary notes by hand. All recorded interviews were fully transcribed.

### Part 3: Analysis

In this section, I detail my analysis. In particular, I focus on my overarching analytic approach to material generated through life history interviews. More specific details of analysing architectural press coverage of awards and EDI policy documentation are outlined in relevant empirical chapters (Chapters 4 and 7).

I begin by reflecting on my own positionality to argue that the material produced in life-history interviews is inevitably a co-production between researcher and interviewee. Next, I give a brief outline of the different techniques I used to immerse myself in interview material and bring some initial interpretive order to emerging findings. I outline the detailed coding I undertook using N-Vivo, which marshalled my interview data into specific codes within broader themes. Finally, I outline the different analytic approaches I undertook to reveal the structuring role that class plays in shaping careers. This includes aspects of class which are more readily apparent in interview talk as well as the unconscious dynamics of the classed habitus.

#### Reflexivity

Bourdieu argues that the difference between spontaneous and reflexive social research is “not between a science that effects a construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of the work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce” (Bourdieu, 1999: 608). In other words, Bourdieu argues that an ideal of scientific neutrality is no more than a myth, and emphasises that the researcher has responsibility to consciously reflect on the act of constructing social scientific knowledge.

#### Personal Class Identity

As a reflexive researcher, I aimed to analyse how my own social identities affect the production of research material generated. Knowledge is effectively co-produced in the relation between researcher and interviewee during the research process. It is, therefore, inevitably contingent on the researcher's personal characteristics.

In this light, and without wishing to fall into self-indulgence, it is worth saying something on my own background. As a middle-aged, white, gay man, I reflect, in particular, on my class background and identity. At various times throughout my research, I had illuminating conversations with my parents



about our family history as well as with my partner, an Australian from a working-class family, with his own complex mobility journey.

I am, in a word, middle-class. I grew up in a wealthy suburb of Manchester, and was privately educated. My father, the Chief Income Earner of our household, held a senior management position in the Post Office. Having spent my career in professional roles in the government and in research agencies, I have not personally experienced social mobility, at least in the limited definition of intergenerational changes in class as occupational aggregates.

The same is not true of my parents. My grandparents were working-class. My grandfathers' varied jobs included postman, electrician, Chief Petty Officer in the Navy and shipyard foreman. One of my grandmothers worked as a clerical officer during the second world war, while the other worked as a nanny in service. Neither undertook paid work once they married and began to raise (their own) children.

Neither of my parents went to university. I recall, growing up, my mother's frequently voiced regret that my father had not had this opportunity. This would, she felt, have 'broadened his outlook'. Less often, she admitted her own disappointment at having finished education aged 16.

With no personal experience of higher education, my parents, in Bourdieusian terms, aimed to instil the importance of institutionalised cultural capital. In their terms, they were delighted that all four of their children went straight from school to university. On the other hand, we did not inherit an appreciation of legitimate culture within the family. High-brow cultural activities did not form part of the every-day of our family life.

For me, such highly abbreviated personal reflections bring to light how the overarching terms used to describe class - middle-class and working-class - fail to do justice to the complexity of classed lives and social trajectories. I also remain acutely aware that such reductive labels, and the class indicators that sit beside them, often work in favour of the privileged. In one way, I embody this bias. Only around 7% of British children are educated privately (Friedman and Laurison, 2019); it is hardly a middling norm suggested by the term middle-class. Despite my privileges of education and wealth, I can, truthfully if somewhat disingenuously, invoke contemporary class indicators to hide my privilege. I am a first-generation student of higher education, whose longer family background is working-class.

I reflect also on how I was read in class terms during the interviews themselves. I did not reveal personal biographical details during the interview. I have all but lost any traces of a Mancunian accent, which was never strong. However, I am aware that my pronunciation of the word 'class' may still place me in the North. This can, in itself, be read in highly reductive class terms. In general, I felt conscious

that interviewees read me, correctly, by my embodied cultural capital as a member of the educated middle-classes. In this, my positioning aligns with the dominant professional class culture of all my interviewees in the field of architecture, whatever their personal class background and identity.

### Professional Identity

Beyond issues of class, I was conscious, at times, of being read as a social scientist, with a presumed interest in 'solving' issues of diversity and inclusion in the profession. At times, therefore, I chose to give verbal cues to obviate the need for a socially acceptable response. As an example, I reassured those with managerial responsibility that many people I had spoken to had done little formal work on diversity and inclusion in architecture. I aimed to relieve any embarrassment on the part of practice managers who may have felt that they had not done all they should. To reiterate, I was not trying to resolve social desirability bias to arrive at 'the truth'. Rather, I was aiming to facilitate a productive conversation, where interviewees felt comfortable to express themselves. My thinking through of issues of social acceptability formed part of my subsequent analysis as I listened back to interviews and reviewed transcripts.

One very important aspect of my identity was my outsider status to the field of architecture. Stead (2012: 191), in her introduction to a special issue of *Architectural Theory Review* on Women in Architecture, argues that within the profession:

*There is a strong discourse of exceptionalism – the idea that architecture is distinctly different from other professions or industries, that architects are not like other kinds of workers, and that architectural work-places and work culture are unlike any other. This can lead to a sense of self-enclosure within the discipline, a closed circle of conversation where only architecturally trained researchers, themselves inculcated and encultured into the discipline, are seen to truly understand the identities, motivations, and idiosyncrasies of architects.*

Further, there is an antagonism, long identified in the sociology of art, between artistic discourse which valorises talent and genius and sociologists whose aim is to critique the ways such terms are culturally contingent and contestable (Tanner, 2003). Stead's idea of 'a closed circle' inevitably poses problems to a complete outsider to the field of architecture, with no architectural training, but who is drawing from a highly critical sociological tradition. It is notable that many of the most prominent sociologists to study architecture, including Robert Gutman, Dana Cuff and Garry Stevens, are architecturally trained insiders. Indeed, Garry Stevens, an architectural academic and sociologist, attributes much of architectural grandees' dismissive rejection to Tom Wolfe's (1982) searing critique of architectural discourse to Wolfe's being an architectural outsider (Stevens, 1998: 107).

Beyond being aware of such potential antagonisms, I aimed to make a benefit of my ignorance and outsider status. The one personal characteristic I did reveal about myself at the beginning of every interview was to say that I had no architectural background or education. For me, there was no possibility of being anything other than an enthusiastic listener to participant accounts of the lived reality of working in the field of architecture. Reflecting on my prior experience of interviewing architects at a London-based practice, albeit one which makes a specific virtue of being down-to-earth, pragmatic architects (Friedman and Laurison, 2019), I did not feel excluded from an architectural discourse. That experience was itself very useful in that it gave me an understanding of many of the issues which architects faced during their education and careers. Although I remained entirely an architectural outsider, I did not feel my questioning was particularly naïve, even at the outset of my PhD fieldwork.

Further, there can be productive gains in relation to holding an outsider status. From a critical perspective, there is value in making the familiar exotic, so as to better bring to light submerged power relations (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Outsiders who are not socialised in the rules of the game of certain fields are more likely to notice taken for granted assumptions and behaviours as socially constructed. I certainly felt this at times during my interviews, for example as I was confronted with architectural practices and values which seemed highly exotic to me. These included the notion of a 'design-led' practice, the importance of architectural competitions and talk of an all-encompassing architectural worldview. Equally, I was made aware of imposing taken for granted values as an architectural outsider, whose own career has been spent in the hierarchical organisations of the civil service and large research agencies. On occasion, when I spoke of line managers, structured career progression within organisations or even the idea of a 'career', it was made clear to me that such constructs did not straightforwardly apply in all parts of the field. In sum, I found my outsider status was useful in questioning architectural norms and values and having my own assumptions questioned in turn.

### Analysis During Fieldwork

As fieldwork progressed, I took extensive field notes, detailing my overall impressions of each interview and any relevant details about its location which would not be captured by audio-recording. After every interview, I created an individual pen portrait, based on my initial impressions of the most salient parts of the account as well as those aspects of career trajectories which interviewees chose to emphasise. Additionally, I represented individuals' career paths visually as a flow chart to note their career turning points and key events according to their narrative accounts. This allowed me to develop a high-level understanding of the overarching patterns and rhythms which were prominent in narrative accounts of architectural careers.

As I set out more fully in Chapter 6, this brought to light a variety of pivotal turning points in many architects' career histories. These include the familial (in particular having children), the economic (notably the impact of recessions) and the happenstance (an unexpected career opportunity, often recounted as a lucky break). I found that many architects eschewed careerism, particularly with respect to intra-organisational career progression. Instead, for many interviewees, a key career decision or ambition was setting up and running up their own architectural practice.

This high-level immersion in architectural careers as presented to me during fieldwork helped shape my more structured and detailed analytic work, which I describe next.

### Analysis of Transcribed Material

The most substantive stage of my analysis was to carry out detailed, line by line analysis of transcribed material, using N-Vivo. There are two main stages to my analysis. The first stage was to marshal all coded interview material within the empirical focus of my research investigations, i.e. around the four subquestions which make up my overall investigation. As a reminder, these are:

#### Overarching Question

- How does class structure careers in the field of architecture?

#### Subquestions

- How is the field of architecture organised?
- How does class structure access to the field of architecture?
- How does class structure progression through the field of architecture?
- How does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression in architecture?

The second stage was to analyse the structuring role of class. These two stages are described in turn.

#### Stage 1: Coding data using N-Vivo

My interview questions encouraged a linear narrative, which broadly aligned with my different research questions. Thus, interviewees recalled issues of access into the field - early interest in architecture, experience at university and first employment in the field – before later detailing their career progression. Finally, I asked questions about class in relation to diversity management towards the end of the interview. In practice, however, interviewees' recollections of their careers rarely followed a perfectly linear path. Interviewees would, at times, jump forward and skip back as they constructed their narrative accounts of their careers.

Initially, therefore, I marshalled interview material into the relevant four research subquestions. Within each of these, I developed individual code-frames, using N-Vivo. While I was sensitised by relevant research literature reviewed in the preceding chapter, e.g. Stevens (1998) and Sahin-Dikmen (2013) on the symbolic structure of the architectural field, as well as Cuff (1992) and Larson (1995) on architectural careers, I developed detailed primary and secondary codes empirically, from the material as it was presented to me by interviewees.

As an example, to code interview material related to career progression, I developed a total of 35 first order codes (see Table 12 below). I next brigaded these under five second order codes: the broader themes of positive aspects of career; negative aspects; turning points; drivers of progression; and motivations/ambitions. As is shown, the second order code 'drivers of progression' incorporates perceptions and evaluations of a range of different skills, personal characteristics, and extraneous factors such as university attended which emerge in career narratives as salient drivers of career progression within the architectural field.

The final list of codes and themes relevant to each specific research subquestion are shown below. Examples of interview data that sit within each code are included as Annex E.

**Table 10: Code Frame for Research Subquestion ‘How is the field of architecture organised?’**

<b>Primary Code</b>	<b>Secondary Code</b>
Architectural Values: Progressiveness	Field-specific capitals
Architectural values: Design/creativity	Field-specific capitals
Architectural values: Commercialism	Field-specific capitals
Professionalism/ professional status	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Types of architect	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Types of Practice	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Starchitects	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Critics	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Developers	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Design-and-build	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: The RIBA	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Universities	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Local authorities	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Design-led firms	Structure of Relations
Organisations/Individuals: Jobbing Architects	Structure of Relations

**Table 11: Code Frame for Research Subquestion ‘How does class structure access to the field of architecture?’**

<b>Primary Code</b>	<b>Secondary Code</b>
Initial interest in architecture	Accessing the field
Family connection to architecture	Micro-class Reproduction
Positive framing	University experience
Negative framing	University experience
Lack of fit	University experience
Natural Fit	University experience
Gender/gendered discrimination	University experience

**Table 12: Code Frame for Research Subquestion ‘How does class structure progression through the field of architecture?’**

<b>Primary Code</b>	<b>Secondary Code</b>
Family/caring commitments	Career Turning Points
Recessions/redundancies	Career Turning Points
Deciding to set up practice	Career Turning Points
Leaving architecture	Career Turning Points
Expanding the field	Career Turning Points
Opportunities/happenstance	Career Turning Points
Intra-organisational progression	Career Motivations/Ambitions
Professional development	Career Motivations/Ambitions
Setting up in practice	Career Motivations/Ambitions
Ambitions beyond career as ascent	Career Motivations/Ambitions
Working hours	Negative aspects of Career
Pay	Negative aspects of Career
Exploitation	Negative aspects of Career
Nature of role	Negative aspects of Career
Problems with employer	Negative aspects of Career
Sexism	Negative aspects of Career
Classism	Negative aspects of Career
Organisational fit	Negative aspects of Career
Nature of role: Design-led projects	Positive aspects of Career
Nature of role: Autonomy/responsibility	Positive aspects of Career
Nature of role: Respect/Voice	Positive aspects of Career
Nature of role: Other	Positive aspects of Career
Organisational/Positional fit	Positive aspects of Career
Work-life balance	Positive aspects of Career
Business/commercial skills	Drivers of Progression: Skills
Project management/delivery skills	Drivers of Progression: Skills
Design skills	Drivers of Progression: Skills
Social skills	Drivers of Progression: Skills
Personal skills	Drivers of Progression: Skills
Hard work/dedication	Drivers of Progression: Effort
Luck	Drivers of Progression: Extraneous factors
Personal Attributes, e.g. Confidence	Drivers of Progression: Personal attributes
Personal Connections	Drivers of Progression: Personal attributes
Family wealth	Drivers of Progression: Personal attributes
University attended	Drivers of Progression: Personal attributes

**Table 13: Code Frame for Research Subquestion ‘How does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression in architecture?’**

Primary Code	Secondary Code
Recruitment	Management Practices
Promotion	Management Practices
Flexible working arrangements	Liberal Positive Working Practices
Apprenticeships	Liberal Positive Working Practices
Work placements	Liberal Positive Working Practices
Mentoring	Liberal Positive Working Practices
Homophily	Negative Working Practices
Stereotypes	Negative Working Practices
Liberal	Orientations to EDI
Neo-liberal	Orientations to EDI
Radical	Orientations to EDI
Instrumental	Orientations to EDI
Dismissive	Orientations to EDI
Transcending Diversity	Orientations to EDI
Transcending Managerialism	Orientations to EDI
Class	Groups subject to EDI
Gender	Groups subject to EDI
Ethnicity	Groups subject to EDI
Disability	Groups subject to EDI
LGBT+	Groups subject to EDI

#### Stage 2: Analysing The Structuring Role of Class

The second stage of analysis of coded material was to explicate the structuring role of class. I used a variety of different approaches, to carry out my analysis of how class structures access to and progression through the field.

Most straightforwardly, I compared how individuals from different class backgrounds narrated their careers. In this way, drawing from the coded material carried out in the first stage of analysis, I analysed differences between individuals from contrasting class backgrounds in relation to their initial interest in architecture, experiences of studying architecture at university, pathways and progression through the field, as well as their career ambitions. To give specific examples, notable differences were apparent with regard to how individuals from contrasting class backgrounds narrated their decisions to set up their own practice as well as how they framed the importance of luck and happenstance in structuring their career progress. These comparisons and contrasts form the cornerstone of my empirical chapters 5 (Access) and 6 (Progression).

One danger of too great a reliance on analytic software packages such as N-Vivo is that qualitative data may become decontextualized as they are broken down into small snippets of interview talk (Crang et al., 1997). I took two different approaches to counter this problem.



First, I carried out my analysis of coded data in conjunction with other more immersive ways of familiarising myself with the data, including re-reading individual transcripts in toto and listening back to audios of interviews to recapture key elements of the interview process which may be lost in transcription: tone, humour, pace and energy.

Second, in reporting, I deliberately chose to draw back and out from decontextualised codes. In accordance with my life interview methodology, my approach to reporting was to include sufficient biographical detail, in order to situate interview talk within both salient aspects of an interviewee's career situation and of different salient facets of class.

In addition to comparisons and contrasts of career narratives by class background, I also coded interview material in conjunction with other facets of class which made up my theoretical ideal: different forms of capital, classed identities, judgements and the classed habitus (Table 14 below provides examples).

This was most straightforward in relation to those aspects of class which present themselves overtly in interview discourse, such as how the inheritance of familial wealth and social contacts are leveraged for career success (indeed the codes of 'family wealth' and 'personal connections' emerged during the first stage of analysis – see Table 12). It is worth reiterating, however, that even here interviewees do not always offer up these aspects of 'class as resource' for straightforward analysis. In a contemporary UK context, middle-class individuals may seek to disavow their privilege (Savage et al., 2001), while issues of shame and stigma may lead working-class individuals to underplay the social disadvantages of their upbringing (Shildrick and Macdonald, 2013). None the less, even if somewhat submerged and underplayed, class as the inheritance of different forms of capital is clearly present in interview talk.

Similarly, instances of class identification and classed judgements are also apparent in career narratives. In relation to the former, sensitised by literature (e.g. Skeggs, 1997), I coded instances of classed identification, disidentification as well as the frequent ambivalence of classed identification. In relation to the latter, I highlighted where individuals felt judged (negatively or positively) in relation to their assumed class background or identity, and how they felt this impacted on their career progress.

It is most difficult to tease out the machinations of the classed habitus through interview talk. By its nature, the habitus, formed in early socialisation, works "below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny" (Bourdieu, 1984: 466 in Atkinson, 2010: 50). As its operating logic is not, therefore, straightforwardly apparent to the individual research subject, it does not reveal itself openly through direct questioning.

In his exploration of class and career progression, Atkinson (2010: 198-99) outlines two ways to unearth the structuring role played by the unconscious machinations of the classed habitus, both of which informed my approach to analysis. First, he sought to explore the homologies between the lifestyles and tastes of participants, rooted in their early conditions of life, and subsequent career choices. Second, Atkinson explored participants' own understandings of class "as a system of typifications", as well as the role they attributed to class in relation to their own career "positions, trajectories and experiences".

I mirrored two of the techniques he sets out in his important investigation of the structuring role played by class. First, during data collection, I had deliberately asked open questions about childhood cultural activities, and familial/parental encouragement (see Annex E for detailed typology). In analysis, I could tease out synergies with regard to subsequent career choices, as well as sense of fit in particular parts of the architectural field. Individuals from privileged backgrounds are more likely to feel a sense of ease and belonging in professional milieu, which may be misrecognised as a natural fit. By contrast, the career stories of individuals whose classed habitus produces discomfort is apparent in 'fish out of water' career narratives.

Second, sensitised by the cultural class literature I reviewed in my previous chapter, I developed a detailed coded typology of class typifications (Atkinson, 2010: 198) – identities, associations and attributions – from my own empirical findings. In my research, the notion of class generated a wide variety of associations around occupation, wealth, education, dress, accent, embodied characteristics, political affiliation and leisure pursuits.

In this typology, I organised the range of words and phrases which interviewees used to invoke issues of class in relation to their own personal careers, as well in their broader evaluations of the architectural field. The attributing role interviewees afforded to class was integral to my approach to analysis. In Annex E, I set out my full typology of class typifications, together with examples from the coded transcripts.

Finally, the ease or difficulty with which an interviewee recounted their career histories provided further insight as to whether there was a concordance or mismatch between the classed habitus and the professional milieu as recalled in the context of a research interview. An important approach to my analysis, therefore, was to listen out for hesitations, long pauses, and part sentences left incomplete on the one hand (see two examples in Table 14 below), and fluency and articulacy on the other.

In this light, a conscious reflection on my own positionality was key. As outlined earlier, I share a broadly similar class background to many of the more privileged architects I interviewed. In my reflective analysis, therefore, I looked to question how my own classed habitus may have facilitated or hindered conversational ease during interviews.

**Table 14: Different Facets of Class in Career Narratives**

Aspect of Class	Examples from interviews
Class as Resources: Social capital	<i>"I was given a very lovely project for a hotel and some housing in Warwickshire by an old friend of mine", "They both got their commissions building houses from their in-laws", "The connections you make in the right schools, in the right social circles"</i>
Class as Resources: Institutionalised cultural capital	<i>"If you're in the AA, you kind of want to set up your own practice", "The guys at Lincoln will become good, competent architects, but they won't be top architects and they won't be in top firms", "He knew that I'd gone to the Bartlett and then the AA, just from like talking to me. And since then, he's always kept in touch and offered me opportunities to speak"</i>
Class as Resources: inherited economic capital	<i>"I was lucky with property. So age 20, I bought my own flat", "But I always had that security net in the back, knowing that if I'm ending up on the streets, probably I can ask if somebody can support me for a while", "The ability to work and not really worry about income, they've got a nest egg"</i>
Class as identity	<i>"I had inverted working-class snobbery, that I really knew what was real and all these people from public schools were a little bit of a joke really", "I'm aware that I've got all of the privileges of the middle classes, but I would still identify with the working class", "We're all working-class if you work for a living I think"</i>
Classed judgements	<i>"People who regard themselves as important and are not worried about showing it to you. And who think you are trade", "a chav from East London", "people would always gravitate to him... he was middle class white guy, slightly plummy voice"</i>
Embodied cultural capital	<i>"I was really aware that I just sounded or looked more working-class", "Just felt really uncomfortable...Edinburgh was just very posh", "Hindered my career because maybe the accent", "big Brummie accent"</i>
The classed habitus	<i>"They all had pinkie rings and they were all really posh. It made me feel..", "Well I felt intimidated in the first practice I worked at because they were all..I couldn't speak. I've never been a really articulate speaker"</i>

## Summary

In this chapter, I set out my overarching epistemological position as a critical researcher. By carrying out an analysis of architecture as a Bourdieusian field, I aimed to analyse the power effects of class, while keeping in tension the agency of individuals as they navigate their careers with the structural constraints that they face.

After discussing how I aimed to overcome and work with the specific challenges posed by the paradoxical ontology of fields within Bourdieu's theoretical framework, I outlined the specific principles which structured my overarching research design. In relation to my principle research method of life history interviews, I emphasised, in particular, breadth of inclusion, in order to gain insight into the structuring role class may play across and throughout the architectural field.

I described how, in line with researching an entity - a Bourdieusian field - which is not known a priori, but is discovered through empirical research, my sample of interviewees evolved and took shape as fieldwork progressed.

I detailed my approach to analysis, focusing in particular on my analysis of life history interviews. I outlined the specific code-frames I generated in order to marshal interview material into broad themes which sat within each of my research subquestions. In relation to class, I illustrated the analytic approaches to explore the structuring role played by different facets of class, ranging from those which present themselves more or less openly in interview talk to the unconscious machinations of the classed habitus.

Interview research is supplemented by material on equalities issues produced by holders of managerial power, which relates to my final research subquestion. Press coverage of architectural awards informs my analysis of capitals which structure the architectural field. This is the subject of my next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: THE FIELD OF ARCHITECTURE

### Introduction

The overarching aim of my thesis is to explore how class structures architectural careers. However, careers do not unfold in a vacuum. As a preliminary step to answering my principal research question, therefore, I need to map the social space through which individuals proceed and progress at work. As outlined in my previous chapter, I use the concept of a Bourdieusian field to delineate this space, outline its principal capitals and populate it with key organisations and institutions. The specific subquestion I consider in this chapter is ‘how is the field of architecture organised?’

Conceptualising architecture as a Bourdieusian field allows for a reading of architecture as a site of intra-professional struggles. Actors within the field compete to accrue both material and symbolic rewards. The nature of those struggles, including who has the power to shape the capitals that matter, and how resultant architectural values and norms are legitimated, resisted or misrecognised is key to understanding the dynamic relations of power within the field.

In this chapter, I build on the work of other scholars who have characterised the practice of architecture as a Bourdieusian field. To summarise from my literature review, Stevens (1998) characterised architecture as a field of cultural production, divided into restricted and mass subfields, which reproduce themselves differently, are subject to different internal dynamics and compete for different forms of capital. Stevens emphasises that intellectual capital is at stake in the restricted subfield, while, in the mass subfield, actors compete for temporal capital.

I criticised Stevens for ambiguity in how he theorises the boundaries of the field, such that those who produce architectural discourse are not consistently included, and for unconvincingly arguing that architecture, as a field of cultural production, produces partly for the dominated class.

Sahin-Dikmen (2013) carried out detailed empirical research which adds nuance to the theoretical model outlined by Stevens. Her work directs attention to the possibility of critical reflection and resistance by actors within the field. However, her work takes little account of class and does not populate the field with actual organisations and institutions. In sum, both studies serve as useful theoretical frameworks, which I revise and refine through my own empirical research.

Drawing from an analysis of awards literature as well as life history interviews with actors spread across the field, I argue that the contemporary UK field of architecture, defined to include those who formulate architectural discourse as well as those who construct the built environment, is structured by three principal forms of capital. These are, in order of their symbolic value, creative capital, public service capital and commercial capital.

I use the term creative capital to suggest both the symbolic mastery associated with the discourse of architecture critics and commentators and the high value assigned to design throughout the field. Public service capital is apparent in ideals of civic-mindedness and social progress, which provide considerable symbolic rewards in certain parts of the field. Commercial capital represents the less symbolically valued need for architects and practices to survive economically and the material rewards associated with business success.

Different organisations are positioned within the field according to their possession and mastery of these different forms of capital. I populate the field with institutions and organisations, providing brief commentary on some of the dominant players, including those which, in later chapters, I show to be highly differentiated by class. These include arts-centred and more technical universities, as well as 'design-led' and more commercial practices.

This chapter, therefore, lays the foundations for my overarching research question. Subsequent chapters will show how individuals' class backgrounds and identities structure access to different parts of the field and issues of 'fit'.

### Analytical Approach

As outlined briefly in my methodology chapter, I drew material from two different sources: coverage of awards in the architectural press and life history interviews. I analysed this material to derive the capitals at play within the field, and to analyse how architectural values are legitimated and contested by different players across the field.

First, I analysed press reporting of architectural awards. Analysing celebratory discourse provides insight into what is publicly and symbolically valued within architecture. It shows both who has the authority to bestow prestige within the field, and who is rewarded. As such, it establishes a hierarchy of architectural values, and illustrates how these are contested by influential actors within the field.

In total, I selected 133 articles from *Building Design* and the *Architects Journal* (61 on the Stirling Prize; 49 on the RIBA Gold Medal winner and 23 on AJ Top practices).

I discounted factual coverage of the awards themselves to focus on evaluative judgements, which were made to celebrate or contest the award. This came from the perspectives of the judges and jury members, prize winners and nominees, as well as the reflections of architectural journalists and editors.

Such evaluative judgements include straightforwardly positive evaluations of award winners and nominees (e.g. 'he is a craftsman of delightful spaces and beautiful detailed buildings'), as well as

critical reflections which pointed more obliquely to value judgements (e.g. '[in the nominees] there is a *coolly refreshing lack* of Hadid, Foster and Rogers' emphasis mine).

I assigned individual first order codes to press evaluations. These are shown in Table 15 below: 'purity', 'genius', 'aesthetics' etc. An individual article could generate more than one first order code, depending on the length and complexity of the evaluation.

At a second stage, I then brigaded these into three overarching categories, which reflect the three major capitals which structure the field; creative capital, public service capital and commercial capital (Table 15 below). Two of these codes aligned broadly with the two opposing capitals, which Stevens had proposed in theorising architecture as a field of cultural production, namely *intellectual* and *temporal* capital. Against Stevens, however, I found four first order codes - 'progressive', 'sustainable', 'civilizing' and 'community engagement' - which were repeatedly used in highly positive evaluations of award winners. I brigaded these positive evaluations as evidence of a third capital which was at play in the architectural field, which I named 'public service capital'.

Additionally, I considered material from my life history interviews. Relevant material emerged as interviewees narrated their career histories, reflecting on what they personally value within architecture, which organisations they have felt drawn to, and which they have avoided.

This material provides nuance and shows how architects beyond the celebrated elite both reproduce and resist dominant architectural values. Interview material allows me to populate the field with organisations and institutions which individuals have experienced in their professional careers.

## Forms of capital

Against Stevens (1998), and in line with Sahin-Dikmen (2013) and Cohen et al. (2005), my analysis shows three principal forms of capital; 'creative', 'public service' and 'commercial'. Below, I outline them individually, before showing how they overlap in syntheses and points of tensions and populating the field with key organisations.

Table 15: Forms of Capital and Award Discourse

Capital	First Order Code	Examples
<b>Creative</b>	Purity	'Architecture today needs to reflect on the tasks and possibilities which are inherently its own. Architecture is not a vehicle or a symbol for things that do not belong to its essence.' 'If he was in charge of the judging he would consider awarding it [Stirling Prize] to a brilliant piece of speculative work....an idea, something unbuilt.' 'buildings are engaged in a rich dialogue with architectural history'
	Genius	'Playful yes, but, executed with polish, poetry and perfection' 'effortlessly capable' 'this is their masterpiece', 'simply astonishing', 'special spark and magic', 'heroic' and a masterful architectural vision', 'heroic rejuvenation of London Bridge Station'
	Aesthetics	'The sculptural quality of the facades', 'a very beautiful building', 'finely crafted, well detailed building', 'an elegant and sculptural addition', 'calm, rational elegance, he is a craftsman of delightful spaces and beautiful detailed buildings'
	Innovation	'Impressively imaginative, inventive [and] courageous' project', 'ground-breaking innovation, extraordinary creativity', 'architecture that tests boundaries or breaks rules' 'push the boundaries'
	Intelligence	'Really clever and considered scheme', 'serious buildings by thoughtful architects', 'elegant, inspiring and thought-provoking'
	Restraint	'Executed with admirable restraint', 'abhorrence of monumentalism' [negative evaluations of] 'architectural flash', 'bombastic projects', 'showy iconic designs'
<b>Public Service</b>	Progressive	'Transformative social housing scheme and eco-development', 'It shows that architecture really makes a difference when designing schools', 'transforming the lives'
	Sustainable	'Architects were serious about tackling sustainability and quality of life issues for ordinary people', 'Faced with a global climate emergency....Goldsmith Street is a beacon of hope'
	Civilizing	'Pinnacle in social aspirations', 'Aspirations of a civilised society', 'Very palpable sense of civic pride', 'Every idea at the Everyman is rooted in the city and the public it serves' 'sparking civic pride'
	Community engagement	'Significant community involvement', 'involvement with the local community throughout the project', 'captured the hearts of architects and the community in equal measure', 'a deep engagement with those who use and experience buildings'
<b>Commercial</b>	Crass	'Show me the money Fees. Dosh. Wonga... Foster and Partners is way out in front in the money stakes', 'squeezing fees of £290,500 per qualified architect', 'most architecture doesn't have an idea. It tends to be banal or overtly commercial', 'commercially driven architecture that has become a cliché from our ostentatious past.'
	Unethical	'Failing to act ethically, and were putting profit before all other considerations', 'Some are putting profit before anything else.'

Source: *Architects Journal* and *Building Design* via Lexis Nexis



### *Creative Capital*

I propose the term 'creative capital' to suggest both the symbolic mastery associated with the architecture discourse of critics and commentators and the high value assigned to design throughout the field. While this broadly aligns with Stevens's 'intellectual capital', I favour the term creative capital as the creativity of design is more universally valued than intellectual criticism throughout the field.

In one configuration, press award commentary values the purity of architecture. In this light, architecture is constructed as an ideal, which is unsullied by economic and political constraints:

*I believe that architecture today needs to reflect on the tasks and possibilities which are inherently its own. Architecture is not a vehicle or a symbol for things that do not belong to its essence.* Architects Journal, 2012

In this way, architecture approaches the ideal of autonomous cultural production, which manages to eschew the external demands inherent in construction. Indeed, excellent architecture may not need to be built to receive the highest accolades:

*The architect behind the 2000 Stirling Prize victor Peckham Library, revealed that if he was in charge of the judging he would consider 'awarding it to a brilliant piece of speculative work, that was never built....an idea, something unbuilt.'* Architects Journal, 2013

Thus, architecture, as a pure ideal, is constructed as insular and self-referential. A RIBA Gold Medal winner is praised for his work in so far as it is 'engaged in a rich dialogue with architectural history'. Such insularity is also apparent in who is called to comment in the press on the award of the RIBA Gold Medal, the most prestigious award given to individual architects in the UK. Architectural critics, former students and mentees are those who lead the celebrations. There is very little commentary from architectural 'outsiders': commissioning clients, end users or civic groups have little voice. The overall impression is of an insular, networked community of Gold Medal winners and their admirers.

In evaluating award-winning architecture, the pinnacle of design and the creativity of the individual designer are celebrated. Design talent may be found in a select few individuals who are revered as geniuses. While the word itself tends to be avoided, presumably for fear of cliché, an air of genius screams out from the hagiographic accounts of RIBA Gold Medal winners, who are feted for their 'special spark and magic' in the production of 'a masterful architectural vision', which is 'simply astonishing'.

The pinnacle of architectural design is celebrated as an artistic endeavour, emphasised by reference to other art forms: 'poetry and perfection' and 'sculptural quality of the facades'. In such celebratory discourse, design is much more than aesthetics: innovation, creativity, intelligence, thoughtfulness

and restraint are repeated motifs of awards discourse, which fall within creative capital.

Design is also near universally valued by practising architects throughout the field. Interviewees spoke with passion of their involvement in high-end design projects. They expressed particular pride to have worked on high-profile buildings such as the British Library or Lloyds Building, which may have been known to me, as an architectural outsider.

On occasions, interviewees broke off from narrating their career histories to sketch out an idea, show me the creative design-work of their students or provide an animated explanation of how design should be understood and tested. The energy of the interviews was at its highest as we talked about design.

Mirroring the celebratory press discourse, architectural design can be enjoyed as a joyous activity by practising architects. Mary is now a mid-career architect in a cooperative practice. She recalls her first position in architecture, when she was working at a starchitect's office on a highly prestigious project:

*But at the time we were doing the Bibliotheque in Paris, one of Mitterand's 'Grands Projets'...I would be making one-to-one scale models of library desks; no expense spared. It was amazing.*

Mary, Architect, Employee-owned practice, NS-SEC 1-2<sup>9</sup>

As prosaic concerns over budget are bracketed off - 'no expense spared' - Mary can recall experiencing architecture as a playful and pleasurable activity.

There is a notable division of labor between highly valued conceptual design and technical delivery of architecture. This holds true at the level of practices which make up the architectural field. Starchitect-led practices with global capacity undertake the conceptual design of iconic buildings, while contracting out technical delivery to local architectural firms.

This division of labour is also very apparent within practices. Trevor, now an academic, recalls the senior partners he worked to, when he was a newly qualified architect in practice:

*One of his partners was, if you like, a nuts and bolts guy, and so xxx would be sketching the entrance hall - if you haven't been in the entrance hall of the British Library, it's a wonderful space - and that's his design. But his partner would say 'how the hell are we going to do this?'*

Trevor, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

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<sup>9</sup> In this, and all subsequent extracts from interview research, I have chosen to use NS-SEC as a concise indicator of class background. As reported in the methodology chapter, there was a strong correlation between NS-SEC and my evaluation of inherited economic and cultural capital.

In such a division of labour, there is a clear hierarchy in terms of what is valued. Conceptual design sits on top, creating the 'wonderful space' of the British Library, while technical prowess is merely the domain of the 'nuts and bolts guy'.

Jane recalls a similar distinction in the practice she set up with her romantic partner:

*Well I think my partner had ambitions within architecture. I'm not a design architect (said emphatically), you know, I'm very much a detailer. Every now and then, he'd design something and go off to teach, because basically his part-time teaching supported both of us, and he'd come back and see what I'd done on his design and turn on me and say 'you've fucking turned it into a conversion!'* Jane, Housing Association Manager, NS-SEC 3-5

As Jane's partner carries out design work, even in the small domestic market, he can claim to have 'ambitions within architecture'. Jane, on the other hand, cannot. Her expertise in detailing and practical construction is undervalued. Jane turns an architectural vision into a mere 'conversion'.

In sum, design, as a key component of creative capital, is a multi-faceted construct, encompassing aesthetics, artistry, creativity and thoughtfulness. It is highly valued throughout the field of architecture. It structures organisations within the field and forms a key division of labour within practices.

#### *Public Service Capital*

The second form of capital I name public service capital. Against Stevens (1998), and more in line with Sahin-Dikmen (2013) and Cohen et al. (2005), I find this form of capital to play an important role in structuring symbolic rewards in the field of architecture. This is evident in both awards discourse and in the testimonies of actors embedded in the field.

Public service capital is apparent in ideals of civic-mindedness and social progression. As an ideal celebrated in awards discourse, public service capital stands somewhat in opposition to the purity and insularity of creative capital. Architecture is frequently celebrated for being socially progressive. It is feted in so far as it is thought to produce progressive social outcomes, act as a civilising force, engage with communities and encapsulate civic pride (Table 15, above).

Many established architects centre their political beliefs and issues of social justice in their career histories. Ruth is a recently retired architect, who trained at a highly prestigious school of architecture and set up her own practice. She describes her decision to leave local authority employment and co-found an architectural firm in overtly political terms. Her goal was to establish a feminist practice. This shaped both the practice's office culture and the projects she undertook:

*And we wanted to do things in a feminist way. The first new building was a women's refuge... We made a point of talking to the people who were going to use the refuge. People who ran it and some of the people in other refuges. So, we went around and we met various people and talked to people about what they needed. Rather than just producing a formulaic scheme.* Ruth, Retired Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Mary and Julia are mid-career architects. They have both actively sought positions in practices whose co-operative ownership model and projects undertaken are closely aligned with their political beliefs:

*The type of work, to be contributing socially and being active in particular fields of architecture, where there was direct need... If you're passionate about something, you just get on with it.* Mary, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC1-2

Political motivations are also prominent for early career architects. This may create a strong sense of disillusion when faced with the commercial reality of the architectural field, particularly given dramatically reduced employment opportunities within local authorities and the broader public sector over recent decades (RIBA, 1992). Ilaria, motivated to find work in sustainable urban design, has been effectively forced into high-end residential work in London. Although she has yet to find an opportunity, her motivation to work in the public sector remains strong. Jay has managed to find a practice which designs social housing and works in education and cultural sectors. He eschews the corporate clients associated with starchitects:

*Fosters or Zaha starchitect thing, that's not really what I'm interested in...Fosters and Zaha seems like it's something for clients who I wouldn't really be bothered about working for anyway. I'm not that interested in the petrochemical companies or Sheikhs or Apple or Google.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

While it could be argued that such career ambitions represent internal motivations of certain architects rather than being intrinsic to the field of architecture itself, these individuals aim to transform rather than leave the field. In this way, their political motivations operate as a dynamic that shapes the field. Indeed, a public service ethos has a strong transformative effect, leading to people to start new practices, look for new ownership models, or shape their practices around issues of social justice.

For example, Kevin, a mid-career architect who has held various positions as an employee in practice and in academia, now focuses on establishing his new practice. His overt aim is to focus on community-led architecture:

*When I started in architecture, what really motivated was the social agenda, the community agenda, and how architects and architecture can help and improve people's lives, whether it's schools, churches, community groups. So when I left being an employee a year ago, I want to focus my practice on being part of the wider community and seeing whether I can help and assist, whilst producing interesting architecture and hopefully making some money out of it, and making a living out of it.* Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

### *Commercial Capital*

I have termed the final form of capital which structures the field of architecture commercial capital. I prefer this term to Stevens' temporal capital as it acknowledges the basic need to subsist as a viable practice or worker in the field. The term also serves as a reminder of its lesser status in the field.

On a work-a-day level, individual architects need to have a regular income. Career narratives reveal that this is often a struggle; many careers are punctuated by periods of redundancy during economic recessions and the need to take any available paying position. Architectural practices grow and wane in line with periods of economic growth and decline.

On occasion, commercial success is celebrated in architectural awards. For example, The Architects Journal publishes an annual ranking of practices in terms of turnover and number of architects employed as part of their AJ100 awards. A formal dinner and awards ceremony forms part of the profession's regular calendar of events.

However, the difference in language between how these awards are reported in the architectural press compared to more design-orientated awards, could not be more stark. The style of reporting becomes more overtly tabloid; the tone appears almost satirical in its references to commercial films and pop music charts. There is no supplementary commentary from an architectural elite. The overall impression is that commercial success is, at best, crass and, at worst, unethical.

*Another big mover is Capita Property Services, which appears to Hoover up contracts.* Architects Journal, 2001

*Show me the money<sup>10</sup>. Fees. Dosh. Wonga. These tables are, many argue, the most important of all in the AJ100.* Architects Journal, 2001

*But perhaps as important as the scale of the fees is the amount Fosters gets from each architect - more than £261,000 per head... The Richard Rogers Partnership made less than half in fees,*

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<sup>10</sup> As bellowed down the 'phone by Tom Cruise as sports agent *Harry Maguire* in a desperate attempt to retain his client's business

*with £12.8 million coming in, but per architect that worked out at £272,340. And architects at RTKL went one better than both peers' offices, squeezing fees of £290,500 per qualified architect.*  
Architects Journal, 2001

Such dismissive language is mirrored in interview talk. Practices which foreground commercial success are rarely celebrated by architects. Peter, who has recently set up on his own practice, recalls the corporate firm of architects where he first worked upon qualifying, with some disdain:

*They've done about four buildings on Tottenham Court Road. They're mostly refurbishment... corporate. Under the radar – they're not going to win any awards (laughter).* Peter, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

On the other hand, career progression in architecture, particularly within larger practices, may be built on commercial success. Interviewees highlighted networking to win new business as a way of gaining promotion. Both Tina, head of HR at a large practice and Richard, the founder of a commercially oriented medium-size practice emphasise the importance of bringing in business.

*Because to get to the top, which is director level and project director level, they require and they have an expectation that the person being brought to that level needs to be able to win pitches and bring work in. But to be able to bring work in, in the industry of architecture, is that you'll have attended MIPIM<sup>11</sup>, loads of different networking events and created and started to build a portfolio of key individuals within the industry.* Tina, HR Director, Large Practice

*And it's [MIPIM] just a good place to meet new clients, seminars and stuff. A lot of it is about networking. So, ultimately if you want to be a director in a company, you either have to be a brilliant architect, or you have to be somebody who brings work in. And the ability to bring work in is not very ubiquitous in architects.* Richard, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

However, both extracts position commercial know-how as, at most, weakly related to architecture. Tina describes bringing work in a way which could equally apply to any other business; in this light, architecture is an industry like any other. Richard highlights the opposition between architectural talent – 'a brilliant architect' – and less highly valued commercial knowhow. Richard intimates that winning business requires particular social skills, which are not the typical strengths of architects, whose rightful interest may lie instead in creative design.

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<sup>11</sup> MIPIM (Le Marché International des Professionnels de L'Immobilier), styled as "The world's leading property market" is held annually in Cannes

Two of my interviewees, who had both reached positions of seniority in architectural practices, were planning to leave the field; one to work as a project planner of large-scale infrastructure projects and the other to work in a commercial sales role in the travel industry. Both were motivated by a desire to substantially increase their earnings, which they felt would be impossible in their current employment. In addition to this simple weighing up of the possibilities of how best to increase earnings lay the recognition that being overtly driven by financial reward was fundamentally un-architectural.

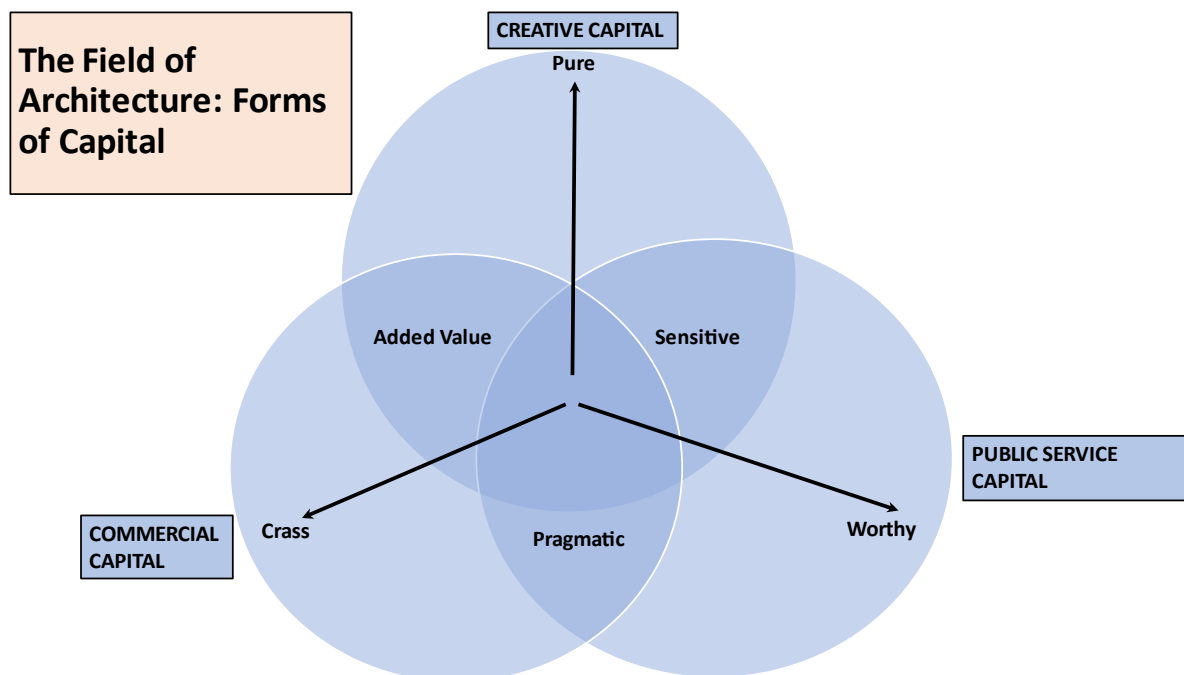
### Overall Map

So far, I have outlined three principal forms of capital that structure the field of architecture in the UK: creative, public service and commercial. These can be assigned value labels, reflecting the dominant values within the field itself. Activities structured by creative capital alone represent 'pure' architecture; those related to public service capital can be labelled 'progressive'. Finally, the pejorative label 'crass' reflects a wholly commercial orientation, which is not tempered by any of the positive associations of creative or public service capital.

Based on material from my life history interviews, I can populate this map of the field with specific organisations, institutions, and actions. Before doing so, I provide a short commentary on its key intersections.

In practice, players in the architectural field are subject to all three forms of capital. Thus, I represent the field of architecture as a Venn diagram with considerable points of overlap, which represent both syntheses and points of tension (Figure 1). As I will illustrate, such overlaps create architectural discourses, organisational practices as well as identity work among individual actors within the field.

Figure 1: The Field of Architecture: Forms of Capital



### Value Architecture

‘Adding value’ represents an attempt to synthesise the contradictions between pure architecture at its most insular, with the basic economic need to remain in practice. The ‘added value’ that architecture may bring is a strong theme of a professional reform discourse, which is led by the RIBA. In this positioning, architects are positioned as uniquely qualified to champion design of the built environment, such that this becomes, in the commercial world, their unique selling point.

Achieving this synthesis is highly attractive to practising architects, who can progress as professional architects, focusing on design creativity, while still earning a living. This drives the ambition of Bruce, a mid-career architect. Bruce aims to develop his practice so that he can spend more time creating bespoke designs. He needs to embrace commercial capital instrumentally and hopes to be able to win business from wealthier clients:

*So, we’ve managed to get a good range of projects, a good range of clients. What we want to do now is focus on improving the design-side of our practice. So, quality rather than quantity, really. Trying to get projects so that we can spend more time developing the designs on jobs. So, some jobs’ budget, there’s a real limit in the time you can spend on the job. It’s limited and therefore you tend to adopt more standard solutions to problems. We’d like to be able to spend a bit more time on bespoke solutions, but that means clients with a bit more money, a bit more ambition perhaps.* Bruce, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2



In practice, however, this may be challenging; such generous, ambitious clients are thin on the ground. Simon has run his own small practice for twenty years and now combines this with work as a lecturer. However, his practice has not grown in the way he had originally hoped. In the extract below, Simon proposes the underlying philosophy according to which he now manages his practice.

*And generally the rule is, 'are you a 'design architect' or do you get things built?' That's the industry standard. And I try to be both and say 'yeah we want to do really nice designs, but yeah we want to build them'. We don't want to just churn out paper architecture. So, I was very keen that we should not just do competition after competition after competition. We should focus on getting buildings built, quite simple buildings maybe. Maybe quite small, but we would have a body of completed work, rather than a wonderful drawerful of wonderful designs. Simon, Small Practice Owner and Academic, NS-SEC 1-2*

In this extract, we see Simon's recognition of the field's symbolic hierarchy, which places concept design at the summit, with the technical construction of buildings firmly on the lower slopes. The former is assigned a valued label - 'design architect' - while the latter is somewhat denigrated as 'just getting things built'. Simon attempts to reverse this symbolic order, arguing that completed building work should be more highly valued than conceptual design. Designs 'on paper', which approximate the ideal of autonomous cultural production, are undermined. Indeed, design itself is repositioned discursively as a repetitive, formulaic task, which is 'churned out' in 'competition after competition after competition': competitions here come to resemble mass production rather than artistic endeavour. Under this attack, design is flipped on its head, and it is the practicalities of construction that are symbolically valued. Indeed, the terms in which Simon describes his practice's output bring to mind the distinction of artistic output: the successful architect has produced a 'small' and 'simple' 'body of completed work'.

Simon's philosophy of practice, therefore, represents an attempt to overturn the symbolic order of the field. Faced with the reality of failing to develop a successful design-led practice, he contests the dominant ideology of the field. However, he does so from a structural position of weakness. He can do little more than temporarily disrupt the symbolic order during the discourse of a one-off research interview.

### *Sensitive Architecture*

Sensitive architecture combines the intellectualism and design integrity of creative capital with the civilizing, politicised ethos of public service capital. It is very evident in commentary on certain winners of architectural awards. In particular, award-winning social housing, schools, theatres, libraries and other civic buildings are celebrated in this way. For example, as a counterpoint to an architectural

ideal of insularity and depoliticised aesthetics, a strong strain of commentary praises certain Stirling Prize winners in terms of social outcomes.

*Burntwood School is the clear winner of the 2015 RIBA Stirling Prize. It is the most accomplished of the six shortlisted buildings because it demonstrates the full range of the skills that architects can offer to society.... It is a culmination of many years of creative toil by Allford Hall Monaghan Morris in designing schools up and down the country. This is their masterpiece.* Architects Journal, 2015

*This year's Stirling Prize award is a delight. Schools can and should be exemplars. The architecture of Burntwood represents a pinnacle in social aspirations, quality and robustness that works to deliver a real difference in the quality of our children's education. AHMM remarkable achievement has been to do this with unique insight, skill and lyricism that sets an unrivalled benchmark for the aspirations of a civilised society.* Architects Journal, 2015

The above extracts position a happy synthesis of public service ('social aspirations', 'real difference in the quality of our children's education', 'aspirations of a civilised society') with the creative capital of design genius ('masterpiece', 'delight', 'lyricism'). These are positioned as complementary rather than in tension.

Practising architects are attracted to work on such architectural projects at the synthesis of public service and creative capital. Jay is an early career architect, idealistic and politically motivated. He recently managed to escape a practice which specialised in high-end residential work for wealthy home-owners – 'They wanted three dishwashers, I've no idea why they needed three dishwashers. I found it soul-destroying' – to find a position at an award-winning practice which specialises in cultural architecture and social housing.

*They [current practice] do really lovely work. I wouldn't say they're in the Fosters or Zaha starchitect thing, but that's not really what I'm interested in. I'm not that bothered about kind of shiny, shiny buildings...Visually, I find it [the work of the current practice] lovely...quite a lot of the cultural stuff...Schools, universities, some housing.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Both visually attractive and socially progressive, the work of his current practice is 'lovely'; its subtlety and understatement stand in stark contrast to the high-end creations of 'starchitect' practices, whose highly commercialised aesthetics become mere 'shiny, shiny buildings'.

### *Pragmatic Architecture*

Pragmatic architecture sits in the intersection between public service and commercial capital, providing architecture which orientates around a social purpose, within strict commercial limitations.

However, such work, at its most problematic, lacks creative capital. It can make resultant work appear worthy, but un-architectural. Jane, an architect who used to run her own practice, is now a technical manager of a large Housing Association. In this role, she oversees large-scale housing developments, and manages the work of architects. This can cause creative tensions, as Jane explains:

*I'm not here for them [the architects she manages] to have ego-trips doing architecture for us, which creates a building that our residents can't live in. So there is a certain mind, I told you we don't do floor-height windows in bedrooms, and it's kind of like, 'I know it's grown-up elevation, but I don't care, I need somewhere for the radiator because these rooms are so damn small you can get a bed, a wardrobe a chest of drawers, a couple of bedside tables, and if I have a full height window, then the radiator is going to go and bugger up the room'. And for most architects, that is so unbearably pedestrian, they hate me.* Jane, Housing Association Manager, NS-SEC 3-5

As Jane concludes, her role is to dampen the design ambitions of architects she manages. This pragmatic approach creates buildings which are 'unbearably pedestrian' to design-oriented architects.

### *Populating the Field*

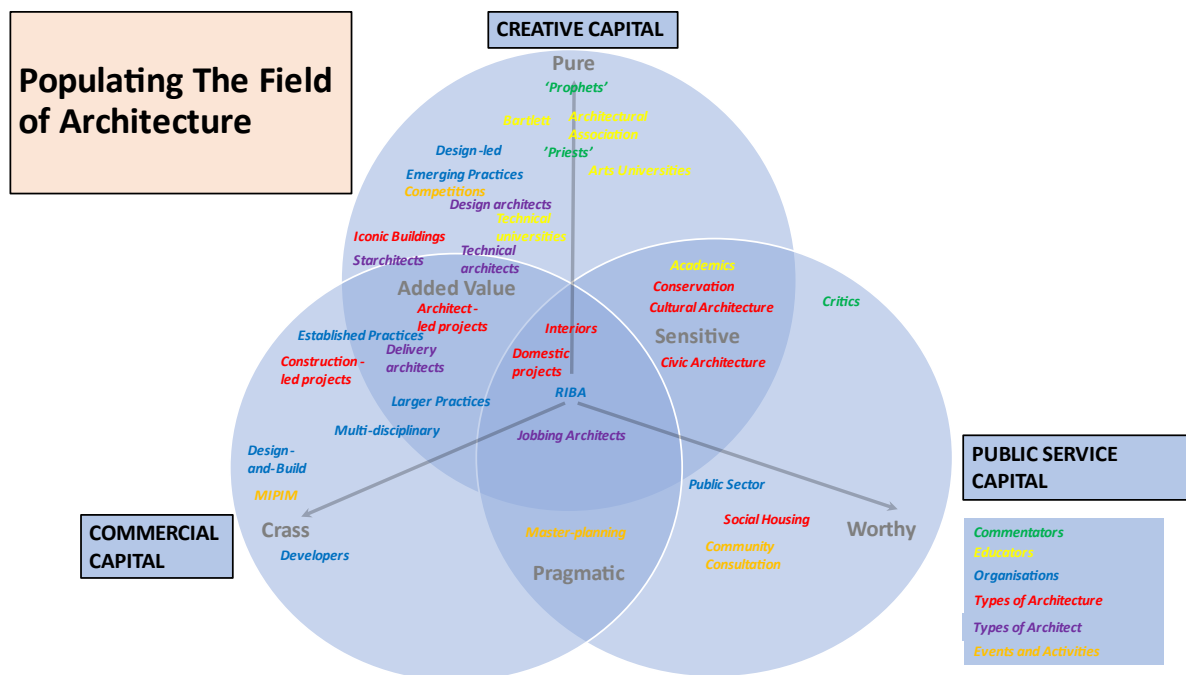
In this section, I populate the field, structured by the interaction of three forms of capital, with specific actions, organisations and institutions. This is vital to understand the specific terrain through which individuals forge their careers. In subsequent chapters, I will provide a commentary on how some of these organisations are differentially open to individuals from certain classes. I will also provide a map of individuals to draw conclusions about the patterned relationships between class and career position.

The field (Figure 2 below) is populated from my interview research. As individuals narrated their career histories, they provided material on their evaluations and experience of different organisations, activities and institutions within architecture.

There are a number of challenges associated with the aim of populating the field. Firstly, there is the issue of using a static two-dimensional representation to depict a field which is changing over time. The field of architecture is ever evolving, driven by its internal dynamics and subject to external pressures. Second, organisations of the same type may operate rather differently; it is not the case, for example, that every commercial developer will entirely eschew creative concerns in every facet of

its operation. Third, and relatedly, individual firms of architects may have a dual focus such that part of their work appears more structured by creative capital and another part by commercial capital: the strategy of certain practices is sometimes described in these terms. Similarly, individuals may operate in different parts of the field at the same time, taking on the role as practice owner, whilst teaching part-time at university, or working as an employee while entering competitions in their spare time. This is, therefore, an idealised field of generalities. While it is inevitably imperfect, it provides an important framework for my later analysis.

Figure 2: Populating the Field of Architecture<sup>12</sup>



I am not going to provide commentary on every item within this map. Instead, I focus on some of the most numerous actors in the field (jobbing architects); most influential ('starchitects' and critics); and those organisations which, as I will illustrate in subsequent chapters, are most clearly 'classed' in relation to career progression. These organisations include particular universities, as well as 'design-led' and commercial practices.

### Jobbing architects

It is estimated that over half of architectural practices in the United Kingdom are sole practitioners, and that more than half of architectural jobs are "individual houses, extensions and loft conversions"

<sup>12</sup> A landscape version of this colour-coded chart is provided (Annex D)

(Architects Council of Europe, 2016). However, their presence in the field of architecture often goes unnoticed<sup>13</sup>.

There is no straightforward term for these individuals, akin to a design architect working in a design-led practice. The term 'traditional architect' has some currency, although it is often invoked in relation to the historical loss of the architect's role as 'natural' leader of construction projects.

I have placed these individuals, so numerous and yet so rarely present in architectural discourse, in the centre of my conceptual map of the field. This is because they are short in all three forms of capital. They are not high earners who orientate themselves around commercial success. They do not enjoy the prestige and symbolic rewards of design-led practice leaders. Nor do they enjoy high public service capital, despite, of course, working more closely with the ultimate user of their projects than do many architects working on much larger projects. I have termed these individuals 'jobbing architects', which reflects their lack of esteem in the field.

In my empirical research, which is somewhat skewed towards the more elite parts of the field, particularly as fieldwork was clustered around London, 'jobbing architects' do not feature strongly. Many of my interviewees effectively worked as such for certain periods in their career. However, in individual career histories, such periods are often downplayed. Small domestic jobs, often commissioned from friends of friends, are frequently undertaken as a necessary means to subsist in architecture, while greater professional ambitions are developed. As Kevin, who is now concentrating on evolving his small practice to carry out community architecture, explains:

*I've got some small domestic projects, but they're not the things that drive me. That's not the stuff that gets me out of bed.* Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

#### *Design-led Practices*

By contrast, 'design-led' practices represent the higher reaches of the architectural field in terms of creative capital. As such, they sit towards the top of my map of the field of architecture.

*I was fascinated to see Sean Griffiths (Soapbox, September 2) refer to "a partner of a 'design-led' practice". What other categories of architect are there, I wonder? How many claim not to put design first? Let's have some names!* Building Design, 2005

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<sup>13</sup> In RIBA's three-volume Strategic Review of the Professions, carried out between 1992-1995, they are referenced only as an Annex in volume 2, which gives the briefest details of a research project with end users of jobbing architects.

The notion of the design-led practice has substantial currency throughout architecture.<sup>14</sup> As the extract from *Building Design* suggests, being perceived as design-led is near universally valued throughout the field of architecture. There are no symbolic rewards to be gained by eschewing the importance of design in practice.

While no individual firm would openly claim to deprioritise design, actors within the field do distinguish between design-led and other types of practice. From interview data, it is possible to tease out distinguishing features of such a practice as an ideal type.

A design-led practice is a smaller, younger firm, whose creativity is led by a single individual, who brings energy, enthusiasm and innovative ideas. A design-led firm is not sullied by commercialism beyond the need to remain in practice. Of course, this basic need, as well as the difficulty in finding clients willing to commission more time-intensive, design-led work, should not be downplayed.

With such a strong professional currency, the ideal of a design-led studio plays a structuring role in individual careers. Some architects narrate their career choices as prioritising design-led practices over those which paid more:

*So [I've] always, always gravitated to design-led studios. And I've taken pay cuts or not earned anywhere near what my friends and cohorts have who've gone and worked for bigger, commercial practices.* Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Similarly, architects who set up on their own often plan to run a design-led practice. Sally, who set up in practice around five years ago outlines her business strategy along these lines, hoping that commercially viable work-a-day projects will provide the platform to win more glamorous, design-led work:

*So, we're coming up through the grubby unglamorous work...so to become a more design-led practice is the aspiration. But to do that, you start by not doing such glamorous work.* Sally, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

A subsequent chapter will explore the structuring role played by class in relation to establishing and running a successful, design-led, practice.

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<sup>14</sup> A database search of the architectural trade press finds more than three hundred articles that contain the phrase 'design-led'. By contrast, searching for 'delivery-led', 'experience-led' or 'ideas-led' practices reveals only a handful of articles.

## *Starchitects*

Practices led by 'starchitects' combine a high volume of creative capital with equally high levels of commercial capital. Their commercial dominance distinguishes them from smaller, emerging, design-led studios.

While starchitects represent only a tiny proportion of the field of architecture, they, and the iconic buildings with which they are associated, enjoy strong public recognition and acclaim. Equally, they are argued to be revered by the rank and file of the profession (Samuel, 2018; Spector, 2005).

Their association with the design of visually arresting buildings draws comparison with the creative leaders of smaller, design-led studios. However, their reputation is such that they may be talked of in the language of genius: their unique talents distinguish them from others in the field. As Miguel and Lexia, two early career architects, argue:

*I mean Norman Foster is a legend, he's a master of architecture.... So, all these people, Zaha Hadid, now passed away, those guys are really, really one in a million people, it's not easy to find a guy like that today.* Miguel, Client-side Architect, NS-SEC 3-5

*There are some architects like Zaha Hadid, she's got her own character. You don't need someone to tell you that that's her building, you know it because that's her style. I think it comes through that, to be able to give yourself your own style so that people will be like, 'oh that's her'.* Lexia, Architectural Assistant, Small Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

A starchitect-led practice has learnt to effectively convert creative capital into substantial economic gain. As such, they function as "carefully choreographed global super brands" (Moore, 2002 in Samuel, 2018: 23). A brand functions as guarantee of economic value and provides reputational kudos for commissioning clients. As Sally, who is aiming to run a successful design-led practice, outlines:

*They [clients] want a famous name, they want a Gehry, they want a Zaha, you know.* Sally, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

However, the architectural field places value on design creativity and innovation. A brand risks signifying something formulaic; an off-the-peg, rather than a bespoke piece. In this light, a starchitect's signature style is seen less as a marker of individual genius and more as a commodified formula. In so far as starchitect-led practices are seen to prioritize commercial profit over design integrity, they run the risk of seeming entirely un-architectural.

*Fosters business for the amount of money they make is bigger than the rest of architecture, it's huge. So, they're not an architectural firm, they're a design business who do buildings. They're*

*like a branding agency. They're not a studio, I don't think of them as architects.* Luke, Recruitment Consultant, NS-SEC 1-2

*Today, those big, big firms are brands in a way, it's like Nike or Reebok. Sir Norman Foster is never there, he's a signature. That's what architecture, starchitects, I mean I appreciate they're great, but they're factories. We're talking about firms, who produce about 200 projects a year world-wide.* Miguel, Client-side Architect, NS-SEC 3-5

The above extracts show that the 'rank and file' of the profession do not simply revere starchitects. Instead, their assessments are considerably more ambivalent. From a different vantage point in the field of architecture, the perspective of critics, starchitects are viewed rather less positively. Indeed, architectural commentators celebrate their (very occasional) absence from award shortlists:

*The list [of Stirling nominees] mostly contains serious buildings by thoughtful architects, and there is a coolly refreshing lack of Hadid, Foster and Rogers.* Architects Journal, 2013

What is lionized here, and what is positioned as absent from the work of starchitects, is architecture which is understated and cerebral; work which requires some effort to appreciate. Such subtlety is contrasted with the sensual, immediacy of iconic starchitecture. The latter may be considered gaudy, and unrefined. Starchitect designed buildings are rejected by Jay, an early career architect who has found a position in a boutique design-led studio, as 'shiny, shiny buildings'. Eugene, an academic drawn to intellectual architectural criticism, airily dismisses Foster's 'Gherkin' as a 'big lump of phallic symbol in the City over there'.

The case of the starchitect also problematises Stevens' distinction between the mass and the restricted subfields. Starchitects, as fleet-footed global brands, are well practised in winning international competitions, and are sought out by clients with deep pockets. In some ways, this gives them architectural freedom, which approximates to autonomous cultural production, placing them firmly in the restricted subfield. However, starchitect practices combine high creative capital with equally high commercial capital; they may not actively publicise their commercial success, but industry business performance data shows they attain it. This accumulation of commercial capital places them therefore in the mass subfield. While the ideal of mass and restricted subfields may be useful conceptual tools to outline different theoretical positions within the field of architecture, empirical research suggests a less clear-cut distinction.

### *Critics*

Architectural critics are broadly defined to include media commentators, journalists, parts of academia as well as curators of galleries and museums (Stevens, 1998). Although very diverse in terms



of their occupational spread, they represent a very small proportion of players in the architectural field.

As leaders of architectural discourse, critics are positioned in my mapping of the field as holders of high creative capital and public service capital. On the one hand, the discourse of critics and commentators creates symbolic value. On the other, a strong strain of criticism emphasises architecture's embeddedness in the social world. In this light, architectural criticism should itself have, tangible political effects. High creative capital is therefore fused with high public service capital.

The discourse of critics and commentators creates symbolic value within the field. It helps position architects as the rightful leaders of design integrity within the construction industry. While critics therefore play an important role in building occupational status, this is somewhat double-edged. On the one hand, commissioning clients may be proud to employ an architect for the status rewards it gives them; on the other, architects can develop a reputation for pretentiousness in ways which may be off-putting in the small-scale domestic market.

Eugene, an academic with substantial experience of working in practice in design-led studios, captures some of the ambivalences and ambiguities of architectural criticism. For Eugene, criticism is necessarily and rightly complex, but there is a danger that such discourse is socially exclusive.

*He's [a leading architectural writer] a very well written man. And I really liked the way he talked about the world. How he talked about architecture's place in the world. He has a couple of styles as most architects do, in my view, like the higher level thinking about architecture, which I think sometimes people can dismiss too quickly as 'oh stop trying to be so fucking knowledgeable, it's quite simple, it's four walls and a roof'. These conversations that take most people away from architecture, there are high levels of conversation aren't there, in every subject... I'm fine with people who write much more difficult things to understand about architecture, but I find only writing in that way to be exclusive in a bad way. And not good for the world. Eugene, Academic, NS-SEC 3-5*

There are ambivalences, too, in how critics are viewed by practitioners. Some architects reject critics precisely because they do not practise architecture. Margaret and Mark, both mid-career architects, dismiss critics as failed practitioners.

*Quite often I don't read a lot of the critic stuff because I think it's easier to talk a load of nonsense, when you've never had to do it. Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5*

*[Architectural criticism] never really interested me at all. I'm more interested in producing stuff, you know, something that you can physically see than criticising someone else. I think somebody*

*said, 'never condemn, complain or criticise'. Definitely not a fan of architectural criticism. At the end of the day, I think that the profession really is incredibly taxing. I think that somebody to criticise from the outside without knowing all the facts of a particular project - I don't think I have the time for that if I'm honest. I really don't.* Mark, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Other practitioners can be more effusive in their admiration for architectural criticism and individual critics:

*I love to read about it, I've got my own ideas as well, but then to develop your career into that, it's being a bit of a philosopher in a way. I've read books like that, it's philosophy, it's crazy, but don't get me wrong, I love it. When I'm not talking about my career.* Miguel, Client-side Architect, NS-SEC 3-5

*I'm a big fan of certain architectural critics like Jonathan Meades for example, is probably my favourite, real heavy weight... Again, they're going to be heavy-weight big punchers, academic big punchers, so I don't think I'd feel particularly comfortable sitting in circles with those guys. Although fascinating to hear what they say, but as far as engaging with them, I suspect I'd feel slightly out of my depth.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

However, in praising critics, both Miguel and Dave maintain a respectful distance between themselves as practitioners and others who are critics. Despite enjoying the practice of criticism at university, Dave 'wouldn't feel comfortable' and would feel 'out of his depth'. Miguel simply 'knows his limits'.

### *Commercial Practices*

Commercial practices, including design-and-build firms and building developers, sit at the bottom of the symbolic hierarchy, driven solely by commercial capital, whilst accruing no benefits from either design capital or public service capital. They operate, in Stevens terms, firmly in the mass subfield.

Design-and-build practices are fast-paced, highly structured and hierarchically organised. The metaphors used to describe these types of organisation – fast food restaurants and chicken coops – reveal their position at the bottom of a status hierarchy. Despite their name, they have little design integrity and are positioned as the antithesis of architectural practice.

*I call it [Design-and-build] the Burger King or the McDonalds of offices, because it's really, really fast-paced. And it's all structured and organised. Those fast-food industries are very structured, lots of rules and principles, so they can achieve those goals at that pace and keep the fries you know, that's the same with the design and build industry, it's so fast-paced* Luis, Design Director, Design-and-Build Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

*I would say that design-and-build firms are the lowest on the scale for most architects, because it's chicken coop thing. You just go and sit at the desk and turn out the same thing day after day.*

Robert, Consultant and Part-time Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

*I mean the likes of Barratts and design-and-build contractors, they're very contemptuous of their architects, they employ technicians really, they don't want starchitects, they really don't like architects.* Jane, Housing Association Manager, NS-SEC 3-5

In this light, any architect who has successfully been acculturated to value design integrity must undertake a Faustian pact to work as or for a developer. Peter, who has recently established his own practice, sets out the terms of this bargain in stark terms:

*I mean that's where the money is, where the serious money is, where you have to really sell your soul. If you wanted to make money, that's where you [go], be a builder, be a developer. As you go up that food chain... I imagine that they'd be trying to screw you at every moment, to do it cheaper, nastier, easier, make more money.* Peter, Owner, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

### *Architectural Schools*

Somewhat against Stevens (1998), who emphasises how architectural schools are perceived by the elite of the field as purveyors of mediocrity, I position architectural schools as high on both the dimensions of creative and public service capitals. Universities instil the value of design creativity and teach that architecture should be socially progressive.

Architectural schools are by no means uniform. Actors within the field highlight substantial differences in terms of the cultures, ethos and pedagogic focus of individual schools. A key distinction is made between the ideal types of an arts-oriented and design-focused school of architecture on the one hand, and more practical, technically-oriented universities on the other. Simon and Richard, both mid-career architects, who manage their own practices, both highlight this distinction in their recollection of their times at university.

*I don't know if you know about architectural education, but some schools are more arts based, some are more technical..it's just the nature of the staff. And the culture that it involves in the University. So, Bartlett at UCL is much more crazy ideas and experimental, whereas Bath, because it's part of the engineering school, so it's much more focused on material, technical detail.* Simon, Small Practice Owner and Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

*It [Manchester] was not a really designer school. It was much more practical. They taught you to do brick detailing. They were slightly old school architects, they were still slightly hung up in*

*their 60s design, prefab. Postmodernism was just coming in. Whereas South Bank was the opposite, it was like forget details, just go crazy.* Richard, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

This distinction is key. In the next chapter, I will consider issues of class in relation to universities, including the different class composition of these two types of university and their roles in propelling students to different career paths through the field of architecture.

### Summary

In this chapter, I have proposed a conceptual map of the architectural field. I suggest that there are three principal forms of capital which structure the field: creative capital, public service capital and commercial capital. Against Stevens, I argue that public service capital serves as an important form of capital in the field. It plays a structuring role, motivating individual actions and providing status rewards in particular parts of the field.

There is a hierarchy in terms of symbolic value assigned to these capitals, with creative capital valued throughout the field, public service capital valued highly by dominant players in parts of the field, while commercial capital is least highly valued. Individuals, organisations and institutions reproduce this symbolic order, even as they, at times, attempt to offer resistance.

My map of the field emphasises overlaps between these three principal forms of capital. These may be positioned as complementary. For example, the RIBA proposes that architects should ‘add value’ through their mastery of design; a synthesis of creative and commercial capital. However, from my standpoint of a Bourdieusian field analysis, any such straightforward syntheses are highly improbable. Instead, my conceptual map of the field reveals points of tension, opposition and conflict in the overlapping of different forms of capital.

Such tensions are illuminated by the case of ‘starchitects’. Starchitect-led practices aim to synthesise creative with commercial capital. In so doing, they aim to foreground the former and downplay the latter. To a degree they are successful, feted as geniuses with a unique talent from which they develop their individual style. However, they are subject to criticism from within the field. Once their style becomes a brand, leveraged for commercial gain, they are open to critique from actors within the field who are more driven by public service capital; in particular politically motivated critics and commentators.

I have populated the field with specific institutions and organisations, including universities, starchitects, critics, ‘design-led’ and commercial practices according to their possession and mastery of these different forms of capital. In subsequent chapters, I will show class backgrounds and identities influence which individuals are more likely to feel at ease and carve their careers in these differently

valued organisations. In the next chapter, I consider how class affects issues of access to the field and the experience of studying architecture in the academy.

## CHAPTER 5: ACCESSING THE FIELD

### Introduction

The previous chapter set out the terrain of architecture as a field of struggles over material and symbolic rewards. I outlined a hierarchy of values given to its principal forms of capital, explored how individuals reproduce and resist these values and populated the field with key organisations and institutions.

This chapter considers issues of access to the field. In relation to social mobility and the professions, policy discourse distinguishes between access ('getting in') and career progression ('getting on'). Although this binary is messily entangled in architecture, with many individuals moving back and forth between education and practice throughout their careers as students, teachers, guest critics and practitioners, it provides a useful heuristic to structure my findings.

I examine the structuring role of class in relation to facilitating or hindering access. I explore the relationship between class and an early career interest in architecture, as well as experiences at university, contrasting life history interviews of architects from working- and middle-class backgrounds.

For the former, I draw principally from eight interviewees who were raised in working-class (NS-SEC 6-8) households. Their parents' occupations include labourer, bus driver and school cook. All except one grew up in the UK or Ireland. Most were brought up on council estates in urban areas and attended non-selective state schools. They were all the first generation in their family to attend university. All eight attended higher education, including three who attended some of the most prestigious educational establishments: The Architectural Association, UCL Bartlett and Cambridge University.

I also use material from 13 interviewees from intermediate NS-SEC backgrounds, particularly architects with low inherited economic or cultural capital, as well as those who drew from their longer family histories to claim a working-class identity.

For the latter, I draw principally from 28 interviewees, brought up in households whose Chief Income Earner is classified as having a professional or managerial occupation (NS-SEC 1-2). Only one interviewee could be said to have come from an upper-class background, as part of his country's social and cultural elite. Principally, these interviewees came from middle to upper middle-class families. Their parents' occupations include teachers and academics, lawyers, doctors, senior public sector managers, and consultants. As many as six of the interviewees' parents were themselves trained as architects. Around half the interviewees were privately educated, including some who attended the

most expensive boarding and international schools. Only 7 of the 28 were the first generation in their family to go to university; 6 of these 7 were aged 50+. Interviewees attended a range of higher education institutions in the UK and abroad, including many of the most prestigious universities.

I also report academics' perspectives on classed differences within the student body. In total, I interviewed ten academics employed at two different London architectural schools, one of which is considered particularly prestigious. Additionally, I draw material from interviewees whose principal position in the field at time of interview was outside academia, but who have had teaching experience within universities at some point in their careers.

In this chapter, I argue that class, in both material and immaterial forms, eases access to the most prestigious arts-centred universities of the architectural field. A middle-class habitus, forged on the appreciation of the legitimate culture, as well as the specific influence of an architecturally trained parent, facilitates an early interest in architecture. More materially, middle-class parents leverage their economic capital to support their children during a lengthy architectural education.

By contrast, working-class entry into the field of architecture is against the odds. Pathways to university are more circuitous and require genuine luck to overcome structural barriers. A working-class habitus is associated with more technically-oriented universities and makes the personal transformation required to successfully adopt an ideal architectural habitus more painful and problematic.

However, issues of class are somewhat hidden. First, the importance of inherited economic capital is downplayed as both working- and middle-class interviewees adopt similar framings to recall childhoods of very different levels of material wealth. Second, architects from middle-class backgrounds position the ways in which they were encouraged to appreciate legitimate forms of culture within the family as universal rather than class-structured. Third, academics misrecognise architectural talent as an individual characteristic, which exists independently of any social identity.

### Architectural Education

The principal route of access into architecture is to undertake study at university. Only those who have completed all three parts of an architectural education may use the protected title of architect, which is regulated in the United Kingdom by the Architects Registration Board. Similar regulatory regimes operate in other countries. All bar three of my interviewees had studied architecture as an undergraduate.

As outlined in my literature review, an architectural education differs from standard undergraduate study. It is a longer undertaking, requiring 7 years of undergraduate and postgraduate study, including

periods spent in practice. In addition to student fees and living costs, students need to finance field-trips and costs associated with making architectural models.

An architectural education differs from most other forms of higher education in terms of its principal place of study (the design studio), main form of learning (reflective practice under the guidance of a studio head) and mode of assessment (the oral defence of design work in a 'crit'). Further, the breadth of types of knowledge – design, technical, critical and commercial – as well as the core architectural values that are instilled – design-integrity, public spiritedness, and perfectionism – distinguish architectural study from many other subjects of higher education.

Older interviewees undertook their education during the late 1960s to 1980s, when overall participation rates were low and strongly skewed towards students from privileged backgrounds (Bolton, 2012). Younger interviewees undertook their university education in the twenty-first century, following the 'massification' of higher education and the replacement of grants with a system of fees and loans. In this later period, it is less unusual for students to come from working-class backgrounds, although there remains a strong bias towards the middle classes (OFFA, 2014).

### Early Family Life

First, I consider how class is related to early interest in architecture and routes into the field, focusing initially on the forms of inherited capital that act as facilitators or barriers. As I will show, a childhood early interest is rarely related to any conscious appreciation of the realities of architectural careers, let alone the capitals that structure possible positions within the field. On the other hand, interviewees from middle-class backgrounds are more likely to have an upbringing which, generally unconsciously, makes them a more natural fit in parts of the architectural field which carry greater symbolic rewards.

### Inherited Economic Capital

All but one of my interviewees from working-class backgrounds describe upbringings of some financial struggle. Robert, brought up on a Midlands council estate, and whose father was a bricklayer, assesses his upbringing from his current vantage point as a successful architect nearing retirement:

*Like most children, we were poor. But, like most children, you don't really realise. I was never deprived in any sense. There was always food on the table. We always had clothes. Kept us warm. It wasn't particularly deprived in that sense, but we certainly didn't have a lot of money.*

Robert, Consultant and Part-time Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Robert's assessment is typical. Most interviewees from working-class backgrounds recall a childhood of some degree of hardship, which is managed by parents to shield its effects from their children.



By contrast, interviewees from middle-class backgrounds benefit from above average inherited economic capital. Alan, whose father worked in the City, was brought up in the suburbs of London. He is now a professor at a prestigious London school of architecture. He was privately educated, had regular holidays and enjoyed a middle-class lifestyle. Alan describes his upbringing:

*Genteel and impoverished. Money was tight. But we lived a very, very middle-class lifestyle. We always had a holiday in the UK. We just about managed to run a car. My sister and I were both privately educated, so there wasn't a huge amount of money left. A scarily small amount of money, actually. I don't know how my parents did it – huge sacrifices.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

It is notable that Alan's framing of his objectively privileged background is not dissimilar from Robert's. Both emphasise hardship and the role of parents in managing the family finances to support their children. In a British context, wealthy individuals often underplay their economic privilege, preferring to adopt an egalitarian veneer of 'ordinariness' (Savage et al., 2001). Inherited economic capital, which I will later argue plays an important structuring role in progression through the field, is rarely foregrounded in life history interviews.

### Inherited Cultural Capital

Working-class interviewees make a connection between lack of economic capital and childhood cultural activities and hobbies. When asked about individual and family pass-times, Jay and Julia, brought up by single parents in Leeds and London, immediately mention a lack of family wealth:

*Hobbies are expensive, and we didn't have much money...I wouldn't say there was opportunity to spend lots of money on pass-times because we didn't have much.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

*I mean, we didn't have very much money.... We didn't as a family go to museums or art galleries.* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Many working-class interviewees recall very strong personal interests in cultural activities as children, including art, music, drawing and creative reading. These are often recalled as self-driven, without specific guidance from parents. Colm, a mid-career owner of a small London practice, brought on a large council estate in London, explains:

*Drawing was always a fascination. And art generally.*

*Ian: Family background in that?*

*Not at all. Mainly just not educated. Both my parents left school at 14, because that's how it was then and so probably just wasn't guided* Colm, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

Nathan, now an academic, was raised in the United States. His parents worked as a taxi driver and a waitress. For Nathan, childhood hobbies such as playing the piano are recalled as personal struggles rather than projects which were encouraged within the family. Asked where his interest in music comes from, Nathan replies:

*Good question, I don't know. I think as a result of it, it's been something I've had to work hard at. But it doesn't come easy to me. I don't know how that came about, I was just interested."*

Nathan, Academic, NS-SEC 6-8

Among working-class interviewees, there was little evidence of active encouragement in 'high culture' activities in the family. In addition to cost, lack of time and parental knowledge are highlighted in narrative accounts.

*I was never taken into an art gallery as a kid. I never went to a theatre and never went to an art gallery until I went to university.* Richard, Medium Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

*My mum's creative. She, I think, drew in school and things, but she had us all very young, so I don't remember her doing anything, having a moment to do anything is the truth.* Maureen, Design Director for Commercial Developer, NS-SEC 6-8

Within these constraints, parents of working-class children encourage as best they can:

*If we were bored, there wasn't always an opportunity to go out and spend money to do stuff, so mum would tell us to use our imagination, and sit us down with a pencil or send us out to the garden.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

*I suppose as a family, we did read a lot, everybody was a strong reader, because that's what, that was kind of cheap and easy, and we went to the library.* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

In relation to cultural capital, many interviewees from middle-class backgrounds emphasise the role of parents in encouraging the appreciation of legitimate forms of culture. Many of the narratives of childhood include family outings to museums, galleries and theatres.

*Quite often we would go up in the evening and meet my father after work and go to the theatre. And at weekends, I'd quite often just go up on my own as a twelve-year-old and just explore it [London] – something which my parents would encourage.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

Sally and Ruth, both brought up by parents who were teachers, relate encouraged cultural appreciation as a simple matter of fact. Cultural appreciation is naturalised within the family:

*Having teachers for parents, the house was full of books and art materials. Very much encouraged to make stuff and do stuff... We used to go on trips up to London occasionally or go to local museums and galleries. Go to the library a lot, go to theatre and things as well. Sally, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

*Certainly, one [a family] that encouraged an appreciation of the arts. It was something that was accepted; that is what you did. Ruth, Retired Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

While cultural appreciation may, as Ruth's verbatim suggests, be positioned as a natural part of anyone's upbringing - 'that is what you did' - there may equally be strong elements of social distinction and elitism in such accounts. Enrico, brought up in Northern Italy, remembers family summer holidays spent appreciating the culture of places beyond what would be available to ordinary tourists:

*It was not so much the very touristic parts, like Venice, Florence or Roma. For that, we had time to go with school. We were more into more particular, more difficult to find [places] Enrico, Consultant and Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

Chloe, whose parents were both artists, makes an important link between parental encouragement of cultural participation and family discussions about politics. In this light, encouraged cultural appreciation is associated with having opinions and the confidence to express them.

*It was great living in xxxxx because we could go up to London quite a lot, so I remember going to Tate Modern when I was very young. And we'd always have, we still do, have very animated discussions as a family, about lots of things, about architecture, but also very much about politics. We're a very politically engaged family, lots of angry conversations over dinner, things like that. Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2*

In these recollections of upbringing, we see the roles of economic and cultural capital in forging a classed habitus. In particular, a middle-class habitus is founded on an appreciation of legitimate forms of culture. Middle-class stories of cultural participation within the family are easily recalled in my research, and Chloe's account suggests how such encouraged appreciation may underpin a broader social ease and entitlement to voice one's opinions.

These narrative accounts also point to the disguise or misrecognition of classed differences. Economic privilege is downplayed as very different levels of family wealth are similarly framed in terms of hardship and parental sacrifices. In relation to cultural capital, misrecognition is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, a specifically middle-class encouragement of cultural appreciation is naturalised, misrecognised in discourse as universal: 'that is what you did'. On the other, the specificity

of cultural activities carried out within middle-class families serves as a source of status distinction from other social groups.

In the next section, I outline how these foundational differences in the classed habitus may produce differences in whether and how individuals develop an initial interest in architecture.

### Early Interest in Architecture

Many individuals struggle to articulate what sparked their initial interest in architecture as an interest, subject of study or potential career. A range of factors include a childhood fascination with construction, an aptitude for technical drawing, and academic strengths in subjects, such as arts and maths, which are traditionally associated with an architectural education.

Jay was brought up by his mother, a canteen worker, on a council estate in Leeds. He is now an early career Architectural Assistant, having completed the first two parts of his architectural education at two of the UK's most prestigious universities. For Jay, his recalled early interest in architecture relates to the physical stimulus of play as a child, which somehow morphs into the adult goal of forging a career:

*I just liked the idea of making things, building things. I think even when I was a kid, I liked playing with Lego, the kind of stuff that teaches you to construct something from a set of components. So, I guess maybe it started from play and then turned into something that had more of a career focus.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Nathan, an academic raised in North America from a working-class background, has recollections of play which are very similar:

*So, even as a child I really liked things like Lego and building blocks and things. So, I suppose my hobby was building things.... I don't ever remember being encouraged to study architecture, but I think at some point someone maybe said you're clearly interested in building and designing things.* Nathan, Academic, NS-SEC 6-8

By contrast, the recollections of certain individuals from privileged backgrounds are very different. For Alan, the presence of cultural knowledge at his home, in the form of 'a huge library of books', leads to a specific interest in mediaeval architecture, which sets him apart from his peers.

*My father assembled a huge library of books. He read and read. He didn't go to university, but he was an extraordinarily well-educated man. And, therefore, I grew up in a house that was literally stuffed full of books. And, therefore, if I was interested in something, my father would*

*say, 'oh yes, have a look at this'. And I got used to leafing through books. And became very interested in mediaeval architecture.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

Similarly, Henri, an architect from the most privileged of family backgrounds, tells a story of his initial interest in architecture. It is remembered in great detail and has had long-lasting, profound effects:

*When I was 8 and a half, my uncle gave me a book by a woman, very good writer, in the 1850s. The book was about a 12-year-old boy, who was on a boat, stranded in Calcutta. The boat had left because he hadn't come back from his exploration. And he then joined a troupe of entertainers and an elephant. And the book was all about India, criss-cross India. So, the journeys were described, and the buildings were described. So that's when I started to ask who does these things. These were all ancient palaces, temples and so on. So, architecture in the biggest sense drew my attention and I didn't say I was going to be an architect, but I thought I'd like to do that. And, over the years, I have constant dreams about the scenes described.* Henri, Small Practice Owner and Former Head of Architectural School, NS-SEC 1-2

Alan and Henri's recollections of their early interest in architecture share certain characteristics. Both are rooted in easy encouragement from a family member; Alan's father and Henri's uncle. Both include markers of quality and distinction, recounted confidently, but told very casually; Alan's father was 'an extraordinarily well-educated man', the book given by Henri's uncle was by a 'very good writer'. And they both spark a very particular interest in architecture. This interest is itself distinctive, in Alan's case, it produces a niche interest in mediaeval architecture while in Henri's the interest is general, but profound: 'architecture in the biggest sense drew my attention'.

The contrast with Jay and Nathan's recollections is equally stark. Jay and Nathan's memories are given rather uncertainly, punctuated by qualifiers, which suggest a lack of assuredness: 'I think', 'I guess', 'I suppose', 'at some point someone maybe said'. Their recollections construct a very simple logic; they both move from point a (Lego as child's play) to point b (architecture as a 'logical' career choice). By contrast, Alan and Henri's stories are much more circumspect. Both their recollections of an early interest in architecture are rooted in a broad appreciation of culture, whether leafing through a library 'literally stuffed full of books' or losing oneself in a very specific tale. As such, the circumspection of their memories serves as a marker of social confidence and distinction.

Neither Alan nor Henri's parents were themselves architects. One noteworthy phenomenon relating to the reproduction of professional fields is the propensity for children to follow the specific professional footsteps of their parents. This has been theorised as micro-class reproduction (Weeden and Grusky, 2005; Weeden et al., 2007). While it is most evident in law and medicine, architects, too,

often follow in their parents' professional footsteps (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). This is apparent in my research. Overall, 11% (six) of my interviewees had at least one parent who had trained or practised as an architect and 20% (eleven) had a close family member who was an architect. Kevin, a part-time academic and small practice owner from an intermediate class background, with no family background in architecture, has been aware of this throughout his career:

*I've come across time and time again in the industry, that people have all got family members who have been in architecture and they've been really successful. And I'm always quite intrigued when I meet somebody and I look up who they are, and the penny drops and you realise that not only are they successful now, but their parents had been successful.* Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

The three recollections outlined below testify to the important relationship between a family background in architecture and a child's initial interest in architecture as a possible career.

Emily, now a partner at a large, prestigious London practice, recalls the influences of her father having studied architecture:

*So, my dad ran the Social Services department of a local authority, but he had studied architecture. And I think that was probably a big influence, because I think he probably pointed things out to us...He'd worked for five years with an architectural practice... I remember finding this box of photographs of all these models, and thinking 'What's this? What's this?' And he had some old drawings, big A1 drawings of buildings that he'd worked on in quite a heroic time in British architecture; the post-war rebuilding of the country. And he'd worked on some really amazing looking things, which then at some point in my childhood we'd actually seen the buildings from the outside. And so, there was this real power to them. So that was definitely an influence, and I think by the time I was about 14 I wanted to be an architect.* Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

The father's training as an architect is recalled as profoundly influential. Indeed, Emily's recollection features both of the most highly valued capitals which drive the field; public service capital of socially progressive architecture – 'a heroic time in British architecture; the post-war rebuilding of the country' - and the creative capital of architecture as design; 'really amazing looking things'. The influence is strongly emotional, having 'a real power' on Emily as a child.

Marius, amazingly a fourth-generation architect from Eastern Europe, who is now an academic, explains his early interest.

*And I remember my dad going around cities that he had never visited before, Florence, and he knew the city by heart just from books. So, he would stand in front of a building and he would be awestruck like a child. And that really did something to me, seeing him being so overwhelmed by this experience. So, I had this cultural interest in architecture rather than what typically you know when you ask people why they want to be an architect and they say they want to get something built. Marius, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2*

He witnesses the emotional response of his architect father, who was 'awestruck' and 'overwhelmed' by a trip to Florence. Marius interprets this memory as underscoring a distinction between himself and other would-be architects. As with Emily, this positions his early interest in architecture as a career in the most symbolically valued part of the field; his is a 'cultural interest' rather than a desire 'to get something built'.

Heather is a senior architect in a large London practice. Her father ran a well-known local authority architecture department. She was brought up surrounded by architecture and with architects as family friends. She was educated at an award-winning architect designed school. As a schoolgirl, she used to show people round the school:

*The school that I went to was actually an RIBA medal winner, it was one of the schools from xxxxx. And I was a very tall and quite confident person. So, we were always having groups of people coming to have a look round our school. And so, it was always, 'Heather will show you round'. So, I got used to, I knew that architecture was a thing. I knew the impact of good architecture. I'd experienced it, I lived opposite it. I lived in it and I understood that people were interested in it. Heather, Senior Architect, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2*

These recollections of early interest in architecture do not entail any specific guidance from parents. Indeed, architect-children rarely recall having a careers discussion with their parents. Instead, they can recall very specific instances – a box of photos of models, a family holiday to Italy – which create a strong impression about the emotional power and cultural significance of architecture. Thus, architecture is inherited as an ideal in toto; it is all-surrounding – 'I lived in it' – as Heather memorably puts it.

In these memories of an initial interest in architecture, there are clear differences between working- and middle-class individuals. Working-class stories are somewhat uncertain and hesitant. Classed outsiders such as Nathan and Jay struggle to rationalise how a childhood hobby turns into a career choice.

Encouraged appreciation of certain forms of culture within the family fosters a middle-class habitus which makes architecture seem a more natural fit. The lengthier accounts of middle-class architects, particularly those with architect-parents, are told more confidently, and include casual references and off-the-cuff details. Such emotionally charged recollections mark the individuals as distinctive. As such, the 'discovery' of architecture is at the same time a story of self-discovery. In this, we see the beginnings of a merging of personal and professional identities, which are rooted in class background.

### Routes into the Field

The previous sections explored how a classed habitus relates to an early interest in architecture. I illustrated how the different upbringings of working- and middle-class children influence their felt affinity with architecture as a subject of interest or possible career.

I now consider more practical issues. I outline how routes into the field of architecture play out in practice, again contrasting individuals from working- and middle-class backgrounds.

While all my eight interviewees from working-class NS-SEC backgrounds attended higher education, none of their parents did. Indeed, there was rarely an expectation that they would attend university. Interviewees from working-class backgrounds often have rather circuitous and longer routes into higher education, which include large elements of genuine luck.

For example, Kevin and Dave both left school at 16 in the 1980s with few qualifications. Both immediately entered the field of architecture as office juniors in small practices employed to carry out basic administrative tasks. While this chimed with their broad interest in construction, they could equally have landed in very different occupational fields.

Both Kevin and Dave remained in these positions for a few years until a recession led them to reconsider. Dave, who had in the meantime undertaken Ordinary and Higher National Certificates in Architectural Technology, chose then to enter higher education as a mature student. Similarly, Kevin, who had forged strong relationships with practice owners, who have served as mentors throughout his career, was encouraged to study architecture at university.

Interviewees from working-class backgrounds recounted particular advantages which facilitated their entry into higher education. While parents could not give advice from their own experience, they generally supported academic and professional aspirations. Others mentioned individual supportive teachers. Older interviewees mentioned the system of grants which preceded the current regime of fees and loans as playing an important facilitative role.



However, there were often barriers which needed to be overcome to enter higher education. The stories told by working-class interviewees reveal active discouragement. Robert, an older interviewee who passed the 11+ and attended a state grammar school, was advised not to consider architecture, as this required good grades which may not be forthcoming. Similarly, Jay was predicted considerably lower grades than those he achieved. Initially, he did not apply to the prestigious university he ultimately attended. Dave, when he wanted to take an Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) on day-release, while working as an office junior, was not supported by the architectural practice owners.

By contrast, routes into the field of architecture from middle-class backgrounds are much more straightforward. Most had parents who themselves went to university, and, with the exception of a couple of older women from privileged backgrounds, participation in higher education was a strong familial expectation.

As the decision to attend university was very straightforward, more care could be taken as to the specific choice of subject and institution. In this regard, parental economic and social capital could be leveraged. Lexia, an early career architect, comes from a wealthy Italian family. Both her parents were successful lawyers. At school, her career ambitions were not set, although she knew she 'wanted to do something creative'. Her parents were able to fund a taster course over the summer at the London School of Arts, which cemented her decision to study architecture:

*So, through Art I knew I wanted to do something creative. Before my last year, I did a two-week course at the London School of Arts in St Martins. I think there are six colleges. And so, within that two weeks, every two days we switched, so we did graphic design, we did fashion design, architecture, so we did illustration. So that was kind of my first flavour of what I wanted to do.*

Lexia, Architect, Small Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

Heather's father, who ran a well-known local authority architects' department, advised her where to apply:

*Yeah, it was an informed decision, because obviously my dad spoke to his mates and asked where should she go? And they said, the Bartlett. So, it was sort of like OK.*

Heather, Senior Architect, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

One of the few architects who had a circuitous route into architectural study was Elena. Elena was brought up in a middle-class family in Northern Italy. Although she had ambitions to study architecture from childhood, she felt she lacked the confidence when she left school and opted for a shorter degree in political science.

*I really wanted to be an architect at that point, from a very early age. But I didn't have the security in myself, because it's a long career, it's quite expensive, and you have the obligation to go to university every day... My dreams I would love to do that – the architectural career or the career of medicine, but they were very long and very demanding careers, so at that point, I was probably discouraged, I don't know what's happening, I didn't have the courage to start.* Elena, Self-employed architect, Interior Designer, NS-SEC 1-2

After studying political science for three years, she turned again to the idea of studying architecture and took an admission's test. Her parents provided the financial support so that she could begin her architectural studies as a mature student.

To summarise, working-class entry into the field of architecture is more circuitous. Overall, the narratives of working-class entry into the architectural field are stories of genuine luck, which could easily have unfolded very differently. Equally, they are stories against the odds; of battling through despite set-backs and discouragement; the working-class grammar school boy who was advised not to dream too big, an office junior whose managers took a dim view of his desire for further education. Finally, they are stories which take time to commence; four of my eight interviewees from working-class backgrounds entered higher education to study architecture as mature students.

By contrast, middle-class individuals are expected to attend university. Parental knowledge, economic and social capital are at times leveraged to finesse the choice of course at more prestigious schools of architecture, and to 'correct' any mistakes and mishaps.

### Experience at University

In this section, I consider the experiences of students at university. As well as contrasting working- and middle-class interviewees, I also draw from my interviews with academics and others with teaching experience.

It is important to acknowledge that, as a result of my research strategy, I interviewed 'successful' working-class architects. By sampling individuals already employed in the field, I did not interview anyone who failed to navigate an architectural education such that they could later forge a career in architecture. Given higher non-completion rates among working-class students in the UK body overall (Sutton Trust, 2004; HESA, 2009), it is important to recognise this omission.

Indeed, half of my interviewees from working-class NS-SEC backgrounds (4 of 8) had not completed all three parts of their architectural education. While they were employed in the field of architecture, they could not use the protected title of 'architect'. In only one of these instances, Nathan, an academic who undertook a PhD in sociology, was the decision not to complete the final parts of his

education narrated as a confident career choice. The other three architects from working-class backgrounds gave less positive reasons for non-completion. For Jay, currently employed as an Architectural Assistant, the cost of study was prohibitive. The other two interviewees, Maureen and Colm, although holding senior positions in the field, both expressed some regret at not having completed their education.

By contrast with working-class architects, less than one in four (6 of 28) interviewees had not completed their Part 3 or non-UK equivalent. And in these instances, the decision not to complete an architectural education was recalled in a much more assured manner. Three of the six interviewees are academics, two work as journalists/critics and one is a recruitment consultant. As they do not work in practice, not being able to use the protected title 'architect' is less problematic. The decision not to complete Part 3 was not positioned defensively or regretfully. Instead, they narrated their decision not to complete their Part 3 confidently as a choice, which made sense for their individual career paths. The relationship between class and the confidence with which careers are narrated is explored further in the next empirical chapter.

### Overall Evaluation

Asking open questions about how individuals got on at university yields a mix of recollections. These are often framed around an overall negative or positive assessment.

Many interviewees' summary recollection of their time at university is extremely positive. In such accounts, individuals typically recall an instant love of an architectural education, emphasising its liberating and personally transformative effects. An architectural education is recalled as inspirational. Creativity is encouraged such that the student enjoys new ways of seeing the world.

On the other hand, a negative framing often unfolds in complaints about the amount of work, curriculum requirements and structure of the course, as well as problems with individual tutors. A negative assessment may encompass feelings of personal failure; not being sufficiently clever or creative to take advantage of the education. It may engender a crisis of confidence and feeling of being on the point of giving up.

Overall, there is no simple correspondence between either class background or gender and a negative or positive framing of architectural education. Men and women, architects from working, intermediate and middle-class backgrounds recount their university experiences as both negative and positive. However, as I will outline, there are notable differences beneath the surface of this overall framing.

### *Working-Class Experiences*

I consider, first of all, the experiences of working-class students. When interviewees from working-class backgrounds recall their time at university, issues of class come readily to the fore. From initial impression at open days, through a degree of culture shock when meeting fellow students, engaging with tutors and responding to the specific demands of an architectural education, issues of class difference are often overtly foregrounded in these parts of my interviews.

The working-class women I interviewed, Margaret, Maureen and Julia, all foreground negative issues of class *rather* than gender when recalling their university education. Superficially, gender is discounted as a problem at university by all three. Julia jokingly dismisses gender imbalance – ‘I was quite happy to escape all the women I went to school with!’ - while Margaret recounts ‘I don’t remember feeling overwhelmed by blokes’. Maureen, who studied Architectural Technology in a student cohort numerically dominated by men, did not think this an issue at the time. As ‘a bit of a tom-boy’ brought up in a family where ‘there were no girls’ job or boys’ jobs’, she did not expect to be treated any differently. She concludes that the gender imbalance ‘wasn’t a problem, we enjoyed it’.

It is class, rather than gender, that is recalled as pivotal in the narratives of their early entry into the field of architecture. Julia, now a senior architect at a highly acclaimed cooperative, rejected elite schools of architecture and chose instead to study at a post 1992 university:

*And actually the thing about Nottingham Trent, because it had been a polytechnic, it felt much more comfortable and it was a different environment, like I went to Edinburgh because they do architecture and looked around there, and thought (pulls face)*

*Ian: Not for you?*

*Yeah, the people, I just thought the people. I went to [an open day at] the Bartlett in London*

*Ian: How did you find that?*

*Just felt really uncomfortable (laughter). Lots of very wealthy students, from abroad, which is probably still the case. Edinburgh was just very posh* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Margaret describes the challenge of acculturation to university and to the study of architecture as a difficult process. This centres on her social background, which she struggles to name: ‘class or money or whatever you want to call it’. Her recollections are rather general; centred on her regional

background and the wealth of her new peers. When asked to explain what she called a difficult 'process of adjustment' at university, Margaret replies:

*I suppose different class. I'm very much from a working-class background, from the North East. And I was the only person there from a working-class background, especially from the North East. And I was on full-grant and all the rest of it. And most of the people there didn't need to be on a grant. So, lots of fairly wealthy people there who'd come from very different backgrounds....I don't remember feeling overwhelmed by blokes. It was more very different kind of background....It wasn't gender. It was very much class or money or whatever you want to call it.* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

Margaret's recollection of her early educational experience points to the issue of classed acculturation, which features equally in the narratives of male architects from working-class backgrounds. After a successful career through different design-led firms, Dave is currently employed as a Director in practice. Dave's recollection of his time at university illuminates how difficult it may be to successfully negotiate architectural study at prestigious institutions for students from working-class backgrounds.

Dave's entry into the Bartlett was highly atypical. As a working-class boy who had left school with few qualifications aged 16, he found employment as an office junior at a small architectural practice. While working there, he studied on day-release to gain technical qualifications in Architectural Technology. When made redundant during a recession, he decided to study architecture at university. He applied to the Bartlett, as it was close to where he lived, with no awareness of its reputation as a world-leading architectural school.

When he recalls his first assignment at the Bartlett, Dave's early confidence that his Architectural Technology qualifications would stand him in good stead soon evaporated:

*So, it promptly turned my world on its head. I thought, I'm going to go into this with my hands behind my head, this will be a breeze. Not at all, it was like, I remember our first project, it was called 'Beyond the Objects'. We were given a range of objects to select and my object of choice was an indigenous nut. (Reacting to my look of puzzlement) Yeah exactly so, 'go away for two weeks and represent this indigenous nut'. I thought what the bloody hell could I do with that? It was a conker, a horse chestnut. Well I can take a photograph of it. I can draw it. I don't really know what else I can do with this.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

With no background in conceptual art and lacking any internalisation of architecture as abstract practice, Dave is at a loss as to how approach his first assignment. Following this initial shock, his

struggles continue. The requirements to produce highly experimental design work leave him bewildered. Asked whether he felt intimidated by the institutional requirements, Dave replies:

*Yeah, completely and utterly. I just thought 'what the fuck is going on here?' And some of the stuff on the wall [drawings prepared by students in 'crits'] was incredible, visually it was amazing, but I mean, 'what are we looking at here? Even buildings, the way they were drawn - is that a section, is it? I've no clue.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Dave finds his new cohort of peers as intimidating as the course requirements itself. His easy association of an expensive private education with intelligence belies a lack of confidence as to who deserves to have their place at university and have their voice heard.

*The majority of them come from fee-paying school backgrounds: very, very, some very intelligent people there. They were for me quite intimidating, spoke another language, that sort of stuff, really like their parents had spent a lot on their education it seems and given them the privilege to bump into me (laughter).* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Dave's time at university is precarious. He feels very clearly a 'fish out of water', struggling to understand what is expected of him and how he should behave. Problems of cultural fit are more likely to be felt for working-class than middle-class students (Bradley, 2017). The dissonance between his working-class background and middle-class expectations of university life and the study of architecture lead to what Bourdieu terms a 'habitus clivé'; an uneasy synthesis of simultaneously having one foot in two very different social worlds, and the emotional turmoil this may produce.

*When I was at the Bartlett, I was still hanging around with all my mates on the estate and stuff like that so I was swinging from complete polarities, from the academic, having the most bizarre and interesting lectures, discussing like interesting things and in the evenings sitting down with my old mates and drinking or whatever and talking about football and girls. That was a real weird thing to balance. And my mum noticed, in fact she once called me a snob towards the end of the course.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

The fragility and lack of confidence as to whether he deserves his place at university are borne out in his relationships with teaching staff. Dave established one positive, supportive relationship with a tutor, which he attributes to their having a similar social background. However, this relationship soon sours, as Dave wonders whether he is seen by the tutor as a potential threat. Although it is a shared class background which forms the imagined link between Dave and his tutor, it is his masculinity which feels under threat. Dave appears to experience a fear of exposure which he projects onto his tutor.

*I sensed a developing resentment from my tutor towards me and I think it was because we came from similar backgrounds. And I think he saw me as a risk for exposing him for perhaps who he really was, and I think he wanted to cloak all that stuff and I could see that. Not that I was emasculating him in any way publicly, I just got the feeling that he realized that we were from a similar sort of background.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Dave can pinpoint an exact moment where he felt he had undergone the necessary personal transformation so that he was now an architect. A television interview with a famous architect allowed him to make sense of the purpose of an architectural education. Rather than learning to construct buildings, the point of the education, is understood as more psychologically grounded: 'to see how you think'. Conceptualised in this way, Dave felt he finally 'got it'.

*And it wasn't until there was a show on BBC2 years ago, it was called the Late Show, it was an arts show.. And this show, Rem Koolhaas gave an account very similar to my personal experience at the Bartlett. I was sitting there thinking, this is exactly how I was. And he said, why are we doing this sort of stuff, why aren't we drawing buildings? Forget about all that, we want to see, we want to can open your head and see how you think. I thought, 'right OK, I get it now'. I got it, by which time I was more than half-way through the first year, so I suffered, I struggled through the first year.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

However, at the end of his first year, Dave's results were poor. He recalls being encouraged by academic staff to leave the Bartlett, but manages, with emotional support from his mother, to battle through. Ultimately, this is recalled as a story of success against the odds, as Dave 'had a strong second year'.

By no means all of the working-class students I interviewed signalled an experience at university as personally challenging and tumultuous as Dave's. However, many did recount aspects of significant personal transformation. And, critically, these experiences often entail a loss of aspects of their class identity.

Jay, a young Architectural Assistant who has very successfully negotiated the first two parts of his architectural education at elite institutions, was initially conscious of his more privileged peers:

*I didn't particularly have a great experience, just because I felt there was a class and diversity issue. Just full of white kids from private school.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Although he has successfully navigated his education, such that he has developed a cohort of supportive friends and has embraced architecture as a career, he is aware that he has lost elements

of his identity. He reflects that he has lost his regional accent, a marker of a class identity which made him feel self-conscious as an outsider during the early stages of his architectural education:

*I'm aware that I've lost my Leeds accent. It was when I went to university, I think I was very self-conscious about the fact that I had quite a strong accent and over three years it just went away. I don't know if that's common when people go to university.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Julia, who initially recoiled at some of the 'posh' institutions she had considered for her Part 1, chose to undertake her Part 2 diploma at a more prestigious university. With the successful completion of her undergraduate study under her belt, this move was far less troublesome. Although she still read her Part 2 peers as more middle-class, she felt she had assimilated into the culture of an architectural education.

*I went up to Glasgow, to the Art School there, and then again, that was probably, there were less people like me, but by which point I felt more confident and I'd probably assimilated* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Margaret, who had initially felt marginalised by her tutors due to her class background, now, as a middle-aged successful architect at a design-based consultancy, no longer thinks of herself in class terms.

*I don't [think of myself as having a class identity] on a day-to-day basis at all. I was probably more aware of it when I was younger, because I was just less well travelled, less experienced, or whatever.* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

Both Julia and Margaret make sense of the process of their acculturation into the field of architecture and the concomitant loss of a class identity in individualistic terms. Julia's understanding is more psychological, she 'felt more confident' after having completed her undergraduate degree. Margaret understands her loss of class as a vague personal deficit that has now been rectified: 'I was just less well travelled, less experienced, or whatever'. Her earlier recollection of classed discrimination does not come to the fore. For both Julia and Margaret, a working-class background is positioned rhetorically as a personal deficiency to be overcome by the individual.

### *Middle-class Experiences*

In contrast with interviews with working-class architects, issues of class are very rarely recalled in recollections of a university education. One exception is a strongly classed culture shock when architects from privileged backgrounds enter the most elite institutions.



Both Simon and Trevor objectively emanate from the highest professional background (NS-SEC 1). They attended a private prep school and selective state school respectively. However, they both felt somewhat intimidated by the intellectual atmosphere and social elitism they encountered at Cambridge. As Simon recalls:

*Well, I was a bit overawed, because you turn up at a place like Cambridge, so I kept pretty quiet.*

Simon, Small Practice Owner and Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

Beyond such encounters with a classed 'elite', associated with a public-school background at the most prestigious institutions, issues of class are rarely raised at all by middle-class architects as they recall their time at university. Overt class identities are weakly held, if at all, and do not feature spontaneously. In any case, social backgrounds align with the majority of their peers and the requirements of higher education. Thus, their classed habitus makes them a more 'natural' fit for university life.

Emily's father had trained as an architect. Earlier, I described how growing up in a household which valued architecture had had a profound impact on Emily, who herself wanted to be an architect from a young age. In the lengthy excerpt below, Emily summarises Parts 1 and 2 of her architectural education:

*I went to the University of Manchester. I got a first-class honours degree...I really enjoyed it. It always felt like it was a thing I should be doing... It doesn't prepare people for the real profession and so maybe I was lucky that it was the thing that I hoped it would be, because it's so broad and varied and it pulls together so many different strands... very stimulating, even though it can be deeply frustrating in many ways, but the subject matter is still so vital, that we live and work in buildings which support us and inspire us and all of that kind of thing. So, I really enjoyed my degree at Manchester. I enjoyed my degree at Manchester a lot more than I enjoyed my part 2 at Edinburgh University, which as an institution had a very different agenda. Manchester was very socially based as a city, it had a lot of attitude, there were Poll Tax demonstrations and things like that going on at the time. There was a lot to feel you were learning from as a young adult, and it was just a bit broader, whereas Edinburgh had a very narrow architectural agenda. They weren't interested in pluralism and they weren't interested in what you might bring to it. They wanted you to learn what they were to teach. So, Manchester had been quite different and of my cohort in my degree year, there were about 55 of us, and we were all very, very different. And there were four people in my year who got a first and we all had completely different work, completely different, we were like apples and pears, but that was fine, because as long as you took a position and you could justify what you were doing and you were thorough and so on,*

*you were judged individually, whereas Edinburgh, I didn't really fit there as well. I always think it's a bit like you play jazz and now you've got to play Mozart in a very particular way, and you're used to being able to interpret a bit more and they didn't really want that in Edinburgh. It was good for other things, I mean there was real rigour. And so that was good for me.* Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

While her overall framing is very positive – ‘I really enjoyed it’ - her specific evaluations are far more nuanced and ambivalent. She oscillates between positive and negative evaluations of her time at university. On the one hand, her education was ‘broad and varied’, ‘stimulating’ and ‘vital’. On the other, it failed to prepare her ‘for the real profession’ and was ‘deeply frustrating in many ways’. While her Part 1 encouraged individual creativity, her Part 2 was more restrictive. However, Emily manages to draw value from both parts of her education, concluding that ‘there was real rigour’ in the more restrictive Part 2.

Overall, Emily has perfectly adopted a particular architectural habitus, which paves the way for a career in the most symbolically valued parts of the field. Her way of seeing the world is architectural, and encompasses both highly valued capitals; public service in the shape of social progressiveness and creative in relation to design integrity. Her outlook is socially grounded, in the politics and urban attitude of Manchester, but highly individualistic in its creativity, in a way that can stand up to architectural critique.

There is no sense from Emily’s recollection that an architectural education required any problematic classed acculturation. Instead, she is clearly well prepared by her specific upbringing to succeed. As she recalls, and in stark contrast to working-class students like Dave, who struggled during his time at the Bartlett, ‘it always felt like it was a thing I should be doing’.

### Inherited Capitals

I now consider class theorised as the possession and mastery of different forms of capital - economic and cultural - and how this may be structure experiences at university.

Most obvious is the effect of inherited economic capital, particularly given the length of an architectural education and, for younger interviewees, the reduction in state support. While older working-class architects benefitted from grants when they were students, they feel they would struggle under the contemporary regime of loans and fees. Some say they would not consider taking an architecture degree.

Jay is an early career working-class Architectural Assistant, who has carried out the first two parts of his architectural education at two of the UK’s most prestigious universities. He has decided to delay

the start of his Part 3 because of its cost. For Jay, financial support offered by parents of his middle-class peers was paramount. Fieldtrips abroad, an integral part of the design studios of his elite university, are an additional expense. Model-making and the production of a portfolio are a further financial drain:

*I found it very hard financially. Really difficult, because there was no real funding, there was the expectation that you would have to make lots of lovely, they major on visual materials, huge drawings, big models and everything is crafted in a meticulous way, it's not just cardboard models, like I used to do at my part 1. And people would spend like £600 on a model and I always used to wonder where they would get the money from. So, I just ended up making paper models...There's printing a 100-page portfolio, they want eight quid to print the paper, so you're looking at £800 to print your final portfolio. And it's just kind of a bit exhausting.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

The educational histories of architects from privileged backgrounds illustrate the value of inherited economic capital and family wealth. Firstly, it facilitates choice and the possibility of changing direction. Course switching is more viable for middle-class students (Bradley, 2017) and a number of architects from middle-class backgrounds changed their course of study to architecture, backed by their parents' financial support. Others were able to attend the most prestigious higher education institutions outside their country of birth due to parental wealth. Such parental financial support plays a clear and important role in entry into the field.

At the same time, the presence of inherited economic capital may be submerged in narrative accounts. Paula, a self-employed architect from a wealthy background, bought her first flat in Edinburgh when she was a student. This provided an income during her early career in a series of design-led practices, and has accrued substantially in value over the last couple of decades. Paula provided this information as an after-thought towards the end of her interview, when she had finished talking through her career history: 'I was lucky with property. So, age 20, I bought my own flat'. As wealthy individuals often downplay their economic privilege (Savage et al., 2001), the role played by inherited wealth in supporting students at university, is somewhat hidden in narrative accounts. It is none the less pivotal.

Cultural capital may also function as a resource which facilitates a path through higher education. In Jane's case, her cultural participation saved her from expulsion. Jane struggled initially at university and failed her first year. However, she recalls that, unlike other students who did not engage in any 'legitimate' cultural activity, she was allowed to return. In Jane's account, her cultural capital was evaluated by course leaders as a way to 'improve the mix' of her architectural school:

*Yeah, I got chucked out after the first year to take a year out. But fortunately, they chucked various people out, but I was told a few years later by someone who'd been in the room at the time, that the reason why they let me through was because it didn't really matter whether I passed or failed in the end, I was the only person in that year who ever did anything like go to the theatre or do any sort of cultural activity ... But four other people were just chucked out, but I was told to take a year out and come back. Because, well they just reckoned – I don't think my work was any better than the four people who just got chucked out - but they reckoned I'd improve the mix.* Jane, Housing Association Manager, NS-SEC 3-5

According to Cuff (1992), there exists a strong belief within the academy that talent, linked to aesthetic judgement, is a natural property held by certain students. Stevens (1998) argues further that architectural schools misrecognise social privilege as talent.

My research buttresses and develops these ideas. At times, academics fail to reflect whether talent can be disentangled from mastery of different forms of cultural capital which are intrinsically linked to social background. Below, I outline the problematic approaches to pinpointing talent from my interviews with Alan, Henri, and Trevor, all academics with vast teaching experience in education at London universities.

Alan, a professor at one of the country's most elite architectural schools, recognises the student body as highly privileged. He also notes a causal link between a middle-class upbringing which normalises an appreciation of legitimate high culture and a greater likelihood of acceptance into his elite institution:

*You have a huge competitive advantage if you come from a middle-class family with parents who've gone to university, who consider this as part and parcel of what you read, what you talk about, the films, the theatre that you go and see, the friends that come round. You are exposed through the family from a very, very early age.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

Further, he acknowledges a problematic role of private education in producing candidates who appear impressive at interview, irrespective of their abilities:

*I think there is a private education system, which I'm not a fan of, does produce a set of mental reflexes, which are quite seductive when you're interviewing.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

And yet, despite the condemnation of the private school system, when he comes to talk about his institution, Alan is unapologetic about its 'elite' status:

*I don't think anybody here - including me - will apologise for what we do, for our approach, because we do take the very, very best people and turn them into quite exceptional graduates...We are unashamedly an elite school. And there is a role for that. There is a role for an elite school. We have something like 94/95% employment rate, so practices like our students and they want them. And they want them because they have extraordinary rather developed technical skills.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

While, earlier in our interview, a middle-class socialisation and private education gave unfair advantage, now the student intake is simply 'the very, very best people'. This is justified through a recourse to market demand 'practices like our students and they want them', which is met by the supply of graduates with 'rather developed technical skills'.

To explain what was meant by technical skills, Alan proudly showed me a project of one of his students, whose work was included in a catalogue of a world-renowned Architectural Biennale. His student had referenced a famous painting, reworking it multiple times to allow for imaginative, architectural critique. For Alan, this was the realisation of architectural 'talent' at the end of one student's architectural education. While it was certainly a highly accomplished piece of work, the assured references and reworking of a piece of high art in painstaking and imaginative detail arguably masks the social privilege that lies behind the production of such work.

Henri, who had led an architectural school in London, took a humanistic approach to uncovering talent. His approach was holistic; he aimed to understand the whole person at interview in ways which could not be systematised. When asked whether this approach had made the School more socially inclusive, Henri replies:

*Very much so...So someone would come in the door – black, white, pink or yellow it doesn't really matter – male or female, I have no judgement on that – came in, and all I thought of was 'could I teach that person, would a conversation work and would they learn anything from me?'*

*Ian: Is it easy to evaluate that?*

*Yes, because the questions you ask get answered and that allows you to touch the soul of that person. It's not mystical. I'll give you an example. An obviously autistic guy walks in the door with a guitar case that he puts in the corner, sits opposite us, hardly opens his mouth. And the guy and I the other interviewer more or less think this is a waste of time, but then I, being a musician, ask him, 'so what instrument have you brought?' And he said oh my guitar, and suddenly this guy was alive. Gosh, and he went over without me asking him and he opened it.*

*And immediately I realised, and this guy is one of our best students. Henri, Small practice owner and former head of Architectural School, NS-SEC 1-2*

Here, an avowed diversity-blind approach to inclusion – ‘black, white, pink or yellow it doesn’t really matter’ – is revealed to be far from neutral. Instead, the happenstance of a specific cultural talent, being able to play a musical instrument, forges a connection between the potential student and the head of the Architecture School. Whatever the subsequent animated conversation proved of the student’s potential talent for architecture, this illustrates the power of cultural mastery and an assumed cultural affinity between head of studio and student – ‘I, being a musician’ – in facilitating access into the academy.

When asked whether it’s easy to spot talent in his students, Trevor, a senior lecturer, replies immediately:

*Yeah, yeah, yeah. It’s almost instantaneous....I mean, teachers, we’ll often say, you know, he’s good, and he’s only produced one bit of work at the beginning of the first year. And you say that’s good, you just know it...They really want to become an architect, they’re talented, it’s obvious. They get on with it, they get on with it, that’s the main issue you know...I think if you get on with it, and you’ve got the energy and the determination, and therefore the commitment to get on with it. Trevor, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2*

In this reply, Trevor appears to point in two very different directions in the unearthing of talent. On the one hand, talent is something that can be spotted by an experienced tutor immediately – ‘it’s almost instantaneous’ – and may be apparent from just ‘one bit of work’. In this configuration, talent is a rare signal of potential, which points, perhaps, to the ideal of artistic genius within architecture. But in a second understanding, talent is grounded in hard work, in ‘energy and determination’. In this light, it is the relentlessness with which students ‘get on with it’, which signals their talent. I would argue that the internal contradictions in these configurations – talent as rare spark or talent as commitment – illustrate that something other than potential is being ‘discovered’.

From a working-class student’s perspective, this ‘something’ may be embodied cultural capital, in the form of accent, comportment and self-presentation. When Margaret remembers her early experiences of university, she recalls a strong sense of discrimination. She was placed by her tutors in the ‘not very interesting group’ of students who lacked talent. In this respect, she felt judged by their readings of her embodied class identity rather than any ability to study and produce architecture.

*And I think going back to university, because I didn't have that language or accent or look, for some tutors, I was in the not very interesting group.* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5]

## Distinctions by University Type

In the final section of this chapter, I outline how experiences at university differ by specific institution. While there is no routine data analysis of student intake, rates of completion and subsequent labour market outcomes for all 59 Higher Education Institutions<sup>15</sup>, where architecture may be studied, actors in the field of architecture make clear distinctions. Critically, for my overarching research question, these distinctions can be classed and have effects on subsequent career progression.

As outlined in my previous chapter, an overarching distinction, made by practitioners who recall their time in education, is between arts-centred and technical universities. As an ideal type, arts-based universities are more conceptual, experimental and theory-driven. Many of these schools are located in or near London and employ architects from design-led practices in the capital as part-time teaching staff. Technical universities, by contrast, tend to be located away from London, and are understood as provincial in outlook. As ideal types, they centre the material, technical, practicalities of construction; the 'nuts of bolts' of architecture.

There are clear classed differences in ideal-typical arts-based and technical universities, in terms of the felt experience of an architectural education and the composition of the student body.

Paul, an early-career working-class architect rejects the provincialism of the technical university, where he undertook his Part 1 undergraduate studies. Paul recalls an important end of year assignment:

*The brief was to design a British cultural centre. And we were kind of getting into texts like Naomi Klein's No Logo, like Globalisation, like Brand Culture and we were kind of trying to write about how there is no culture anymore and looking at globalisation and how it is disappearing and homogenisation etc. And one of the tutors was saying 'why are you trying to make your life so difficult? Just think about red buses, fish and chips'... that made me realise that maybe the school wasn't progressive enough.* Paul, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Moving to Westminster for his Part 2 Diploma, he recalls a more intellectual atmosphere. However, he is made to feel out of place at this London-ethos school. He suffers symbolic violence at the

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<sup>15</sup> 59 Institutions accredited by the RIBA <https://www.architecture.com/-/media/files/Validated-schools/RIBA-validated-UK-architecture-schools-list.pdf>

treatment of his socially privileged peers:

*It [Westminster] was very much more intellectual. A lot of public-school people there, there was less public-school people in Kent. They used to call me Del Boy<sup>16</sup> at Westminster, which I think was partly my accent and partly because I'd already started my own business. Sometimes I found that quite offensive.* Paul, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Academics report clear class differences in the student body of individual institutions. Kevin, an experienced academic, distinguishes the student body in terms of levels of parental wealth and resultant 'financial hardship' experienced at different institutions.

Alan, a professor at one of the most elite London schools, concurs. He contrasts the privilege of the student body of his London school, with a visiting professorship:

*I'm also a visiting professor at Lincoln, and I really like Lincoln, I like the course, I like the teachers, I like the students. But it's a very, very different set of students here at xxx. It's a complete class difference.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

Both academics concur that students of different institutions will find employment at different parts of the field. For Kevin, even the best students at Nottingham Trent tend to accept positions as jobbing architects rather than aiming for leading practices:

*I always marvel at the end of an academic year, where students will gravitate to, where they place their CVs. We'll get fantastic first-rate students, and I'm like 'where will you apply to?' and they're 'I'm just going down the road from where my parents live', and I'm like 'no! I can get you interviews into practices in London'* Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Again, Alan agrees:

*And you know, the guys at Lincoln will become good, competent architects, but they won't be top architects and they won't be in top firms either. One or two will break through but most won't.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

By contrast, graduates of more arts-based universities enjoy different career opportunities in the most symbolically parts of the field. Alan points out that, at his elite London school, 'the big practice[s] are queuing up at our [end-of-year student] shows to sign up our students'.

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<sup>16</sup> The main character from the Sit Com *Only Fools in Horses*, a market trader routinely mocked for his social pretensions and failing 'get rich quick' schemes.



The most prestigious institutions may leave a very specific imprint on their graduates, which facilitates career opportunities. Chloe, a successful freelance journalist, explains how a leading member of the London architectural scene read that they had both attended the same institutions after a single meeting. This has led directly to more work opportunities.

*The Director of xxx, he went to the Bartlett and went to the AA, and he, I feel like - every time I remember this I feel like I'm making it up - but his Assistant basically said to me that after he first met me, xxx first met me, he knew that I'd gone to the Bartlett and then the AA, just from like talking to me. And since then, he's always kept in touch and offered me opportunities to speak and things like that.* Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2

Finally, Irene and Alexandr, two graduates of the Architectural Association both reflect that attendance at this most elite institution instils an ambition to set up one's own design-led practice, and provides the network of contacts to make this a viable career. I discuss the social capital advantages which accrue to architects from more privileged backgrounds, in relation to setting up a design-led practice, in the next chapter.

## Summary

In this chapter, I have shown how class is salient in relation to access to the field of architecture.

A middle-class habitus, forged by inherited wealth and an encouraged appreciation of legitimate forms of culture, aligns readily to an early interest in architecture. More specifically, having an architecturally trained parent facilitates the development of an ideal architectural habitus. Further, middle-class parents leverage their economic capital to finesse choice of course and institution and provide financial support to their children during the lengthy architectural education.

By contrast, working-class entry into the field of architecture is against the odds. Pathways to university are more circuitous and require genuine luck to overcome structural barriers. Far fewer students from working-class backgrounds begin an architectural education at all, and completion rates are likely to be considerably lower.

Class structures the experience of an architectural education. Working-class students experience considerable culture shock as they meet new peers in the middle-class domain of a university. Indeed, working-class women foreground class rather than gender as a social identity which shapes their early university experiences. A working-class habitus makes the personal transformation required to successfully adopt the most highly valued architectural habitus more painful and problematic.

By contrast, students from middle-class backgrounds rarely highlight issues of class in their recollection of their education. Although some middle-class students frame university experiences negatively, a middle-class habitus facilitates an easier transformation into the professional identity of architect.

Finally, there are notable differences by type of institution. Progressive, arts-centred, universities favour students from middle-class backgrounds, while more technically-oriented, provincial universities draw students from less privileged backgrounds. As I will set out in my next chapter, attendance of particular universities itself plays a structuring role in relation to career paths which carry different symbolic value.

While working-class students centre issues of class in their early recollections of university, and academics note the different class composition of their universities, in other ways, issues of class are somewhat hidden in regard to access to the field.

First, the importance of inherited economic capital is downplayed as both working- and middle-class adopt a similar frame to recall childhoods of very different levels of material wealth.

Second, architects from middle-class backgrounds position the ways in which they were encouraged to appreciate legitimate forms of culture within the family as universal rather than class-structured.

Finally, to buttress Stephens (1998), academics fail to question whether their inconsistent appraisals of student talent may be related to students' social background. The misrecognition of architectural talent as independent of class, or any other social identity, is problematically used to justify the elitism of particular architecture schools.

## CHAPTER 6: PROGRESSION THROUGH THE FIELD

### Introduction

The previous chapter considered how class affects entry into the field of architecture. I argued that a middle-class upbringing facilitates a smoother progression through university. Both inherited economic capital and a middle-class habitus, founded on an encouraged appreciation of legitimate culture, play a structuring role. In particular, the presence of architect parents facilitates the development of an ideal architectural habitus. By contrast, those who experience intergenerational social mobility take more circuitous routes to enter the field. They face struggles during their higher education and are more likely to attend less prestigious universities.

In this chapter, I address career progression. Again, I contrast material drawn from interviews with working- and middle-class architects. I argue that class plays a structuring role in relation to positions held, career paths, issues of 'fit', and the assuredness with which career histories are narrated.

A middle-class habitus underpins the motivation and confidence to find career success in more prestigious parts of architecture, whose symbolic rewards go beyond the commercial, and to traverse or expand the boundaries of the field. Further, inherited economic and social capital facilitate both the desire and means to run a 'design-led' practice.

By contrast, a working-class habitus provides less ontological security in prestigious parts of the field. Although objectively successful, the status of individuals as architects is held with less confidence and careers are somewhat more limited to the traditional confines of the profession. As such, work at the edges of the field has the potential to be a mark of inadequacy. Leaving the field may engender a sense of rueful regret.

However, middle- and working-class individuals rarely afford class a structuring role in their career narratives. Architects from middle-class backgrounds tell agentic, yet modest stories, which emphasise 'luck' instead of privilege. Working-class architects similarly emphasise their personal agency, and disavow a structuring role to class, even as their career histories include examples of class disadvantages.

As outlined earlier, my working definition of 'career' is deliberately broad to allow for the complex mix of agentic actions and structural constraints that constitute individual career paths, as well as the equally intricate subjective interpretations individuals assign to their career histories in interview talk. Life history interviews among individuals spread throughout the field of architecture allowed me to explore careers in ways which did justice to their lived complexities.

## The Messiness of Architectural Careers

In overview, my research suggests only a very limited applicability of a lay interpretation of 'career', long problematised in academic scholarship, as a succession of well-ordered positions of increasing prestige. A linear order is apparent in relation to the completion of the three parts of an architectural education, which are required to use the protected title of architect. Further, career paths within larger architectural practices are, to some extent, ordered in an ascending scale of salary and prestige, from entry level Architectural Assistant, through Architect, Project Architect, Associate, to Director and Partner.

However, such pathways are rarely followed straightforwardly. Individuals reach positions of seniority and influence without formally completing all three parts of an architectural education, while others wait many years before completing their Part 3. While some early career architects are keen to progress from Architectural Assistant through Architect and Project Architect, very few interviewees foreground titled promotions when asked to narrate their career progression or future ambitions.

Instead, careers are generally far less ordered, and unfold with uneven rhythms. Careers often encompass both periods of intense effort and commitment interspersed with times of reduced motivation. Architectural careers do not necessarily end at retirement age; some architects I interviewed have carried on working well into their 70s and 80s. On the other hand, others, particularly women, leave architecture well before retirement age. Career histories intertwine with the starting and raising of families, the myriad ups and downs of family life, including the formation and breakdown of relationships. Indeed, practices are often set up and jointly managed by architects who are also romantic partners.

An architectural career is not always made up of a series of discrete jobs, which take place one after the other. As well as periods without any form of paid employment, multiple roles are often held simultaneously. Full-time academics also manage their own practices. Employee architects also carry out occasional private commissions, teach at universities, all while entering unpaid competitions, with a view to starting their own practice.

Careers develop, in part, within organisations, which evolve according to their own rhythms. Interviewees contrast the dynamism of a new practice with a perceived lack of energy of some older firms. Within established practices, a slower paced career progression is evident; 'patient diligence' is the term coined to denote steady intra-organisational progression within architecture, based on hard work and a slow evaluation of organisational fit (Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

As well as intra-organisational progression, architects frequently set up on their own. Indeed, the ideal of setting up in practice is strongly encouraged in prestigious, arts-centred universities. The initial establishment of an architectural practice is demanding, often associated with long hours and high levels of stress. Periods of independent employment as a sole practitioner may be more flexible, with greater emphasis on family, and less focus on career advancement.

Some individuals use their architectural skills to forge careers outside what would be thought of as the traditional boundaries of the profession. At other times, they abandon architecture altogether for a time, before returning to employment within the field. Indeed, in career narratives, it is not always clear whether actors choose to abandon, refashion or expand the field of architecture. While career moves between different organisations, settings and professions may be planned strategically, they are often subject to the happenstance of opportunities as they present themselves.

Subjective measures of career success are both material and symbolic. As well as objective measures such as pay and position, creative expression, pride in the design quality of completed projects, and furthering the public good are often integral to career motivations. And negative aspects of career, in addition to poor pay and exploitation, centre equally on a lack of creative opportunities, a lack of voice and negative assessments of the ethics and working cultures of certain employers.

In sum, I emphasise both the messiness of career rhythms, patterns and pathways, as well as the complexity of subjective meanings which are assigned to careers as they are lived and reconstructed in the context of a research interview.

### Ordering Architectural Careers

Gunz and Mayrhofer's (2018) Social Chronology Framework (SCF) provides a helpful framework to chart an order through this complexity, and bring class into focus.

The authors propose three elements in the analysis of careers: spatial, ontic and temporal. The first, spatial, relates to mapping; "locating career actors and their careers in a defined space internally structured by boundaries constraining and enabling careers" (ibid: 48). The ontic dimension demands a focus on the myriad ways in which actor-driven careers may unfold, taking account of structural constraints. Finally, the temporal dimension requires career transitions to be sequenced in order to establish career chronologies.

In this chapter, I first consider the spatial mapping and analyse the clustering of individuals within the field. I re-introduce the map of the field I developed in Chapter 4 to show the extent to which the careers of individuals from similar class backgrounds coalesce together in different parts of the field.

In this light, I also consider the issue of 'fit' to explore who feels at ease and unwelcome in different parts of the architectural field.

Second, I consider how agency is constrained by the structural constraints of class. Specifically, I illustrate how class relates to a highly valued norm within architecture; to set up in practice. In particular, I consider the role of class privilege in facilitating the establishment and running of a successful 'design-led' practice.

Third, I consider the temporal sequencing of class which orders individuals career narratives. Specifically, I explore how class structures career pathways which develop through an individual's career history to date, particularly those which develop at or beyond the traditional boundaries and borders of the profession. I also consider the confidence with which career narratives are told in the social context of a research interview, and how this relates to class.

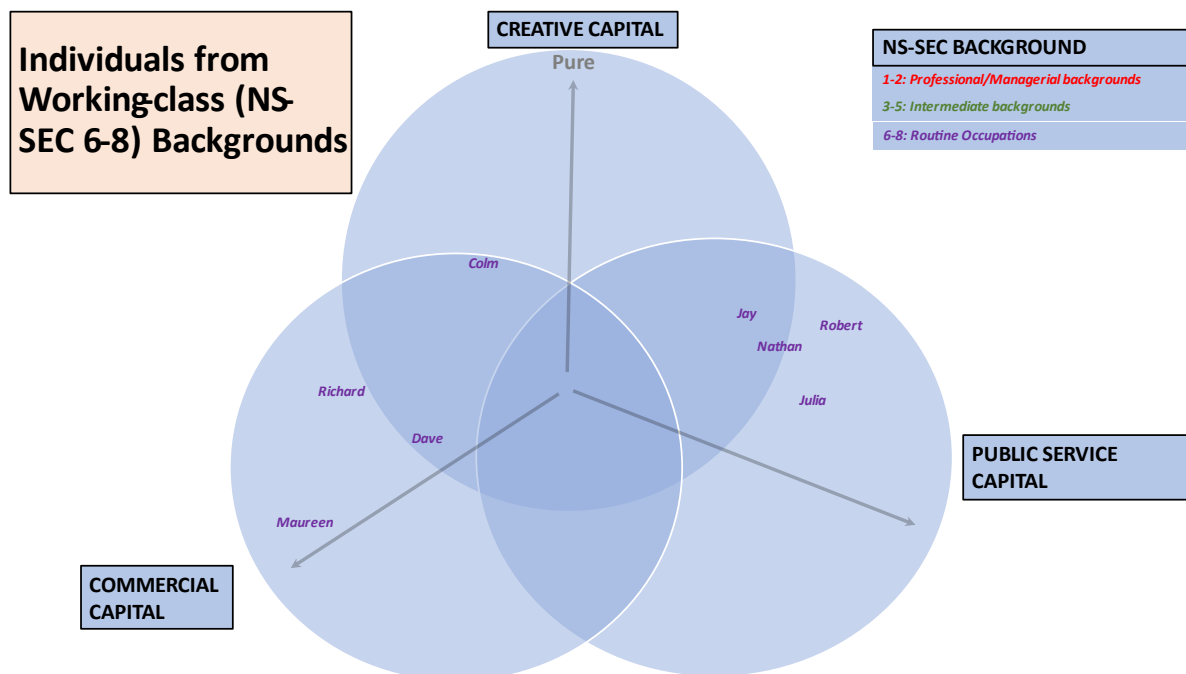
Finally, I consider whether and in which contexts actors themselves attribute a structuring role to class in relation to career progression. I show how both working- and middle-class architects often disavow class in relation to their individual careers. I also outline classed differences in how such disavowals are made.



Indeed, all eight architects from working-class (NS-SEC) backgrounds have objectively and subjectively successful careers in the field of architecture. Their individual pathways through the field are also different to each other. Nor do all the architects from highly privileged backgrounds congregate in the most symbolically valued parts of the field. Beyond this lack of simple correspondence between class and ‘objective’ position in the field, some classed patterns are apparent.

Working-class architects cluster somewhat in positions associated with high public service capital (Figure 4, below). Jay, Robert, Nathan and Julia have all found positions in this part of the field. Exploring their career histories reveals something more of their political beliefs, which drive their career ambitions and resultant position in the field.

Figure 4: Career Position of Individuals from Working-class backgrounds



Jay, an early career Architectural Assistant, left his first employment as the practice began to take on more architectural work for private-school clients. He found employment in a small practice, whose highly acclaimed work in the public and cultural sectors aligned more with his political beliefs. Julia, a mid-career architect from a very similar family class background, actively sought out a position at a well-known architects’ cooperative which was founded on overtly socialist principles. Finally, Robert, an older architect approaching retirement, navigated a career through radical housing associations, overseas development and conservation architecture driven by strong political beliefs. We see in these unfolding careers some synergy between political beliefs rooted in class background and an attraction to parts of the field governed by stronger public service capital.



The second overall pattern that is clear from my mapping of individuals is that individuals with high inherited cultural capital cluster away from the dimension of commercial capital. Instead, they tend to be positioned more highly on public service and creative capital (Compare the commercial capital axis of Figures 5 and 6 below).

Figure 5: Career Position of Individuals with high inherited cultural capital by NS-SEC

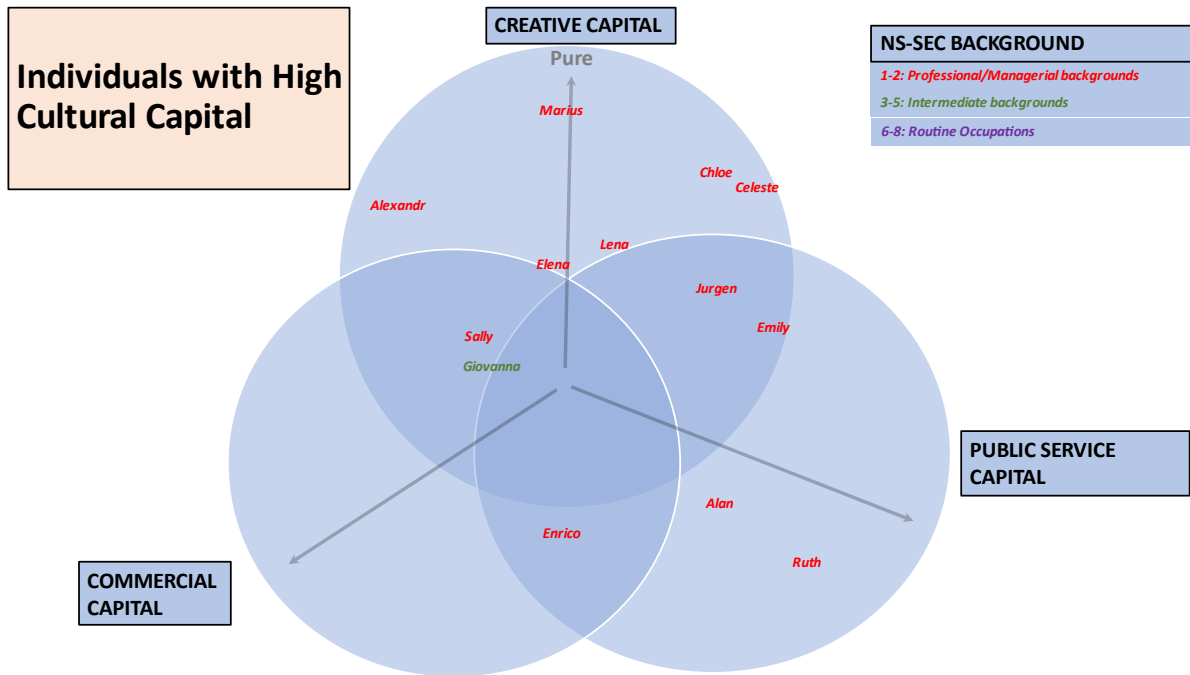
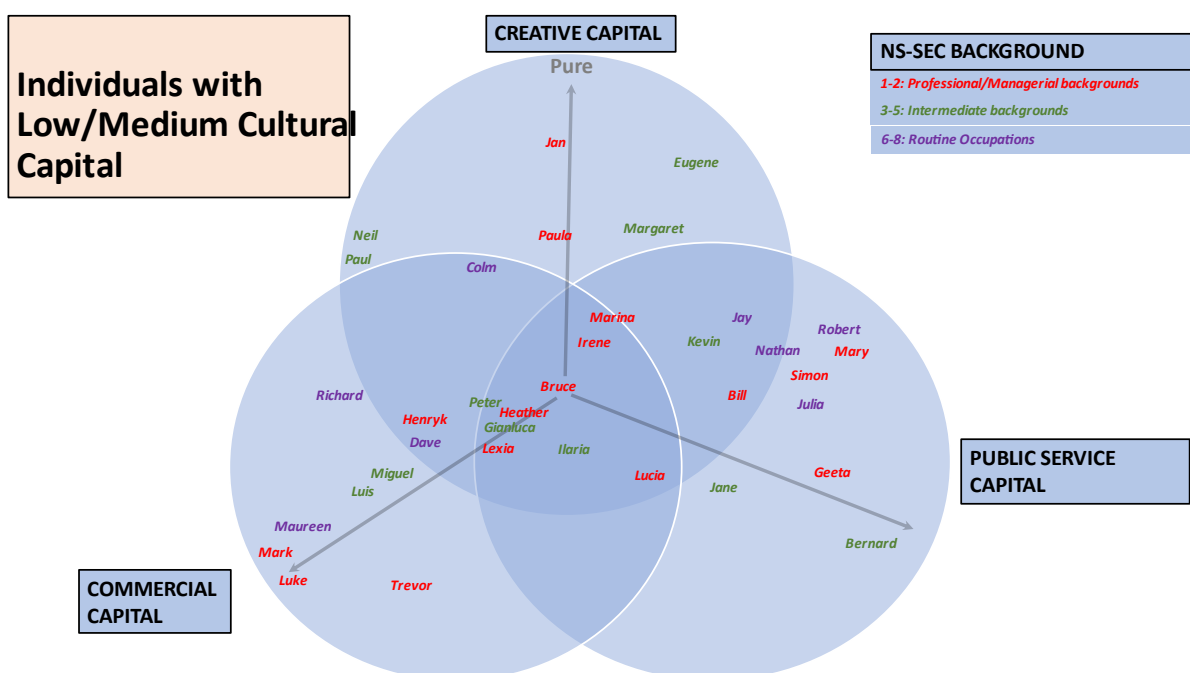


Figure 6: Career Position of Individuals with low/medium inherited cultural capital by NS-SEC



A previous chapter illustrated how the inheritance of cultural capital was naturalised within a family setting as an appreciation of legitimate culture. This facilitated entry into more prestigious universities and the adoption of an ideal architectural habitus, which values design integrity over commercial success. The patterning away from commercial capital illustrates how these effects continue through individual careers.

The career histories of Chloe, Celeste and Marius illustrate this clustering away from commercial and towards the more highly valued forms of creative capital.

Chloe is a freelance journalist and critic, while Celeste is the editor of an architectural magazine. They both come from privileged NS-SEC backgrounds, brought up to appreciate legitimate high culture, and were educated at elite schools of architecture. Neither of them completed their Part 3, choosing instead to forge careers in journalism.

Chloe recalls that, after finishing her Part 2, she could see two possible career pathways: architecturally interesting but precarious and poorly paid work at a design-led studio or dull-work with (somewhat) better pay and job security at a commercial practice. Neither of those paths were particularly attractive. Instead, she has chosen to work as a journalist and critic. Although she does not 'earn loads' and 'probably won't ever own my own home', her rejection of the commercial world of architectural practices allows her to forge a more personally meaningful career, which is 'very close to architecture'.

*I meet so many brilliant people, spend my whole time talking about architecture in a way that I never would if you are just at a desk doing door schedules or whatever, it's a very different thing.*

*So, I feel very close to architecture.* Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2

Marius is a fourth-generation architect from Eastern Europe. He came to England as a student and graduated from two of its most prestigious architectural schools. He describes his time in study as somewhat traumatic, characterised by highly intellectual and crippling competitive battles between students and academic staff. Although he paid an emotional toll, his studies instilled a love of architectural theory and discourse. When he graduated, he could not countenance working for a commercial practice:

*So, I came out of the AA, I did everything not to have to go to an office. I think I was cleaning my girlfriend's house for money for a while. I was working in my friend's shop at xxxxx... I would do anything, nothing illegal, but I would live off nothing for quite a long time. I worked in a bookshop and then at one point, this job offer came up from this school for running a design studio.* Marius, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

While he would not consider putting his architectural education to work within a corporate culture, he has successfully managed his academic career over the last decade or so. He has no regrets in eschewing corporate life, and does not envy friends who have risen through ranks of a practice.

*I enjoy all the good things about architecture, which is teaching these people, dealing with people all the time, talking about architecture whichever way I feel like, that is, of course, conducive to their learning...So, I think I'm in a very good place.* Marius, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

What both Chloe and Marius value within their careers is feeling part of a community of interest, whose sole focus is architectural discourse; 'I meet so many brilliant people, spend my whole time talking about architecture', 'dealing with people all the time, talking about architecture whichever way I feel like'. In this way, architecture is positioned as a pure interest, aligned with the ideal of creative capital and set against an antithesis of routine, repetitive, design-free labour; as Chloe puts it, sat 'at a desk doing door schedules or whatever'.

By contrast, some architects from working-class backgrounds feel more comfortable in parts of the field, which are governed more by commercial capital. For example, Richard, brought up by a single parent on a London council estate, now runs his own practice. He feels the ease with which he can socialise with commercial developers from working-class backgrounds distinguishes him from a mass of middle-class architects.

*The ability to bring work in is not very ubiquitous in architects...If you have that ability to get on with people, just talk football, cricket, rugby...I mean property developers aren't upper class, they're usually, they're not usually very bright people, they're just usually guys that are after money...A lot of them come from working-class backgrounds, or working-class quite 'wide' backgrounds.* Richard, Medium Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

When architects from working-class backgrounds operate in parts of the field governed by high creative capital, they, at times, feel the need to perform. For example, Dave and Paul both refer to themselves as 'social chameleons'. They consciously deploy specific behavioural repertoires to communicate 'professionally' in specific work settings. At times, they both recall the pain of this performance and feel out of place. Paul felt highly self-conscious of his regional accent in his first position of paid work and chose not to socialise with architect colleagues:

*I was really aware of my accent at Fosters. It made me very nervous and it made me very aware, hugely so...[At Fosters] they all had pinkie rings and they were all really posh. It made me feel.. I was really aware that I just sounded or looked more working-class* Paul, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Dave berates his inarticulacy which left him feeling 'exposed' in the design-led practice where he first worked upon qualifying:

*Well I felt intimidated in the first practice I worked at because they were all.. I couldn't speak. I've never been a really articulate speaker, but I couldn't speak as articulately as perhaps I can now. My vocabulary was very poor, and that was often exposed. Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8*

In both instances, the pain of the recollection of classed outsiderdom is very clear. Both Paul and Dave start to recall how they felt and fail to finish their sentence 'It made me feel..' and 'because they were all..'. They both, however, use repeated phatic vocabulary, 'very aware, hugely so', 'very poor', which emphasises their feelings of exposure.

Margaret has forged a career in design-led firms, and has reached a senior position at a highly prestigious practice. However, she is aware that she is judged as atypical within the field. Her self-presentation, accent and communication style mark her as outside the architectural, professional norm. By contrast, she outlines the unmerited privilege afforded to a middle-class, white male friend, who is judged to belong:

*I'm very mindful that I do not look like the archetypal architect. Nor do I sound like the archetypal architect. Nor do I talk like the, you know, and you do get judged for that... There's a chap that looks and sounded like the archetypal architect, but I know that he isn't the best architect in the world. But people would always gravitate to him, because of those three things... He was middle-class white guy, slightly plummy voice, used long words whenever he could, used long words, always be talking about architecture like it was his passion, but because I knew him very well.. (laughter). Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5]*

Oral communication forms a powerful and recurrent theme in relation to fit in different parts of the architectural field. Again, this is clearly structured by class. Both Marius and Chloe centre 'talking architecture' to summarise their careers. Their self-expression is both liberating and joyful; Chloe can 'spend my whole time talking about architecture', while Marius' career is 'talking about architecture whichever way I feel like'. A middle-class habitus instils both a desire to talk about architecture and a confidence that one's voice should be heard. In this, they are well suited to their positions as academics, critics and journalists, in parts of the field, which overtly centre discourse. They contrast their 'career as talk' with an imagined, and feared, corporate career of repetitive labour.

In professional contexts beyond architecture, knowledge of legitimate forms of high culture has been found to facilitate career progression. In the media, elite gatekeepers evaluate suitability for senior

positions by a candidate's ability to casually deploy cultural references which have no relevance to job related tasks (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). In architecture, by contrast, the ability to 'talk architecture', rather than reference other forms of high culture, is what is highly valued.

Architects with a working-class habitus, by contrast, are much more self-conscious and do not always feel they have the right to speak about architecture. And this self-consciousness is grounded in an understanding of the classed judgements of others. Working-class architects are conscious of being judged harshly, even as, like Margaret, they are critically aware of the absurdity of a 'plummy voice' being read as a marker of architectural knowledge.

The ability to communicate, and the classed judgements of others, positions architects from different class backgrounds in different parts of the field. In the commercial world of property developers, Richard feels comfortable deploying his cultural knowledge of mass-participation, male-dominated sports; this sets him apart from the middle-class mass of architects, whom he considers introverted. By contrast, in the world of design-led firms, Paul, Dave and Margaret are highly conscious of the perceived judgements of others in specific relation to their accent as a marker of a more general lack of fit.

### Setting up in Practice

Setting up in practice to realize one's own design style is a highly valued norm among architects. This goal is particularly promoted at leading 'arts-based' architectural schools. Irene, now an academic, recalls such encouragement from her time as a student at the Architectural Association. This ideal is contrasted with the dull and routine work, which would be expected of a new graduate at a more commercially oriented firm:

*If you're in the AA, you kind of want to set up your own practice a little bit...It's difficult to work for other people if you are kind of the CAD monkey. Irene, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2*

The ambition to set up in practice is clearly structured by class. In particular, the inheritance of high economic capital and the social capital accrued by a privileged upbringing and education, are highly beneficial.

Chloe and Jay, two early career architects, who have not set up their own practice, emphasise the importance of economic capital. Inherited wealth allows one of Chloe's contemporaries a clear head-start in setting out on his own:

*Like one of my friends, xxx, he's very wealthy basically... he's now got his own practice, and he's got work and he's building houses...nobody else I know has started his own practice, he's the only one.* Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2

As outlined earlier, Chloe sees two potential routes through practice; either better paid, dull but secure work for a commercial practice, or more precarious, less well-paid work for a small design-led studio. Critically, Chloe believes it is the second, poorly paid route which affords opportunities to develop an individual design style and set up on one's own:

*If you want to have your own practice you go the painful route where you work long hours for no money in a very small practice, but it means that you'll probably have more creative autonomy and you'll probably be trying to start your own practice when you're at the end of your 30s. Whereas if you go for the larger practice, you have a much safer [career]* Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2

Jay, an early career architect from a working-class background, professes no immediate ambition to start his own practice. Like Chloe, he foregrounds the financial risks in going alone. When asked whether he wants to set up his own practice, Jay replies:

*I don't want to do that. I don't want to do that because, I think the options available are to people who have lots of money behind you, you have the money to set up a practice, you have clients to take with you or people that you know who have money spare to commission a project. And on top of that, there's all of the software licences you need to buy and if you're bidding for projects, you need to have professional indemnity insurance and that's really expensive.... Because I can't afford to take on any of that risk financially...I think I'd much rather spend my time and energy trying to work my way up somewhere I like rather than setting up on my own and having all of that financial worry. That doesn't really interest me.* Jay, Architectural Assistant, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

While he outlines his hopes for career progression within his current practice, later in the interview, Jay reveals: 'I don't mean that I'm not ambitious. I would love to own my own practice'. In this way, Jay reframes an encouraged architectural ideal, to set up on one's own, as risky behaviour to be avoided. What he initially presents as his agentic choice, to focus on intra-organisational career progression, is structured largely by his limited financial resources.

By contrast, architects who inherit wealth, or have potential recourse to parental support, choose riskier career paths. Henri and Irene, both newly qualified architects from highly privileged

backgrounds who had studied at the Architectural Association, were able to set up their own practice as early career architects. As Irene recognises:

*But I always had that security net in the back, knowing that if I'm ending up on the streets, probably I can ask if somebody can support me for a while.* Irene, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

In addition to inherited economic capital, social capital, defined as an individual's "personal network and all the resources a person has access to through this network" (Boxman et al., 1991: 51), facilitates setting up in practice. The 'weak ties' of social networks can be leveraged by individuals to expand and improve personal opportunities and life outcomes.

Different forms of social capital are unevenly distributed across social classes. Socially advantaged groups enjoy three principal benefits (Li et al., 2008: 400). First, they have "larger social circles". Second, their contacts are higher status. Third, their contacts are more widely distributed "across the social spectrum" than the distribution of contacts of socially disadvantaged groups.

In architecture, attending prestigious educational institutions provides networks of higher status individuals. Mark set up his own practice after being made redundant following an economic downturn. While commercially viable, he does not feel his practice has become design-led, and his career satisfaction is very limited. Mark feels that the social connections he would have made if he had attended an independent school would have allowed his practice to develop very differently:

*I think it [my career] would have been quite different. The connections you make in the right schools, in the right social circles, matters. I've got no complaints about what I've done, but I do think that makes a big difference. I do.* Mark, Self-employed architect, NS-SEC 1-2

Julia, an experienced architect, makes a similar point about private schooling and a prestigious university education. Friends who attend the same university often decide to set up architectural practices in partnership. This amplifies the social capital held by each individual partner. Julia relates how her practice was founded:

*XXXX was privately educated, went to the Bartlett. All of his group who set up this practice were all of his students who went to the Bartlett.* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Similarly, Simon, an architect from a privileged background who studied at Cambridge, recalls how he first came to set up his practice:

*I was given a very lovely project for a hotel and some housing in Warwickshire by an old friend of mine.* Simon, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

The practice of being 'gifted' projects, particularly as a new firm is being established, is acknowledged within architecture. Sally notes that one of her principal competitors is the son of a successful architect, who has been provided 'hand-me-down projects' to help him set up:

*Really renowned long term, so it's the son [who is the practice owner of the new firm]. And there's a lot of that, and they get hand-me-down projects essentially.* Sally, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Bruce, a practice owner who is striving to make his practice more 'design-led' without an elite personal network, feels the presence of other practices, who are provided with work by wealthy relatives:

*A lot of the younger practices who seemingly set up with no experience from anecdotal evidence, most of those projects come through family and they have the ability to work and not really worry about income, they've got a nest egg or something that enables them to spend time maybe promoting themselves. They got a job through relatives which enabled them being the launchpad for them.* Bruce, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Practising architects often invoke the class background of architectural grandees to make sense of their professional success. In particular, architects mention the elite social background of Zaha Hadid. Further, both Richard Rogers and Norman Foster are said to have received their first substantial commissions from wealthy parents-in-law.

*Zaha Hadid didn't build anything for about 20 years. I think she did the one fire station in Switzerland, but didn't build for many years.... But she comes from a very, very wealthy émigré Iraqi family, so she was a very, very wealthy individual who could afford to do it.* Richard, Medium Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

*And it always amuses me with the Rogers and Foster, that they both did houses for the same in-laws, so to speak, because I think Wendy came from a fairly wealthy backgrounds, so they both got their commissions building houses from their in-laws.* Jane, Housing Association Manager, NS-SEC 3-5

In addition to the foundational myths of how starchitects got their first opportunities within the field, my research provides first-hand examples of the structuring role that can be played by inherited economic and social capital. The career history of Alexandr, an early career architect about to set up his own practice, is exemplary in this respect.

Alexandr, the son of architecturally trained father, grew up in the Czech Republic, where he, too began to study. His father was able to use his expertise to evaluate Alexandr's early architectural education.



*I started studying in Prague. I did two years in the university there. And since my dad had been through that, and I lived at home while doing it, he saw what I was doing there. And wasn't impressed at all. Alexandr, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

Alexandr left the Czech Republic and his father paid for his education at elite institutions in the United Kingdom, including the Architectural Association. During his time in education and early work experience, Alexandr was able to choose unpaid internships at leading practices across the globe.

*I also went to New York to do an internship. And that was the first time, where I was consciously looking for an office, which would look good on my resumé. The office I went to in Tokyo is also a good name, but it wasn't a conscious choice. But then I started thinking about it. So, when I went to the AA, I got lucky enough to have a CV, which I could show to people. And I think that got me into the better units at the AA. Alexandr, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

Encouraged by the structure of the education at the AA, Alexandr developed a large network of contacts and an appreciation of the different approaches to architecture:

*Since there are these many different units, in comparison to most schools. You get to meet an incredible amount of different people. And you see that whatever you thought about your approach to architecture, there are just one of many, many ways, and that opens your eyes a lot. Alexandr, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

After graduating, he found work in Prague through contacts of his father and was later accepted at a leading design-led practice in London. Finally, in his early 30s, he is in the position to set up his own practice. In line with an ideal architectural habitus strongly encouraged at the AA, Alexandr practice itself aims to be design-led. When asked about ambitions for the practice, Alexandr replies:

*As much as possible I would like to have opportunities to create a design that I could be proud of myself. So that is certainly the main, the most important thing. Alexandr, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2*

In summary, running a design-led practice is a highly valued ideal in architecture. Developing this ambition is itself classed; it is particularly encouraged at prestigious schools of architecture dominated by middle-class architects. Class also plays a facilitative role in the practicalities of setting up and running a successful design-led practice. The safety net of high inherited economic capital facilitates taking the risk of setting up in practice, while social capital in the form of a prestigious social network is also important. Specifically, successful architect parents can provide guidance and passport projects to new firms.

## Career Narratives at the Boundaries of the Field

In the previous chapter, I showed the different ways in which class structures access into the field of architecture. I also reported that, despite my interviewing people currently employed in architecture, a higher proportion of interviewees from working-class NS-SEC backgrounds had not completed all three parts of their architectural education (half or 4 of 8), compared with interviewees from professional/managerial backgrounds (less than one quarter or 6 of 28). Without completing all three parts of an architectural education, these interviewees could not use the protected title of 'architect' in professional contexts.

As well as different rates of non-completion, the way in which a 'failure' to complete an architectural education was recounted in interview talk, differs by class. For working-class interviewees, non-completion was told in career histories with a degree of regret. Architects from professional/managerial backgrounds narrated their educational decisions confidently as a personal choice, which made sense for their individual career paths.

In this section, I consider the structuring role class plays in relation to progressing through the field. I show how class influences the confidence with which architectural careers are experienced and narrated in life history interviewees. I focus specifically on career narratives at and beyond the traditional boundaries and borders of architecture, where I found class to have a notable impact. I contrast the career histories of four interviewees from privileged backgrounds (Ruth, Alan, Trevor, and Chloe) with four from intermediate or working-class backgrounds (Paul, Jane, Margaret and Dave).

Ruth is recently retired. From a privileged background, she was educated at boarding school and studied at the Architectural Association. Her career was spent largely within local authorities and Housing Associations. She also set up her own practice, which she ran for around ten years.

Early in her career, when she was working as an architect for a local authority, Ruth recalls considerable frustration that her design for a new estate was not approved by the Housing Committee:

*And I did a lovely little scheme, and it sat in a drawer, it kept going to Committee, nobody would pass it, nobody would pass it. So, you think, 'well why am I doing it?'* Ruth, Retired Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Ruth decided, therefore, to take a policy role within the same local authority. This is recounted, not as a retreat from architecture, but as a positive career move. Ruth does not lament this career choice; rather she was chasing answers as to why architecture was not as valued as she believed it should have been:

*But I did the policy [role] because I wanted to find out why my scheme was sitting in the drawer. This isn't just a question of producing something, there's something else going on, what's the background? Who's making these decisions? Why are they making them?* Ruth, Retired Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Ruth was successful in this enterprise. More broadly, she was able to carve out a successful career within a policy environment, beyond the traditional remit of professional architects. However, she does not narrate this as an abandonment of the profession. Indeed, Ruth's next career move was to establish her own architectural practice. Ruth's career history consists of moves in and out of what could be considered the traditional boundaries of the profession, but her career narrative does not entail any sense of regret or career discontinuity.

I interviewed Alan as a Professor at a prestigious school of university. Alan is from a privileged background and attended an independent day school for boys. He is one of the most objectively successful people I interviewed, having had a multifaceted career in the public and private sectors. Within local government, he rose to Departmental Director, and has led design practice at the highest levels of government. He has also been a partner at a large architect's practice, and used to run his own consultancy.

In an important sense, however, Alan is an interloper in the field of architecture. He did not study architecture as an undergraduate, let alone complete Parts 2 or 3. Instead he studied urban planning. Objectively, his career narrative could be seen as a series of shifts in and out of the field of architecture. At times, and in certain roles, he has been deeply ensconced in the field: working as a partner at a large practice; managing a team of architects on one of London's largest regeneration projects. At others, he has been much more tangentially involved, for example as a local authority Director of Planning with far broader responsibilities. However, he does not foreground exiting and re-entering the architectural field as he narrates his career. Instead, for Alan, his career is a simple matter of evaluating and responding to opportunities as they present themselves and in so far as they align with his evolving professional interests. The extracts below show how Alan assuredly narrates a career which crosses in and out of the field of architecture:

*I was far more interested in how you shape bits of city. So I went to work for xxx.. which was actually planning, it was masterplanning... And I then decided I didn't want to do planning at all. I decided I actually wanted to write...And I found a strange job...applied research...Then, by that time I was becoming quite interested in the whole business of management. And my career trajectory then was management....I kind of toyed with being a chief executive. I'm really glad I*

*didn't... And I suddenly became interested again in architecture and design. So, then I went to xxxx, and there got back into architecture and planning.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

Trevor, whose father was a company accountant, comes from a similarly privileged background. Trevor attended a state grammar school before studying architecture at Cambridge University. Approaching retirement age, he now works part-time as a lecturer. His career path has been somewhat atypical for architects, in that he has consciously moved from a career in design-led architecture in favour of more commercial development.

Upon graduating, he was proud to work for a very well-known architect on a signature project in London, famed as a design success. However, after a spell working abroad, he returned to a design-led practice in the UK and became disillusioned with what he saw as the pretensions of the profession, which focused on design ideals over more work-a-day client requirements:

*And architects were just sitting above all of this [client needs], and I just thought I don't feel comfortable, and morally I don't feel comfortable. I'm not doing anybody any favours, I'm merely pandering if I'd gone down that route. I'm merely puffing up my own self-importance, and that's not me. So, I decided to do something about that, and I made another change in my career.* Trevor, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

Instead, he worked for property developers, became Managing Director of a construction company and worked in senior roles for multidisciplinary companies. His career path, although forged in the parts of the field of architecture which is least symbolically valued, is recounted with pride and confidence.

*Yes, client-side, I've worked with contractors. As a consultant, so I've done pretty much everything. So, I do feel proud to be honest. I'm proud of the story I've just told you.* Trevor, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

Trevor does not display any uncertainty in his rejection of core architectural ideals. Instead, he feels strongly that the architectural field should be transformed to centre more on the client-needs of commercial developers.

Chloe, who works as a journalist and critic, has decided not to complete her Part 3. She cannot, therefore, use the protected term of architect. However, she emphasises that her role as a journalist has allowed her to push the boundaries of architecture, so that, in addition to writing, she is involved in editing, website design, curating architectural exhibitions and speaking at international events. This boundary pushing work is, for Chloe, none the less central to architecture. Chloe narrates her career

to date, not as a failure to qualify and enter into practice, but as a potentially new way of working within the field:

*I do see emerging a much more exciting way of being in architecture...I've got to the point now where I really don't see myself needing to go back to do part 3...I said for a while now that I feel closer to architecture than I ever did working at a practice.* Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2

Now, I will consider the careers at the borders of the architectural field of four individuals from working-class or intermediate backgrounds: Paul, Jane, Margaret and Dave. These life history interviews are narrated, at times, with less confidence. Interviewees are less assured of their legitimate place within the architectural field. In particular, work at or beyond the boundaries of architecture is not narrated as transformational or positive. Rather it may be a source of some regret.

Paul, a young architect from an intermediate NS-SEC background, draws from his family history, friendship group and place of upbringing to claim a working-class identity. At times, he has been made to feel an outsider in the field of architecture and has understood this in class terms. He was subject to symbolic violence at a prestigious London university where he was nicknamed 'Del Boy'. He also felt ill at ease among 'really posh' architects during time spent working at Fosters.

Paul had received his Part 3 shortly before our interview. He can now use the protected title of architect and is considering how this may affect the business strategy of the practice he has run for the past five years.

Paul has a highly ambivalent relationship with the professional world of architecture. On the one hand, he is keenly interested in conceptual art and seeks to develop a practice which is firmly design-led. On the other, he rejects the pretentiousness of architectural discourse: 'wanky architects that use all these words that really don't mean anything'. Paul wonders whether he can countenance developing his practice to be traditionally design-led:

*Is elevating the [design] narrative to that level going to put us in a different world? Do we want to be in that world?* Paul, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

While his strategy is a work in progress, he is drawn to develop branded events for media and advertising clients. That professional world, he feels, is more down-to-earth than high-end architecture. Paul concludes:

*A lot of people in the media are more akin to our personalities, probably. The media world is less stuffy than architecture.* Paul, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Paul's defensive ambivalence mirrors his complex family class history and class identity. At once attracted and repelled by architecture as high art, Paul does not feel wholly at ease in this part of the field. And the language he uses to portray such ambivalence is starkly definitive. In his imagining, architecture and the media are different professional worlds. In this way, Paul's interpretation of his own career may take him beyond the world of architecture. It is not a case of his imposing an assured architectural habitus into a different professional setting.

Like Paul, Margaret comes from an objectively intermediate class background. And, similarly to Paul, she identifies more as working-class, due to her longer family history, regional identity and accent.

Although her entry into the field was somewhat circuitous, Margaret has had, objectively, a highly successful career, forged within different firms of architects and design practices. She recounts her career as having taken off when she won a competition for a regeneration project.

Despite having an objectively highly successful career, Margaret feels much less assured in her position within the field of architecture. Her work in the less symbolically valued arena of estate regeneration, on which she has forged her career success, does not give her a solidity from which to talk of herself, modestly or assertively, as having a successful career. By contrast with Trevor, who aims to subvert architectural values, such that commercial capital is more highly valued, Margaret accepts the symbolic order of the field.

When asked her to what she attributes her career success, Margaret counters immediately:

*I don't know (laughter). I don't even feel like it's a successful career!..I still think I'm part-way there. I've got a long way to go (laughter). I'm just scratching the surface!* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

Margaret's interview contrasts strongly with Alan's in this respect. Instead of, like Alan, performing modesty as a way of deflecting privilege, Margaret appears unsure of her status and success in architecture. Indeed, twice during our interview, for no obvious reason, she asserted that she is probably not the best person to talk to.

Dave, as outlined earlier in this chapter, experienced a particularly difficult entry into the field of architecture, struggling at the prestigious university where he undertook his undergraduate study. Since then, his career through different practices has been objectively successful. Dave currently works as a Director in a firm of architects. However, he has not always felt comfortable in the field of architecture and considered in the past to study law. He is about to change career to become a project planner of large-scale infrastructure projects. This position will pay more:

*It may sound a bit coarse or a bit base that money's the driver, but it is. And it's because my background from where I came from. I haven't got parents who will leave me a huge amount, so I haven't got that comfort.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Dave talks about the emotional consequences of his leaving the field of architecture:

*There'll be a small tug on my heart strings I suppose, but you can never take that away from me.*

*Ian: In terms of you are an architect?*

*Yeah, I suppose it will all stop when my subs cease paying to the ARB<sup>18</sup>, then officially I can't say I'm an architect, but to have gone through the process. I suppose it's like a Royal Marine, once you're given your green beret, you've always got a green beret.* Dave, Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

On the one hand, he will always take pride in the fact that he has successfully navigated his architectural education - his 'green beret' - but will feel somewhat dismayed once he has left the profession and stopped paying his 'subs'. These slightly forced metaphors belie the sense that this new position would mark a definitive move beyond the field of architecture and some loss of professional status. It is a very different way of narrating a career pathway than the fleet-footed moves in and out of the field of architecture that punctuate career narratives of individuals from privileged backgrounds.

Finally, I consider the career path of Jane, now a Housing Association manager. Jane's family background is somewhat complicated in relation to class. Objectively, she is from an intermediate NS-SEC class background. From a military family, she attended a boarding school, where she was mocked for her accent and made to feel socially inferior by her peers at school. She considers herself as coming from a lower middle-class background, which is the wrong side of where she places the dividing line between architects who are successful and unsuccessful in the most symbolically valued parts of the field.

Jane's early career encompasses freelance work, running a small practice and periods as an employee in design-led practices. She was made redundant following an economic downturn. Jane tried to return to the labour market, but, like many women I interviewed, struggled to find suitable employment with primary caring responsibilities for a young child.

Eventually, Jane found a position within a Housing Association, where she has worked for the last fifteen years. Although her architectural skills are integral to her work - 'one of my jobs here is to

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<sup>18</sup> Architects Registration Board

critique architects' work' – she describes this position as a move 'out of architecture basically'. In part, this is to do with the nature of the job, she has lost the first-hand design work and is now a 'technical guru'. But partly, it reflects her worldview. It would be possible to position her role as expanding the boundaries of architecture or bringing an architectural habitus to a different professional setting. Instead, Jane is adamant that she 'has left architecture'.

In sum, a middle-class habitus facilitates an assured narration of career pathways among my interviewees. Irrespective of their status as formally qualified architects, the high ontological security of individuals from middle-class backgrounds allows them to straddle, expand or ignore the borders of the architectural field with ease. These individuals show little reliance on the professional label of architect in their career narratives, and so can appear rather loosely embedded in the field. Middle-class architects can make instrumental use of that loose fit in their personal career choices at and beyond traditional boundaries.

The confidence with which they narrate their career paths takes different forms. It can produce modest narratives of understated career success (Alan), assertive stories of attempts to overturn architectural values (Trevor) or the optimistic adoption a non-traditional career path (Chloe). Such careers encompass different forms of success, including positions of seniority and material benefits (Alan or Trevor), or more symbolic rewards (Chloe). But in all cases, their confident narrations of very different career paths emphasise that they have made the right career choices for themselves as individuals.

By contrast, a working-class habitus provides less ontological security within the field. While those few individuals who gain access to the field may achieve objective career success, they are more likely to stick within the traditional boundaries of architecture, while also feeling less confident that this is where they belong. Working beyond the traditional boundaries of architecture is positioned more definitively as an abandonment of architecture. Leaving the field in this way may engender certain feelings of regret.



## Classed Attributions

So far, I have outlined the structuring role class plays in relation to progression through the field of architecture. I have considered classed patterns in position within the field and related issues of perceived 'fit'. I have shown a relationship between class background and the fulfilment of a principal architectural ideal; opening and running a successful, design-led, practice. Finally, I have shown how a middle-class habitus facilitates more confident narratives of career progression, particularly at and beyond traditional professional borders.

In this final section, I consider whether, how and in which contexts, architects themselves attribute class a structuring role in their career narratives. They rarely do. The role of class is silenced in three, overlapping ways. First, architects tend to provide highly individualistic and agentic narratives of career which underplay structural barriers and enablers. Middle-class architects use a variety of discursive strategies to neutralise any accusations of privilege and tell career histories of personal merit. Most commonly, the role of luck is manipulated in career narratives to this effect. Second, and related, career narratives often reflect a belief in the ideology of meritocracy. Third, the ambivalence and ambiguities of class identification serves to downplay the salience of the class, particularly among architects from working-class origins.

Architects from middle-class backgrounds rarely afford their class background a central, structuring role as they narrate their career histories. One of the very rare exceptions is Chloe.

Chloe is an early career architect. Brought up by artist parents, she considered a career as an artist herself, before opting for architecture. She has studied at two of the most prestigious 'arts-based' educational institutions. Chloe has begun to forge a career in architectural journalism and has made a highly successful start to her career.

Chloe affords a pivotal role to her privileged upbringing in her career narratives, centring both the encouraged exposure to legitimate forms of culture within her early upbringing and her education at elite universities. In particular, she emphasises the role played by the Bartlett in giving her the confidence to begin her career in architectural journalism. Thinking about her first days at work, Chloe recalls:

*So, it was quite a steep progression, but I think if I'm honest, like going to the Bartlett was the perfect thing because it just threw me in. Like I remember walking out of my room for the first time thinking 'oh god, what is this thing that I have to do?' And just jumping in and just having to deal with it.* Chloe, Journalist, NS-SEC 1-2

There are different possible explanations to understand Chloe's unusual willingness to afford class an important role in her career narrative. First, she has less to justify. As an early career architect in architecture, Chloe has not reaped great material rewards; she honestly wonders whether she will ever earn enough to be able to afford to buy her own home in London. Second, she is highly politically engaged, as an individual. Finally, a critique of privilege sits well with her field position within politically charged architectural criticism.

Unlike Chloe, interviewees from middle-class backgrounds tend not to foreground a structuring role to class as they recall their careers. Instead, they tell highly individual stories, which emphasise their agency and personal choices. Careers are recalled as largely self-driven, as individuals respond to the happenstance of available opportunities.

It is not the case that such career histories are told as if they occur within a social vacuum. Quite the opposite. Interviewees foreground external events, in particular recessions and redundancies, as well as myriad changes to their personal circumstance, periods of illness, starting and raising families, changes to personal relationships, as they recount their career histories. However, they still centre their own processes of independent decision-making as they relate their career histories. In line with Atkinson (2010), individuals tell highly agentic 'I decided' career histories stories.

Following what has been termed a 'meritocratic turn' (Friedman et al., 2021), successful professionals come under moral pressure to tell narratives of deserved career success, which emphasise personal effort. At the same time, even the most objectively successful architects do not tell self-aggrandising stories of career success. In line with an ideal architectural habitus which disavows careerism, they tell 'modest stories' (Miles et al., 2011).

Alan, as I outlined earlier in this chapter, has had an objectively highly successful career in and beyond architecture. However, Alan underplays his objective career success. When asked how he managed to rise so rapidly in his various roles within local authorities, Alan replies:

*A combination of deaths, sackings and people leaving a job, and I was the last person standing basically. And so, at the age of 30, I was a Planning Director, without actually knowing very much about planning to be honest...I think probably there was an absence of talent at a high level. It wasn't that I was spectacularly clever, it was just that people were slightly dimmer than me (laughter). Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2*

Such modest stories downplay the structuring role of privilege. One very common discursive technique used in such career narratives way is to invoke 'luck' (Larson, 1995). In relation to family background, first of all, luck both signals wealth, but softens and distracts from a possible accusation

of unmerited privilege, making it seem as random as a role of the dice. When asked about family background, architects from wealthy backgrounds often invoke luck in this way:

*The other question [on the pre-survey questionnaire] is whether you would consider your family wealthy or average. I thought that was quite interesting because I'd never really thought about that. And looking back now, I can say well actually we were pretty bloody lucky.* Simon, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

*I am conscious that I am very lucky. Because I came up from middle, normal Italian family of the 80s, but I had a lot of opportunity..I am conscious that I am really lucky, so I would say that I can consider, I don't know, middle-class. I don't really know. It's horrible these things, that's horrible in a way.* Elena, Self-employed Interior Designer, NS-SEC 1-2

As the extract from Elena's interview illustrates, class labels may sit very uncomfortably. Although she does not articulate the reasons, repeating merely that 'it's horrible', it may be because they are accusatory, signalling levels of inequality which demand justification. Instead, invoking luck neutralises such accusations. It allows objectively wealthy individuals to claim the label of 'normal' or 'ordinary', which serves as a seemingly neutral base from which to launch a meritocratic career.

Similarly, luck is peppered throughout individual narratives of career progression, and serves much the same purpose of deflecting attention from privilege. At 'arts-based' universities, Marius, Paula and Jane all emphasise the luck of finding inspirational teachers:

*So, the good thing about it is we have, I didn't even attempt to find anyone and I was very lucky that a lot of brilliant teachers came at the same time.* Marius, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

*And I was just lucky, it coincided with this most amazing head of architecture. This guy called xxx, who died quite a long time ago, but he was extraordinarily inspirational and amazing. You can just get lucky.* Paula, Self-employed Architect NS-SEC 1-2

Lucia manages to avoid having to search for a job, because a friend was able to recommend her for her first position:

*I got really lucky because a friend of mine found two jobs, so she had to turn down, so she recommended me for the job she turned down, so she really was the key. I wasn't really good at looking for jobs.* Lucia, Senior Architect, Small Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

Henri is lucky to be put in contact with one of the architects of one of London's most iconic design projects. He also describes chance meetings with other architects with whom he felt an immediate affinity and with whom he worked productively as he set up in practice:

*Having the great luck of having met xxxxxx one of the five architects of the Festival Hall...So lucky to come across xxx and to come across xxx and those meetings were accidental but in each case we all knew we wanted to work with the other lot.* Henri, Small Practice Owner and Former Head of Architectural School, NS-SEC 1-2

All of these career histories signal aspects of the field architecture which are highly class structured – attendance at prestigious universities, social capital networks of weak ties, and felt affinity with particular individuals – and yet all foreground the randomness of ‘luck’.

While luck signals haphazard chance, in order to make such stories personally meritocratic, luck can be refashioned within career narratives to incorporate individual talents and efforts. Trevor’s career narrative is exemplary in this regard. Trevor, now a part-time academic approaching retirement, recalls how he got his first lucky break:

*Well, he [the lead architect of an iconic building in London] came up to me in the studio at Cambridge. And he said, you know, you’re doing OK, I like your work, you’re an organised guy. I need somebody to help – amazing lucky break really.*

*Ian: So, were you ready for that responsibility?*

*No, I was quite frightened by it. But I’ve never, I’m lucky because I’m a very confident chap. And so, it might be a big problem in front of me, but I’ll just say that I’ll work through it...Well I’m lucky that I work bloody hard. I came out of college when I was 25, and I’ve worked non-stop til I was 60.* Trevor, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2

Trevor’s successful career path was set in motion by meeting a well-known architect who recruited him to work on an iconic London project. This meeting, structured by privilege, is disguised in his career narrative as a chance opportunity. Luck also plays a pivotal role in providing a meritocratic justification of Trevor’s career success. Trevor is ‘lucky’ to be naturally hard working. He does not ascribe his positive working relationship to the lead architect to any shared affinity, which may be related to class; rather he is just lucky to be ‘a very confident chap’.

As well as the discursive flexibility of luck, architects employ various other techniques of class disavowal as they relate their career histories. My research reveals different beliefs and discursive strategies which serve to neutralise potential accusations of unmerited privilege.

The first is to redraw class boundaries such that individuals from ‘objectively’ privileged backgrounds position themselves as ‘ordinary’. Alan, from a highly privileged background in terms of education and

parental occupation, manages to shift the dividing line between the working-class and an unnamed elite to include himself within the mass of the working classes:

*We're all working-class if you work for a living I think.* Alan, Professor, NS-SEC 1-2

In line with recent research (Friedman et al., 2021), architects from middle-class backgrounds invoke complex family histories to provide themselves with a platform to tell a meritocratic career narrative. A story of humble family origins serves a moral purpose to justify individual career success. Henri, an architect from an upper-class background, whose family were part of his country's social and cultural elite, draws from his multi-generational family history to position himself, first as middle-class, and ultimately as working-class:

*My background is typically middle-class, but in fact I'm working-class. My great grandad was a stone mason. My grandad was a wine grower. My other granddad, my mother's father was the son of a miner. I've been, when I was in Berlin, before that I became a labourer on a building site, quite deliberately actually. I see myself as a working person, as a thinking working person.*

Henri, Small Practice Owner and Former Head of Architectural School, NS-SEC 1-2

The second strategy is for architects from middle-class backgrounds to compare up the social hierarchy rather than consider their position of relative privilege (Dorling, 2014). As outlined earlier in this chapter, middle-class architects can, with justification, point towards more privileged others, with greater family wealth or who have been passported projects by architect parents. Comparing upwards in this way allows middle-class architects to hide their own privilege.

The third strategy is to endorse the myth of meritocracy, such that the field of architecture is reported to act as a level-playing field upon which careers are forged. In particular, middle-class architects invoke education as dismantling unmerited privilege. Bill, a consultant from a professional background poses the rhetorical question:

*Doesn't training in a meritocracy mean that we've done away with this?* Bill, Consultant Town-Planner, NS-SEC 1-2

The correspondence between the habitus of middle-class individuals and prestigious institutions of learning is such that privilege may not be recognised. Ruth was privately educated and studied at the Architectural Association. She takes at face value her failure to recall any incidents of institutional classed discrimination:

*You were never told [at the AA] that you weren't good enough or that you didn't have the right background or that sort of thing.* Ruth, Retired Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

A final tactic is to refuse point blank to countenance any class talk:

*I never, ever, ever talk about class. Never Trevor, Academic, NS-SEC 1-2*

Indeed, several architects from middle-class backgrounds did not complete the class identity questions of the pre-interview questionnaire, failing to see any relevance to their career trajectories. While most architects from middle-class backgrounds are not such refuseniks as Trevor, my introduction of class into career narratives was often glossed over, met with a degree of puzzlement, and the conversation quickly moved on.

As I have highlighted throughout this and the previous chapter, working-class architects do, at times, foreground aspects of class discrimination as they recall their career histories. These include being subject to class prejudice, feelings of discomfort in particular parts of the field, as well as lacking the inherited resources (economic, social and cultural capital) which facilitate riskier career decisions.

However, as Atkinson (2010) also found, working-class architects frequently tell very similar agentic, individualistic stories as their middle-class counterparts. By exploring the career narratives of three working-class architects, Robert, Bernard and Margaret, I will bring to light some of the complex contradictions and ambiguities which characterise classed attributions.

Robert grew up on a large council estate in the midlands, where his father worked as a labourer. He spent his early career working for housing authorities, and worked overseas before setting up his own conservation architectural consultancy. He is now a part-time consultant approaching retirement age, and is highly reflexive and articulate about his personal social mobility journey, which he understands in relation to social class:

*I think anybody who ticks the 'no box' [of the class identity question in my pre-survey questionnaire] is deluding themselves in terms of class identity. If they don't recognise it, that's different. I could say I'm working-class because I work for a living and I've worked for a living all my life, but there's a difference between being a professional and having those opportunities and creating your own work than simply going to a building site and being told what to do every day. I'm in control of my own career, which my father certainly wasn't. That's the difference between working-class, you're a labourer, you take instruction and you do what you're told, whereas a middle-class person you've got much more control over how your career is progressed. Robert, Consultant and Part-time Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8*

Robert, himself, ticked the 'middle-class box' and describes his successful acculturation into the professional milieu where he has worked all his life. He firmly believes that architecture functions effectively as a meritocracy, rewarding hard work and talent throughout the field.

However, at the end of our interview, he describes instances where his class of origin has had clear effects in terms of his perceived fit and treatment within the field.

Firstly, he recalls his lack of confidence as a young architect, which he ascribes to his coming from a council estate:

*I did feel that coming from a working-class background council estate in the early days. I was conscious of that, all the way through. One tended to regard, at that young age, experienced architects, practice owners and so on as Very Important People. Partly, it's gaining confidence as you move through. Also, I do think that the attitude of practices has become much less elitist these days in terms of only taking people on from private schools. I think it's changed radically over thirty years.* Robert, Consultant and Part-time Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Much later in his career, he came into contact with people who exhibited clear forms of class prejudice, as he outlines below:

*You meet people, individuals who regard themselves as well above you. And show it. We do a lot of work with the Oxford and Cambridge Colleges and I've worked a lot in the Royal Gardens at Windsor and so on, you will meet people who regard themselves as important and are not worried about showing it to you. And who think you are trade...it's just individuals. It's not a systemic thing.* Robert, Consultant and Part-time Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Both times, the salience of class in architecture is followed quickly by a statement of disavowal: 'it's changed radically over those thirty years' and 'it's just individuals, it's not a systemic thing'. In both instances, we see the individualisation of class attributions; Robert believes it is up to individuals to themselves gain confidence and that it is only individuals who make classist judgements.

Margaret is a director at a well-known practice. Her work centres on estate regeneration, which carries less prestige in architecture. As I outlined earlier in this chapter, despite her objective career success, Margaret is less assured of her professional status.

When prompted, Margaret attributes her specific career path to her class background. Indeed, she feels her embodied cultural capital may have effectively blocked off other career paths:

*I think it's [class background] maybe the reason I do the sort of work I do. So, maybe it's informed the direction I've ended up taking. And if I wanted to go in a different direction, then maybe it would have hindered my career because maybe the [North East] accent... Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5*

However, as I touched in my previous chapter, her class identity is held very loosely. She rarely consciously reflects on her class during her working life. When she does, Margaret conceptualises class as a vague personal characteristic - 'less well travelled, less experienced, or whatever' – to be overcome by the individual, or which fades 'naturally' with the passage of time.

Bernard is an architect from a working-class background who is approaching retirement. He has forged a wide-ranging career encompassing spells as a carpenter, and an architect within housing associations. For many years, he worked as a self-employed architect and, latterly, has become a part-time academic.

Early in his career, he foregrounds his class identity. He studied at Cambridge University and felt a strong sense of superiority to the socially privileged students he encountered there:

*I had inverted snobbery, inverted working-class snobbery, that I really knew what was real and all these people from public schools were a little bit of a joke really.* Bernard, Academic, NS-SEC 3-5

Bernard positions his career pathway as wholly agentic, driven by his personality and values. His career has developed entirely by happenstance, in response to opportunities presented themselves by his network of contacts. Bernard boasts of a having enjoyed a multi-faceted career without ever having had a formal job interview. Nothing is pre-planned:

*So, my view has always been you can't really decide what your career is, you can only take what people offer to you. And so, at any one time you have a choice of what's offered.* Bernard, Academic, NS-SEC 3-5

Bernard admits to a hatred of the corporate culture and office politics which he associates with larger architectural practices. He has studiously avoided such firms throughout his career. Towards the end of the interview, however, Bernard bemoans his lack of confidence in corporate settings.

*There are certainly people who are more confident in the boardroom say, who are more comfortable in large projects, who use their middle-class culture as a skill. And it's a skill I don't have.* Bernard, Academic, NS-SEC 3-5

While his career pathway is positioned as wholly agentic, Bernard, like Margaret, suggests that certain career opportunities within the architectural field are effectively blocked off to him, as they require a specific form of embodied cultural capital. Such opportunities are available only to those who can 'use their middle-class culture as a skill'. While his spontaneous career narrative is highly agentic, the



possibility that this might be attributable to class lies under the surface, emerging only towards the end of the interview as an undeveloped afterthought.

In sum, once interviewees have entered the field of architecture, they rarely foreground the structuring role of class in relation to their career progression. In particular, architects from middle-class backgrounds signal their own talents and efforts, even as they tell 'modest stories'. Career narratives emphasise the happenstance of individual choices, rather than the structuring of opportunities by social privilege.

In response to the pressure to tell a personally meritocratic career story, the discursive ambiguity of 'luck' is invoked to pre-empt and soften accusations of unmerited privilege. Luck both nods in the direction of privilege - 'I recognise that I was lucky' - while at the same time signalling equality of opportunity; 'anyone could have been there, it just happened to be me.'

There are many other techniques of neutralisation which are employed, consciously or otherwise, by middle-class architects. These include the redrawing of class boundaries, the invocation of multi-generational familial histories, comparing up the social hierarchy, the refusal of class and the belief in the myth of meritocracy. While it is not always possible to disentangle conscious strategies of disavowal from heartfelt beliefs in equitable level-playing fields, the outcome, in either instance, is to deny class a structuring role.

Working-class architects foreground aspects of class more overtly as they narrate their careers. Issues of 'fit', examples of class prejudice, as well as a material lack of inherited economic capital, punctuate these career narratives. However, classed attributions remain uncommon and somewhat tentative. Working-class architects also tell agentic career histories, which emphasise their successful acculturation into the field of architecture, even as they recognise this acculturation may be somewhat partial.

## Summary

While there is no simple correspondence between class and principal position of employment, interviewees from more privileged backgrounds cluster in the more prestigious parts of the field which do not solely value commercial capital.

A middle-class background, fine-tuned at 'arts-centred' schools of architecture, provides the motivation and confidence successfully to work in more prestigious parts of the field, including journalism and design-led practices. Working-class architects are more likely to (be made to) feel at ease in parts of the field, which are structured by commercial capital and provide less symbolic reward.

Running a design-led practice is a highly valued ideal in architecture. Developing this ambition is itself classed; it is particularly encouraged at prestigious schools of architecture dominated by middle-class architects. Class also plays a facilitative role in the practicalities of setting up and running a successful design-led practice. The safety net of high inherited economic capital mitigates the risk of setting out alone, while social capital in the form of a social network provides employment opportunities. Specifically, successful architect parents can provide guidance and passport projects to new firms.

Class privilege is also apparent in how architects narrate the success of careers, particularly at and beyond the traditional borders of the field. The high ontological security associated with a privileged class background and identity allows certain individuals to traverse or expand the boundaries of the architectural field, without necessarily framing their careers as breaking professional boundaries. Whether their resultant rewards are more symbolic or material, their career paths and decisions are recounted confidently as stories of personal success.

By contrast, a working-class habitus provides less ontological security within many parts of the field. The status of individuals as architects is held more tenuously, and so career success is confined more to the traditional confines of the profession. As such, work at the edges of the field has the potential to be a mark of inadequacy. Leaving the field may engender a sense of rueful regret, even personal failure.

Once interviewees have entered the field of architecture, they rarely foreground the structuring role of class in relation to their own career paths. In particular, architects from middle-class backgrounds tell agentic, yet modest stories, which emphasise 'luck' as a way to deflect accusations of privilege. Other techniques of neutralisation, which disavow privilege, include the redrawing of class boundaries, invocation of multi-generational family histories, a belief in the myth of meritocracy and a refusal to countenance class talk.

Working-class architects foreground aspects of class more frequently in their career narratives. Issues of 'fit', examples of class prejudice, and a lack of inherited economic capital, are all present in career histories. However, classed attributions are uncommon. Like their middle-class counterparts, working-class architects tell agentic career histories, which emphasise their successful acculturation into the field, even as their narratives contain evidence that such acculturation may remain somewhat incomplete.

## CHAPTER 7: THE MANAGEMENT OF CLASS

### Introduction

In previous chapters, I have analysed career progression from the perspective of individuals as they enter the field (Chapter 5), and forge careers in architecture (Chapter 6). I have shown that both access and progression are highly class structured. However, the structuring role of class is rarely foregrounded by individuals as they make sense of their own careers. While class is highly salient, it is frequently silent.

In this chapter, I shift the emphasis to consider issues of management. Specifically, I consider how the attitudes and actions of holders of managerial power in the field of architecture affect the relationship between class and career progression.

Architecture, theorised as a Bourdieusian field, is 'semi-autonomous', driven not only by internal dynamics, but also subject to external pressures. In relation to class and career progression, I analyse whether and how managers in the field have been activated by two highly complex policy arenas, which have largely developed outside of architecture: EDI and 'social mobility'.

As outlined in my Introduction, the evolution of EDI policy discourse and organisational practice is by no means uniform or linear. Within this complexity, I set out two broad and interconnected trends, which are highly salient to the adoption of EDI rhetoric and resultant practice in the field of architecture.

The first is the development from a liberal approach to equalities to a neo-liberal orientation to managing EDI oriented around the business case and concomitant rejection of radical alternatives (Zanoni et al., 2010; Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011; Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). Neo-liberal arguments centred on the business case have achieved a degree of ascendancy, spreading beyond private companies to be endorsed in the voluntary and public sectors (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010; Conley and Page, 2017).

The second is an expansion of the focus of EDI management from historically disadvantaged groups in favour of a much broader range of individual differences, including personality and working styles (Zanoni et al., 2010; Oswick and Noon, 2014). In theory, at least, all aspects of diversity are equally valued and social disadvantages are theoretically dissolved (Liff, 1996).

These fundamental shifts, disguised in an overarching discourse of progression from mere equalities to more genuine forms of inclusion (Oswick and Noon, 2014), serve to depoliticise EDI, undermine its relation to social justice and weaken its progressive potential.

Class enters organisational diversity policy and practice via the work of the social ‘mobility industry’ (Ashley and Empson, 2013). Professional leadership bodies and employer organisations are tasked with improving social inclusion by improving classed barriers to professional access and progression. In a clear corollary with the evolution of EDI policy and practice, this is a neo-liberal agenda, which depoliticises and individualises, so that classed exclusion is transformed into a managerial problem requiring technical, business-oriented solutions.

Managerial responses to these policy agendas are highly contingent, differing by sector, profession, organisation and employment position (Conley and Page, 2017; Janssens and Zanoni, 2005). This chapter, therefore, considers whether and how holders of managerial power throughout the field of architecture have adopted, adapted, ignored or resisted these external policy agendas. In line with the overarching focus of my thesis, I analyse the implications of this professional response as regards the relation between class and career progression. Thus, the subquestion I consider in this chapter – how does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression in architecture? – breaks down into a number of further questions:

- In what ways have holders of managerial power in the field reacted to external EDI and social mobility agendas?
- What is the position of class within EDI management? Is class managed as a diversity issue? And to what effect?
- How does this diversity work affect managerial practices, e.g. in relation to recruitment, and how do these practices in turn impact on the relation between class and career progression?

### Argument

I argue that holders of managerial power throughout the field of architecture have recently come to endorse, rhetorically and somewhat superficially, the importance of EDI management. Managers adopt a hybrid liberal/neo-liberal orientation to policy, which largely mirrors the ideological evolution of policy developed outside architecture. However, this approach is highly contradictory, and problematically depoliticises class in a way which makes progressive change unlikely. While resultant managerial practices may facilitate access into the field for a lucky few who are beneficiaries, they serve equally to deflect the need for more fundamental organisational and professional change. Therefore, the adoption of a liberal/neo-liberal orientation to EDI policy may do little to make the field genuinely inclusive in terms of class.

Despite this superficial endorsement throughout the field, EDI management is yet to take strong hold in architecture. This can be explained, firstly, by the structure of the field. The numeric domination of micro-practices with only minimal HR functions is such that a liberal diversity agenda, which requires

bureaucratic management, is not easy to implement. Further, in larger practices, individuals who are committed to or tasked with leading on issues of diversity lack authority and positional power. Second, a diversity discourse is deflected and undermined by dominant values within the field, particularly in relation to creative capital. A focus on architectural design over practice management, a belief in the inherent professionalism and equal status of design-focused architects, and the common conviction that talent is an individual characteristic which exists free of social identities, all contribute to an undermining of EDI as a managerial agenda. In this light, architecture is seen by managers to transcend the need to manage diversity. Third, there are specific reasons why class is rarely considered within EDI. In comparison with gender and ethnicity, both of which have a longer history and are underpinned by legislative requirements, class is a very new, and entirely voluntaristic, agenda. Managers highlight technical issues about how to measure and operationalise class as a diversity issue, and raise concerns about social embarrassment and stigma.

As a liberal/neo-liberal EDI agenda is highly problematic, it could be argued that its failure to take root in the field of architecture is, somewhat ironically, to be welcomed. However, as I have shown in earlier chapters, the status quo is highly unequal in relation to classed rewards in the field. Furthermore, current managerial practices, particularly informal recruitment based, at times, on homophily and cultural affinity, may serve to reproduce and exacerbate classed inequalities.

Progressive potential in architecture is rooted in public service capital. The field of architecture attracts individuals who are politically motivated to think through how to make more genuine forms of inclusion. Although evidence of action and success is thin on the ground, this progressive potential finds concrete form in a more radical orientation to EDI, predicated on the distributed ownership of cooperatives and shared distribution of managerial responsibilities.

### Evidence

Theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field, managerial power is not held centrally, but is distributed throughout different organisations and individuals, dependent on position and relationships with other actors (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011). In order to take analytic account of the distribution of managerial power, I draw evidence from three different positions within the field: from material produced by the RIBA, from the websites of leading employers and from my interview research among managers in the field of architecture.

First, I consider the RIBA. In a professional leadership role, the RIBA provides resources, training and professional development services to individual members and chartered practices, who can use the RIBA affix. While by no means all practising architects choose to be members, in total, the RIBA has a

“membership of 40,000 individuals in over 100 countries and 3,600 UK-based accredited practices”<sup>19</sup>.

Spurred on both by the development of external EDI and social mobility policies beyond the field of architecture, as well as internal pressures from practising architects and press campaigns, the RIBA’s work on EDI has gathered pace recently. From a position of little activity just a few decades ago, the RIBA now positions its work on EDI as central to its professional role<sup>20</sup>. I briefly trace this evolution, and, in particular, analyse two recent documents which are central to the RIBA’s work: The Social Mobility Action Plan (RIBA, 2018) and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (RIBA, 2019a).

Second, I outline how leading architectural practices present their approach to issues of EDI. Specifically, I analyse output created by the 30 largest architectural employers in the United Kingdom (Architects Journal, 2019). This list is headed by two practices, Fosters and Partners and BDP, both of which employ just over 1,000 staff in total, including, in each case, nearly 400 qualified architects. Overall, the average (mean) practice size is 290 individuals, comprised, on average, of 130 qualified architects.

To source material for analysis, I reviewed the websites of these leading employers for any information on their approach to EDI<sup>21</sup>. This was generally sited in sections on careers, company culture or general information about the practice. An analysis of material derived from websites in no way represents an audit of all activities that practices carry out under the aegis of EDI. However, it is a valid way to assess the information practices choose to foreground.

As many as nine of the thirty practices did not present any relevant information. This is itself revealing, suggesting that many of these large employers do not see a particular need to foreground their work on EDI in order to attract potential candidates or portray themselves in a positive light to potential clients and the public.

Third, I analyse material derived from my interview research. I draw from the subset of my interviewees, who have had the chance to manage EDI issues in the field. The 27 interviewees are made up of current or past practice owners (12), architects with managerial responsibility as employees (10), Business and Human Resource Managers (3) and recruitment consultants (2).

While these include some representation of employees at large and medium sized practices, I only conducted three interviews with architects who worked for any of the 30 largest employers. Instead, and in line with the structure of the architectural labour market, which is dominated by sole

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ribacharteredpracticesdirectories.co.uk/riba/thelist/ribathelist2019/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.architecture.com/about> ‘Being inclusive, ethical, environmentally aware and collaborative underpins all that we do’

<sup>21</sup> The content of the websites was reviewed 20/08/2019.

practitioners and micro-practices (ACE, 2016), most of my interviewees own or work for small organisations of around 10-20 employees. Although these individuals hold managerial responsibility, this is often in organisations without a separate HR function, let alone any in-house diversity specialist.

Interviewees are spread throughout the field of architecture, working in a mix of 'design-led' practices and more commercially oriented firms. In line with my overall sample, which by no means straightforwardly reflects the field, near equal numbers of men and women (14 vs 13) hold positions of managerial authority within the field. Managers also emanate from different class backgrounds.

In this way, I consider how class is managed from three vantage points; from the perspective of the body which adopts a leadership role, from its largest employers, and the mainly smaller practice owners and managers whom I interviewed directly.

Drawing material from three different sources allows me to make important comparisons. The first is position within the field. I contrast the stated policy position of the body which leads the profession with the position and practices of employer organisations. The second comparison is size of firm. I contrast the 30 largest employers with managers of much smaller practices whom I interviewed directly. Third, I compare how EDI is represented as an ideal, to set a professional standard or create a positive impression on a website, with managerial practices revealed through interview research. While interviews are themselves a social performance involving impression management, they do reveal more of the ambivalences and ambiguities of managing EDI in practice.

Of course, these comparisons are not 'like for like', in that smaller practices inevitably have fewer resources than large employers. Further, I draw different forms of material for analysis: the presentation of EDI as ideal of strategic and policy intent as outlined by the RIBA, its presence within a broader public display in the case of large employers, and in relation to direct questioning among my interviewee sample. My analysis aims to take account of these key differences. None the less, this multiplicity of vantage points allows me to explore my research subquestion - how does managerial action affect the relation between class and career progression in architecture? - as both an emerging ideal and in relation to contemporary practice.



## Structure

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first, I use a framework developed from Miller (1996), who outlines three different political orientations – liberal, neo-liberal and radical - which guide organisational actions. In turn, I consider the positioning of the RIBA, large employers and small practice owners. I show how all three groups, with some minimal translation, adopt a hybrid liberal/neo-liberal approach to managing EDI, which has developed outside the field of architecture. Although this represents a positive, if superficial, championing of the importance of EDI management, I argue that this is unlikely to carry substantial progressive effects.

In the second section, drawn largely from interview material, I show that more ambivalent or negative orientations lie below the positive rhetoric. These include a begrudging instrumentalism and a somewhat cynical dismissal of EDI. Relatedly, managers at times adopt the attitude that architecture, as a naturally progressive profession, transcends the need to manage diversity. I also detail negative actions in relation to recruitment, which run contrary to architects' avowed approach to managing diversity, and which may produce regressive effects.

Third, I outline who does the work of managing diversity in the field of architecture. I argue that managers who show greater commitment and insight into the need to manage diversity sit outside the norm of a white, male, middle-class owner-manager. However, such individuals are scarce in the field and tend to lack positional authority.

## 1: EDI: Positive Orientations and Practice

In this first section, I analyse the orientation of the RIBA, large employers and small practice owners with regard to EDI management, and the position of class within this work. I show how all three groups adopt a similar, hybrid liberal/neo-liberal position. Although this orientation is positive in the very limited sense of superficially endorsing the importance of diversity in architecture, this is unlikely to carry substantial progressive effects. A radical orientation, although only adopted very minimally in the field, has more progressive potential.

### Analytic Framework

As a theoretical framework, I derive a typology from Miller (1996) and Jewson and Mason (1986), who outline three different political orientations – liberal, neo-liberal and radical - which guide organisational strategies and actions (summarised in Table 16 below). This simple typology allows me to chart the development of diversity management in the field of architecture.

#### *Liberal*

A liberal approach to EDI aims to banish prejudicial attitudes and discrimination in order to facilitate free competition within labour markets (Jewson and Mason, 1986: 314). The liberal goal is to introduce fair policies and procedures, based on “principles of rational-legality and bureaucratic impartiality” (ibid: 313), such that individuals, irrespective of their social categorisation and group affinities, “are enabled freely and equally to compete for social rewards” (ibid: 307). The goal is therefore equality of opportunity.

In order for this liberal ideal to be realized, “positive actions” may be required to assist individuals within social groups who have been “historically disadvantaged” (Miller, 1996: 205). In addition to workplace training, these include “family friendly policies”, “culturally sensitive arrangements in the workplace” and the monitoring of rates of inclusion of women and ethnic minorities (Miller, 1996: 205). The goal of such positive and affirmative action remains firmly liberal; to create a level playing field which facilitates fair competition between individuals.

#### *Neo-liberal*

A neo-liberal political perspective is associated with the ‘business case’ for diversity (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). This argues that effective diversity management can go hand in hand with improved organisational performance. The goal is the “*maximization of individual potential*” (Miller, 1996: 205, emphasis in original), which in turn increases business profitability. To achieve this goal requires a focus on organisational culture. The promotion of a vision statement and improved internal communication are some of the managerial techniques required to align individual with business objectives and forge a strong organisational culture.

### Radical

Radical approaches to equality contrast strongly with liberal and neoliberal formulations. A radical perspective rejects the liberal ideal of equality as fair competition between individuals endowed with different skills and talents. Instead, a radical approach argues that talent is itself a social construction, which serves to disguise and safeguard elite interests (Jewson and Mason, 1986).

As such, radical organisational EDI policies should provide “an opportunity to advance the sectional interests of the oppressed” (ibid: 320), thereby increasing solidarity and collective awareness of inequitable treatment of certain groups within the workplace.

Radical approaches can sit within equality initiatives; principally in the form of positive discrimination to ensure high levels of representation of historically excluded social groups (Miller, 1996). Further, radical approaches may aim for ‘equality of condition’ within the workplace. Organisational actions to achieve this form of equality include the restriction and equalisation of working hours, a “transparent payment structure” and efforts to “curb directors’ pay” (ibid, 211).

Table 16: Organisational Approaches to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Political perspective	Principle	Strategy	Type of Equality
<b>Equality Initiatives:</b>			
Liberal: Fair	Fair equal opportunity	Level playing field	Equality of opportunity
Liberal: Positive	Positive action	Assistance to disadvantaged social groups	Equality of opportunity
Liberal: Progressive	Strong affirmative action	Give positive preference to certain groups	Moving towards equality of outcome
Radical	Positive discrimination	Proportional equal representation	Equality of outcome
<b>Managing Diversity:</b>			
Neo-liberal	Maximise individual potential	Use diversity to add value	Equality = profitability
<b>Equality of Condition:</b>			
Radical	Parity in terms and conditions	Challenge existing notions of merit and pay hierarchies	Equality of condition

Based on Miller (1996: 205-11)

### The RIBA and EDI

First, I consider the RIBA, to show how it has evolved over the last few decades from paying little attention to EDI, to positioning EDI management as central to its purpose. A flurry of recent activity has seen the RIBA establish various working groups, activities, policies and practices, which carry substantive progressive intent.

I place the RIBA centrally within the field of architecture (see Figure 2 in Chapter 4). The RIBA promotes a synthesis of all three principal forms of capital - creative, public service and commercial – in its leadership role. This is evident in the RIBA's Strategic Review of the Profession (RIBA, 1992; 1993; 1995), a substantial reform strategy, carried out over three years in a time of professional crisis.

The Strategic Review establishes architecture as a troubled profession, which struggles to cope with growing client expectations, endures a problematic relationship with the rest of the construction industry and has suffered a severe reduction in public sector work. The RIBA argues that architects have two principal assets they can draw from to effectively enact professional reform: architects know how to design (creative capital) and speak for end users of buildings (public service capital):

*[Architects have] only two real sources of power – their ability to interpret user needs and their skill in turning user aspirations into built reality through the disciplined exercise of design imagination (RIBA, 1993: 1).*

To succeed, the Strategic Review argues that the profession needs to reform. Architects need to work flexibly to deliver new services, embrace new technologies and improve knowledge management. In this way, they can become effective, client-focused leaders within the construction industry. In short, they need to embrace commercial capital without losing mastery of their public service and creative capital.

#### *From Ignoring Diversity...*

The Strategic Review makes no mention of issues of EDI or social mobility. It does not include any discussion of which social groups make up the profession of architecture and there is no acknowledgement that the profession may be socially exclusive. Accordingly, there is no consideration that increased diversity and inclusion may be a solution to the problems of the profession. As such, the Strategic Review plays neither to equalities as an issue of social justice nor the emerging ideal of diversity as a potential business benefit.

Since the seminal Strategic Review, there have been a number of smaller-scale interventions led by the RIBA, which have proposed strategic reforms to safeguard the future of architecture as a profession in crisis (White, 2005; RIBA, 2010). These too, have paid little or no attention to issues of diversity or social mobility.

#### *... to Embracing Diversity*

In line with early practice outside the field of architecture (Zanoni et al., 2010), the RIBA's early focus of diversity was on women and ethnic minorities. Initial work took the form of research to understand

gendered exclusion in the profession (De Graft-Johnson et al. 2003) as well as the representation and experience of minority ethnic students and professionals (CABE, 2004).

Over the last decade or so, RIBA's work on EDI has gathered pace. It has now an established programme of work, and has developed a range of different small-scale initiatives, including practice role models, individual diversity role models and a mentoring scheme. The RIBA manages a Diversity and Inclusion working group, 'Architects for Change', whose strategic work is guided by seven different 'issues for action': "social mobility, gender parity, BAME representation, LGBTQ+ communities, disability, mental health and wellbeing, religion and belief" (RIBA, 2019a: 2-4). While class is not mentioned directly, it is clearly signalled by the emphasis on social mobility.

More recently still, the RIBA has published a Social Mobility Action Plan (RIBA, 2018), Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (RIBA, 2019a) and appointed of a Director of Inclusion and Diversity in 2020.

The RIBA now centres inclusion in its core, public-facing definition: 'Being inclusive, ethical, environmentally aware and collaborative underpins all that we do'<sup>22</sup>. One of its five guiding principles is to promote diversity and inclusion:

*Reflect the diversity of the population in our workforce...by adopting reforms and policies that promote diversity and inclusion within our own business practices<sup>23</sup>*

So what drives this seemingly revolutionary change from complete disinterest in issues of diversity at a time of professional crisis, to the RIBA's contemporary position where inclusivity 'underpins all that we do'?

It is certainly possible to delineate a range of factors, both internal and external to the field of architecture, which may lie behind this volte-face. Internally, the activism of groups of practising architects such as Women in Architecture, press campaigns on gender equality (Building Design, 2005), and the sporadic *cris de coeur* of architectural grandees (Building Design, 2006) may all have applied upward pressure. Beyond the field, the expansion of equalities legislation, which culminated in the Equality Act (2010), as well as the specific work of the 'mobility industry' may have played a part. Indeed, the RIBA is a named contributor to *Unleashing Aspirations* (Cabinet Office, 2009), and was an early signatory of the former Deputy Prime Minister's Nick Clegg's Social Business Compact.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.architecture.com/about>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.architecture.com/about/strategy-and-purpose/future-of-the-profession>

While this list is inexhaustive, in many ways, it is beyond this thesis to work out all the reasons why, over the course of just a few decades, the RIBA's position has seemingly changed so dramatically. However, the contrast between the absence of diversity from the Strategic Review and more recent work on professional reform, and its prominence in public facing position statements, means it should not be taken at face value.

Instead, I attribute the RIBA's prominent support for diversity as a reflection of broader trends beyond the field of architecture. In his account of the rise of 'diversity' as a contemporary discourse, Vertovec (2012: 287) argues that "we are living in the age of diversity". Diversity functions as a "normative meta-narrative". Although diversity talk is frequently ambiguous, contradictory and banal, the normative ideal that diversity is "the right thing to do" is now an accepted common sense that has permeated across different organisations, professions and institutions (ibid: 306). In this light, the RIBA's overarching promotion of 'diversity', and its more contemporary cousin, 'inclusion' (Oswick and Noon, 2014), may represent a somewhat superficial adoption of fashionable policy rhetoric.

#### *RIBA's position: Liberal/Neo-liberal*

By analysing the content of the Social Mobility Action Plan (RIBA, 2018) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (RIBA, 2019a), I look beneath the superficial adoption of diversity as common sense to outline the specific positioning of the RIBA's work.

In its EDI strategy, the RIBA argues that the profession should aim to be "representative of the society it serves", (RIBA, 2019a: 1), emphasising that "currently under-represented groups [should] become better represented within the profession". By advocating proportional equal representation within the profession, the RIBA's diversity work signals a degree of radical intent, according to Miller's typology. However, beyond this aspiration, recommended actions are never themselves radical. There is no advocacy for any form of positive discrimination, which could represent an effective way of redressing historical injustices to guarantee equal representation (Noon, 2010).

Beyond the aspiration for equal representation, proposed actions are resolutely liberal. The RIBA (2019a:1) suggests that "equal access" should be "based on talent and merit". In this way, talent is positioned as a characteristic which exists independently of social group membership. This is highly problematic, given evidence which problematises talent as socially constructed by particular social groups to the exclusion of others (Sommerlad, 2012; Ingram and Allen, 2019). In relation to my specific research focus, there is no consideration that architectural talent may be classed in ways which disguise and sanctify elite interests (Stevens, 1998).

The overarching positioning of the RIBA's EDI Strategy is neo-liberal. Mirroring the discourse of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2012), which argues that a diverse workforce will improve the United Kingdom's professional competitiveness, the RIBA (2019a: 1) positions architecture as a profession "in competition for talent". A diverse workforce will, according to this logic, provide a "commercial competitive advantage":

The profession must be able to attract the very best, in a world in which there is increasing competition for talent and at a time when higher education costs are spiralling upwards. A diverse workforce will help RIBA chartered practices in the UK and worldwide to maintain a creative, cultural and commercial competitive advantage (RIBA, 2019a, 1)

Similarly, the overarching framing of the RIBA's Social Mobility Action Plan is neo-liberal. It elides the business case for diversity – "our profession thrives by attracting the best and most diverse talent" – with a liberal notion of equality as equal treatment on a level playing field, where architects enjoy opportunities to maximise their individual potential and forge careers "regardless of their family background, school or where they live" (RIBA, 2018: 1-3).

In line with dominant terminology of the broader social mobility industry, the Action Plan avoids the use of class as a politically charged term, which may point towards the need for fundamental change to address structural inequalities. Instead, the liberal focus is on providing actions to increase the representation of individuals from "lower socio-economic backgrounds" (ibid: 5), so that they can compete on a level playing field.

In this light, a proposed solution to the barrier of rising costs of an architectural education is to provide detailed information on returns on investment (ibid: 10), such that students and institutions can compete to maximise material reward. As outlined in an earlier chapter, 'elite' institutions are highly structured by class. There is a danger, not recognised within the Action Plan, that a focus on returns on investment will further increase the value of architectural degrees from such institutions. This may incentivise middle-class parents to ensure it is their children who attend these universities, which will exacerbate classed inequalities.

While the Action Plan argues that some, implicitly working-class, students feel that they do not belong in the profession, resultant recommendations are firmly liberal (ibid: 10). Proposed solutions do not include substantive change to the cultures of schools of architecture or firms of architects. Architecture tutors are encouraged to undergo unconscious bias training, which has not been found to create inclusive cultures (Noon, 2018). A further recommendation is that students learning to manage their own wellbeing and experiences of difference more effectively. In this way, students are

individually responsabilised to build their own resilience in order to improve social inclusion in the academy (RIBA, 2018: 10). This is a 'deficit model' of inclusion, which places the emphasis on individuals to transform themselves and obviates for need for organisational cultural change (Liff and Cameron, 1997; Kersten, 2000).

In sum, RIBA's work on professional reform has up until recently ignored issues of EDI and social mobility. In a more recent flurry of activity, both are given prominence. However, this may reflect an adoption of a highly generalised common-sense that 'diversity', however loosely defined, is the right thing to do. Proposed solutions to increase professional access are rather mechanistic; there is little recognition that the exclusionary culture of key institutions within the profession may be more profoundly socially exclusive. When social mobility is considered in detail by the RIBA, it takes a neo-liberal formulation, which conflates the business case for diversity with liberal solutions to create a level playing field. This 'deficit model' effectively makes working-class individuals responsible for paving their own professional pathways to solve the problem of social mobility.

### Architectural Employers

While the RIBA formally leads the profession, its relationship with practising architects has been somewhat strained since its inception (Saint, 1983; Till, 2013). Further, many practising architects and architectural firms are not RIBA members. Therefore, architects have no need to slavishly follow the RIBA's lead, and we should not read off the orientations and attitudes of architectural employers from the public position of the RIBA.

In this light, I outline the orientation and action of architectural employers, drawing from the websites of leading employers, as well as holders of managerial power whom I interviewed directly. Again, I use Miller's (1996) typology to structure my findings.

### *Liberal*

Starting with large employers, a 'liberal: fair' approach, defined by Miller (1996) as aiming to create a level playing field to ensure equality of opportunity, is commonplace. In total, 14 of the 30 leading practices adopt this orientation on their websites. Some large employers provide only minimal information, stating merely that they are 'an equal opportunities employer'. Practices adopting a liberal orientation emphasise equal opportunities and the equal treatment of individuals irrespective of social group membership:

*Equal opportunities employer and treats all job applicants equally irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability or religion.* Allford Hall Monaghan Morris



*As an equal opportunity employer, all qualified job applicants will be considered for employment without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation.* Stride Treglown

In line with a liberal ideal, and closely mirroring the professional lead provided by the RIBA, this identity-blind approach positions architectural ‘talent’ as a characteristic of an individual which exists independently of any social group membership:

*We are an equal opportunities employer and recruit on talent alone.* Scott Brownrigg

Such a liberal orientation was also a common response to my raising issues of EDI in interview research. Interviewees often foreground issues of recruitment when asked to outline their approach to managing EDI. Richard, who owns a commercially oriented firm, Maureen who works for a commercial developer, and Margaret, who leads on recruitment for a large- design-oriented firm, all respond very similarly:

*We really do recruit the best that comes in.* Maureen, Design Director for Commercial Developer, NS-SEC 6-8

*Personally, it’s best for the job.* Richard, Medium Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

*We just do employ people on merit.* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

All three managers state that they address EDI issues by adopting an identity-blind approach, which privileges individual ability, skills and talent to provide equality of opportunity. Despite these somewhat knee-jerk responses, invoked as a mantra of fair practice, I will show later in this chapter that liberal ideals are far less clear-cut in organisational practice.

### Positive Actions

In order for this liberal ideal to be realized, “positive actions” may be required to assist individuals within social groups who have been “historically disadvantaged” (Miller, 1996: 205). The goal of such positive actions remains firmly liberal; to create a level playing field which facilitates fair competition between individuals.

While such positive actions are only highlighted on 3 of the 30 websites of leading architectural employers, probing further in interview research, reveals evidence of a range of positive actions, even among the managers of mainly smaller firms I interviewed directly (see Table 17 below).

Table 17: ‘Liberal: Positive’ Organisational Policies and Practices

Broad Area of Focus	Policy or Practice	Main Focus
Access to the Profession	Outreach work with local schools	Social background
Access to the Profession	Provision of work experience	Social background
Access to the Profession	Mentoring ‘A’ level students	Social background
Access to the Profession	Considering Apprenticeships	Social background
Access to the Profession	Stephen Lawrence Foundation	Ethnicity
Recruitment	Interviewer diversity training	Various
Recruitment	Redacted CVs	Various
Working practices	Shared/extended parental leave	Gender
Working practices	Flexitime	Gender
Working practices	Part-time work	Gender
Working practices	Shared responsibility project teams	Gender
Working practices	Paid overtime	All employees
Practice culture	In-house networks	Gender, LGBT+, Mental Health
Practice culture	Unconscious bias training	Gender/ethnicity
Career Development	Formal mentoring schemes	Gender/ethnicity

Source: 27 Life-history interviews with managers

In so far as positive EDI actions relate to specific social groups, gender is most prominent. Most commonly, interviewees mention the development of ‘family-friendly’ policies, including flexible working hours, and the provision of part-time work. While such policies have historically aimed to support women’s inclusion in the workplace, interviewees are keen to emphasise that men are (also) the beneficiaries of such policies. As Richard, who manages a commercially oriented practice, explains:

*I have one guy [a single dad of two young boys]. And he literally just works every day between 10 and 3. It works for males and females. If you’re the primary carer. So I think that’s just the right ethic to have.* Richard, Medium Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

#### The Position of Class

Class is never named overtly in relation to positive actions. Indeed, the websites of leading employers make no mention of class or any related measure of socio-economic background.

Interview research reveals specific explanations of the absence of class in relation to EDI issues. Tina, a Human Resources Director, is highly committed to proactive action to forge an inclusive culture. However, her work is largely structured by legislative requirements, such that her firm’s EDI work relates principally to the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act (2010). When asked whether class is a salient EDI issue, she replies:

*I think it is an issue. Whether or not it’s a protected characteristic, that would be really interesting as to how you would measure it without making an issue...So, on an equality and diversity form, it would say, what is your religion and you would tick, and then your gender, your*

*sexuality. But then when it comes to social background, how would that look on your form?* Tina,  
HR Director, Large Practice

Although Tina accepts the salience of class, she has yet to consider how it could be operationalised in organisational practices such as equality monitoring. Echoing the technical difficulties the ‘mobility industry’ has encountered in relation to measurement (Bridge Group, 2020), Tina wonders how best to select from different socio-economic indicators to make class a live concern of management.

In addition to the issue of measurement, Tina also wonders how to ‘measure it without making an issue’. This points to a very different issue with managing class a diversity characteristic; the potential for embarrassment or stigma. This possibility is raised in other interviews.

Pauline, a practice manager in a firm renowned for socially progressive architecture, reflects that there is no space available within the culture of her practice to talk about issues of class background:

*There was one person there... from what I knew of him he was from a working-class background but yeah it's not discussed. It's another big whitewash.* Pauline, Practice Manager, Medium Practice

Kevin, a practice owner from an intermediate class background, says he self-censors and avoids talking about class for fear of drawing attention to the privilege of architects with a family history of architecture:

*I wonder whether it's slightly more divisive when you talk about class and mobility...And I guess I'm always quite careful, particularly when I'm talking to friends and colleagues in architecture.*  
Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

In these extracts, we see how difficult it is to subject class to management. In a liberal ideal, class should offer itself up as a measurable trait in order to be subject to managerial interventions. However, the reality of class as a contingent, emotionally laden social identity, makes bureaucratic management action seem a category error. As a result, conversations around class are avoided.

In contrast with class as a social identity, managers do take positive actions which are clearly related to class in relation to the social background of individuals (see Table 17 above). Thus, Pauline makes a somewhat tentative link between her firm’s provision of work experience and the class background of its beneficiaries for the first time during our research interview:

*What we do do, and I don't know if this reflects social class, we do do a fair bit of work experience and have people from schools. I haven't analysed where they come from, but I imagine that that might be a broader range.* Pauline, Practice Manager, Large Practice

A range of other activities which relate to class background include mentoring, the provision of financial assistance, Apprenticeships and developing models of professional access which combine study with paid employment:

*There's something called 'Accelerate to Educate' which we've been involved with as a practice, which is about supporting children from lower income families who are bright and want to study architecture, to get them to consider architecture. And there's also a new architecture school that's set up [The London School of Architecture], where you are in practice, and you're also learning on the job, which we are part of that group.* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

It is notable that all these liberal initiatives, which aim to remove barriers related to class background and may produce considerable benefits for working-class participants to gain professional access - outreach work among schools, mentoring students, sponsored education and Apprenticeships – require no change to organisational culture and practice.

If such activities represent the total of all EDI practice relating to class, there is a risk that the problem of classed exclusion is situated wholly outside practice boundaries. In a corollary with how the RIBA's work on social mobility fails to recognise a need for professional and organisational cultural change, there is a danger that activities, which benefit individuals who participate, do nothing to encourage more fundamental change within the field.

#### *Neo-liberal*

Associated with the 'business case' for diversity (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000), Miller (1996) defines a neo-liberal approach to managing EDI as one which aims to optimise individual potential to increase organisational performance and profitability.

Many leading employers (11 out of 30) position their EDI work in this way. However, in line with the hierarchy of symbolic value in the field of architecture, practices very rarely foreground commercial benefits to the practice itself:

*We value the contribution that a diverse workforce makes to our business.* Fosters

Instead, the organisational benefits of diversity are 'translated' in the architectural field so that they align with different forms of creative capital, which has far greater symbolic value. As the extracts below testify, effective organisational management of diversity is argued to produce 'better designers', 'better work', 'better ideas' and 'great architecture'. In this way, a neoliberal relationship between optimised individual talent and increased profitability is made more salient to prospective candidates:

*We aim to offer full equality of opportunity for everyone regardless of gender, or any other protected characteristics. We think this is important, not just in terms of fundamental equity, but because we believe we will be better designers if we are more diverse and if everyone's voices are heard equally.* Hawkins/Brown

*Grimshaw recognises that our people are our greatest asset, and that a diverse workforce produces the best ideas. To deliver even better work for our clients we are taking active steps to increase the repertoire of experience, cultural background and global insight of our staff.*  
Grimshaw

*Great architecture demands diversity – of background, education, ideas and experience.* Make

These extracts include only one overt reference to a particular social category – ‘gender’ – as well as a single reference to ‘protected characteristics’ of equalities legislation. Indeed, this formulation of diversity management very rarely names socially disadvantaged groups. There is not a single mention of class, or any related indicator of socio-economic status or social background.

Instead, and in line with the evolution of diversity discourse external to the field of architecture (Zanoni et al., 2010), diversity incorporates rather broad and somewhat ill-defined categories, including ‘experience’, ‘ideas’ and ‘background’. When diversity is specified in more detail, it often signals language and nationality. In this positioning, a global workforce leads to a diversity of ideas which improves architectural output:

*We purposefully recruit from around the world, embracing and benefitting from the diverse, multi-cultural influences and ideas that permeate our practice.* AHR

*We hail from 43 countries. A multitude of languages brought the Tower of Babel to a halt; in our studio, the babel of 35 languages makes the work richer and the ideas flow smoother* PLP

Under a neo-liberal formulation of EDI management, common across leading architectural employers, diversity is at once individualised and depoliticised. Diversity consists of myriad traits and somewhat vague, individual characteristics. Individuals from different backgrounds each offer a unique perspective which makes up the pot of diversity to produce better architecture. By failing to signal socially disadvantaged groups, this formulation of diversity discourse suggests there is no need for architectural employers to respond to issues of social justice in their diversity management work. In this respect, diversity discourse closely matches the depoliticization found beyond the field of architecture (Prasad et al., 2016).

### *Radical*

Miller (1996) identifies a more radical approach to ensuring equality within organisations, which could involve positive discrimination in favour of historically disadvantaged groups. Although academic scholarship in a critical tradition supports the ideal of positive discrimination as “a viable and necessary policy intervention to speed up the progression to equality in the workplace” (Noon, 2010: 728), such an approach is, in the main, rejected in the field of architecture.

On occasion, and, again reflecting the professional lead promoted by the RIBA, the true representation of all social groups is presented as an organisational aspiration. However, no practice countenances any form of positive discrimination to achieve such equality of outcome. As the extract below makes clear, all the steps that are assumed to be necessary - bureaucratic procedures, legal compliance, the banishing of discrimination and equal treatment according to individual talent - remain firmly within the orientation of liberal equality of opportunity.

*Our aim is for the company to be representative of all sections of society...We pursue this commitment by:*

- *Having clear and concise procedures and guidelines for both line managers and employees to ensure policies are fully understood and implemented;*
- *Complying with the relevant employment legislation and codes of practice;*
- *Ensuring that all existing employees, potential employees, colleagues and customers are treated equally and with respect;*
- *Ensuring that the workplace is an environment free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying regardless of an individual's gender, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, religious conviction or disablement;*
- *Making all decisions relating to recruitment, selection or promotion according to the employees' ability. Atkins*

This rejection of positive discrimination is also apparent in interview talk. When asked how she takes account of EDI in recruitment, Maureen, who works for a commercial developer, reiterates a liberal ideal:

*I suppose we don't positively, we don't have positive discrimination. We don't recruit for women.*

Maureen, Design Director for Commercial Developer, NS-SEC 6-8

Margaret, a Director at a large design-oriented practice, similarly explains her role in recruitment in liberal terms, emphasising that the company employs 'on merit'. However, after a moment's hesitation, she reveals some of the difficulties of adopting this mantra, noting the gendered division between architects who work on interiors and the exterior building:

*We just do employ people on merit. But what I have noticed is that we seem to get more females on the interiors and more blokes in the architecture. So, and that's without any filtering. That's what I did actually say to xxx, I said 'next time can we just get a girl?' (laughter) Cos I just think studios, the balance, we could just do with more. So it is just about what comes through the door in a way.* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

In this extract, Margaret points towards a more radical approach to EDI, positive discrimination to ensure 'balance' and guarantee equality of representation within the workplace. However, when I questioned whether this could be a viable avenue to explore, Margaret is unconvinced, and reiterates the need to place 'merit' above positive discrimination.

*Ian: And when you said that you said it was just like a joke, just to interview girls, but you could make a kind of argument for..*

*I don't think it was the right thing to say to be honest. Because I think you should be employing people on merit, it's just more kind of.. And actually there was a flux of candidates that were all female, so it was fine.* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

In this instance, the happenstance of women applying as candidates produced a positive outcome, so that the possibility of a more radical approach involving positive discrimination can be shut down; 'it was fine'. The endorsement of equal opportunities and the level playing field holds firm.

In addition to equality of representation, a radical approach may also entail equality of condition (Miller, 1996). In just two instances out of the thirty leading practices, architectural employers hint in this direction:

*Our bonus payments are not awarded on a discretionary basis but are determined by our profit distribution system for all staff which is linked to pay and grade. Our gender pay gap reflects the simple fact that at BDP there are more men at senior level than women.* BDP

*Since September 2017, all of our employees are majority owners through the Employee Ownership Trust Allford Hall Monaghan Morris*

However, in the first extract, a potentially radical approach to equality – the shared distribution of profits – is immediately undermined as bonuses are dependent on pay and grade. Pay, like all

architectural practices which had to report their gender pay gap (Architects Journal, 2020), is profoundly biased in favour of men.

In the second, an Employee Ownership Trust points to the possibility of substantive equality of condition, forged on distributed ownership. This ideal is articulated in more detail in interview research.

Mary and Julia work for employee-owned practices, founded by architects along socialist principles. This political commitment continues to shape projects undertaken and organisational practice. Both practices, therefore, are situated strongly on the axis of public service capital in my conceptual map of the field. Both interviewees are strong advocates for such ownership models.

Mary, who has worked at a cooperative for a decade or so, dismisses the liberal ideal of positive action to facilitate equality of opportunity:

*I went to an event when everyone was talking about fairness at work, and they were just talking about flexible working and this kind of thing, and I thought honestly that's not fairness, that's just good workplace organisational stuff. At the end of the day, the best thing is shared intellectual and financial property.* Mary, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

Instead, Mary argues that the equal distribution of ownership and managerial power effectively trumps differences of social identities, such that career opportunities are themselves equally distributed:

*The easiest way to be fair is just to pay everyone fairly and share the property, share the ownership. In that way, it doesn't matter if you're old, young, woman, man, gay, straight, black, white, everyone gets a share. That allows and facilitates opportunity because you've all got the same opportunity...We've got a kind of pay scale and no one gets paid more than two and a half times more than anyone else...I can get voted out for example, tomorrow, if the rest of the team didn't think what I was doing was right. So we have 100% ownership, I have the same amount of financial power in terms of the business as xxx, a young office administrator. So, we're a hard ownership model.... And I think with architects, it works really well, because you're all sort of a similar, similarly skilled.* Mary, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

Julia is an experienced architect who has spent much of her career working at a cooperative practice. She rejects the need for partners to bring money into a business as highly socially exclusive. Further, she eschews formal titles and orderly bureaucracy associated with liberal ideals. None the less, she feels the cooperative practice is more of a meritocracy than firms with different ownership models:



*Well, I mean I have strong socialist principles I suppose so it appeals to that idea, the lack of hierarchy... we managed ourselves, that's always been done. And it is a true, well it's more of a meritocracy than any practice or experience I've had before because...it's not just based on how senior you are or how many years you've been in the practice, it's based on people's capacity to do things. So we don't have Associates, and I hate all that in architecture, you know, and in the past to be a partner in an architecture firm, it was a bit like being a partner in a law firm, you had to have money, which meant that it was always people from the same background who could set up practices. And the good thing about xxx setting this up is that you don't bring any money into the practice.* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Both Mary and Julia conclude that a cooperative model of ownership provides genuine benefits in terms of inclusion:

*In terms of the office, I mean things that we notice comparing ourselves to other offices. We are 50/50 male/female which is very unusual in architecture. I think partly that comes from being employee owned, because the business is run for our own benefits as a group, we're good at retaining working mothers...We have I think it's something like 10% of people working part-time....And in terms of diversity, we've got a much more diverse workforce than many other architects.* Julia, Architect, Employee-owned Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Both Mary and Julia signal a rather utopian diversity, where distributed ownership and shared managerial responsibilities effectively dissolve inequalities. Their practices are predicated on the equal status – ‘we don't have Associates, and I hate all that in architecture’ - of architects of equal talent ‘architects...you're all sort of a similar, similarly skilled’. Bureaucratic forms of hierarchy are rejected – ‘we managed ourselves, that's always been done’ - such that issues of social disadvantage are effectively banished: ‘it doesn't matter if you're old, young, woman, man, gay, straight, black, white’.

In sum, in this section, I have outlined different orientations to managing EDI. I have shown a mix of liberal and neo-liberal approaches dominate among the RIBA, leading employers and small practice owners. Class is not named overtly within this hybrid liberal/neo-liberal approach. Radical approaches based on affirmative action are roundly rejected. In large part, this mirrors the evolution of EDI outside the field of architecture.

The fact that different holders of managerial power within the field who in other contexts have rather strained relations, in particular the RIBA and leading employers, are largely consistent, suggests their adoption of EDI rhetoric may be somewhat superficial. Beyond the surface endorsement, there is little

evidence of holders of managerial power grappling with the contradictions and complexities of EDI management.

A radical orientation which aims for equality of condition, although far less prevalent and somewhat utopian in its positioning, is strongly endorsed by a small minority of advocates and offers more progressive potential.

## 2: EDI: Negative Orientations and Practice

Liberal, neo-liberal and radical approaches to EDI can be considered positive, not in the sense that they guarantee straightforwardly progressive outcomes, but in that they imply a commitment to EDI management. In this section, drawn mainly from interview research, I consider other orientations to managing EDI, which deviate from such a positive endorsement. These include an instrumental compliance and a somewhat cynical dismissal of EDI. I also outline how managers position both architecture as inherently progressive and architects as inherently professional, such that they transcend the need for diversity management.

### Instrumentalism

Practice owners commit to manage EDI under pressure from clients. Pauline explains that her practice had to demonstrate effective EDI policies and practices to be accepted onto the Mayor's framework for commissioning architectural work. Robert, a Director of a similar sized firm of architects, concurs:

*Many clients will ask if you have those policies. Local authorities will ask if you have an inclusive policy on race and gender and so on.* Robert, Consultant and Part-time Director, Medium Practice, NS-SEC 6-8

Neil, an owner-manager with strong ambitions to grow his small practice, explains the need to convince public sector clients that he takes diversity seriously in order to have a chance of winning larger projects:

*If you come forward to pitch for a job for them [public sector clients] and you are all middle-class white guys you won't even get on the list. And they are absolutely clear that they expect their consultants to follow their lead in fairness, diversity, equality and so on.* Neil, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

While it is not impossible that the need to demonstrate effective diversity management may produce progressive outcomes, there is a danger that firms do no more than 'play the game' of diversity. In this light, diversity management is adopted instrumentally to achieve business success, independently

of any genuine commitment. Enrico, an entrepreneurial business owner, explains how diversity management may be no more than empty performance:

*You want to have that kind of CV, because you tick up the box of diversity, which is not entirely right...Just to have to show to the people that you are diverse. You show your staff pictures.*

Enrico, Consultant and Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Sophie, an experienced recruitment consultant, concurs. She is very blunt in her appraisal of architects' instrumental approach to diversity management:

*Yeah, they'll say we need a woman. People will say this has to be a woman, because our numbers are down or whatever.* Sophie, Recruitment Consultant

### Downplaying Diversity

Beyond this instrumental need to demonstrate diversity management, practice owners can be somewhat dismissive of issues of EDI. Both Neil and Richard are ambitious to increase the commercial success of their small firms. As the two extracts below show, they both interpret my broad questioning on EDI rather narrowly in relation to gender parity within their practices:

*Now, I'm aware that I've got 6 guys and 3 women. Last three that left were female and last two that I've hired were guys. And so, it's tipped. And people said to me that two of those guys are gay, so if you think of those as neutral then..(laughter). We're not a big enough practice to actively monitor. 9 staff. But it is one of those things that I do not want to have a blokey office...It's something I'd like to address.* Neil, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

*I get a lot of earache from xxxxx about trying to keep the balance about 50/50 in terms of men and women* Richard, Medium Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

Although their take on the importance of gender parity of their firms is rather different, with Neil more concerned than Richard to avoid 'too blokey' an office, both are somewhat dismissive. Richard complains about the 'earache' he gets from a senior female colleague, while Neil recalls a second-hand 'joke'. In both cases, the small number of individuals they employ affords them the possibility to underplay the importance of EDI, as, at most, an issue of secondary importance.

However, not everything can be explained by size of practice. Pauline and Emily work at larger firms of around 100 employees. They both agree that formal corporate management processes, which are a minimum requirement of a liberal approach to managing EDI, are not always evident. Pauline, an operations manager, admits that promotion and progression occur rather haphazardly; pathways to career progression for junior architects are not formalised:

*So, yes, we don't have direct, formal progress for career progression that's laid out, where you'd have a road map to getting to that point. Pauline, Practice Manager, Large Practice*

Emily feels that both her employer and the profession as a whole fail to prioritise the effective management of individuals. When asked about line management in relation to EDI, Emily replies:

*Even phrases like line manager. We do use that phrase now, but we only use it with our support staff, we don't use it with our architecture staff, surprisingly.*

*Ian: Do they not have individual line managers?*

*So they do. So people do. We are organised into groups, so each group has a leader and supposedly that would be the line manager for each person, but in practice it doesn't work that way, necessarily... we're not as good at management as we should be I think as a profession.*

Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

In reflecting on the failings of her own firm and architecture more broadly, Emily tellingly reveals that line management is associated with 'support staff' rather than architects. This points to a distinction between the assumed professionalism of architects and a less highly valued managerialism.

### Against Managerialism

Bill, a consultant nearing retirement, reflects on his early employment in the architects' department of a local authority. Although he was nominally a manager, he strongly dismisses the importance of formal management; the inherent professionalism of architects should itself suffice:

*I was a manager, but I wasn't a manager in the modern sense at all. It was these people are professionals, they should, pardon my French, jolly well manage themselves. Bill, Consultant, NS-SEC 1-2*

While Bill reflects back, almost half a century, to his early career, the elevated status of the professionalism of architects over bureaucratic forms of management still has contemporary salience. Earlier, I outlined how Mary and Julia, advocates of a cooperative model of ownership, rejected hierarchical management practices and associated differences in status in favour of an ideal of equally skilled, professional architects.

### Transcending Diversity

Mary and Julia are both very clear in their emphasis that shared ownership and distribution of managerial power are vital to underpin the egalitarianism of their practices. On the other hand, the somewhat utopian ideal of architecture transcending the need for formal management is more broadly evident across the field. It is apparent on the websites of leading employers:

*In a space like this, transparency, collaboration and trust are paramount. Ideas can't help but come from everyone - after all we are a partnership and it is the collective passion, curiosity, and enthusiasm of everyone working here that has made us so successful.* PLP Architecture

*Our culture is based on encouraging creativity, transparency, rewarding success, personal development and an open exchange of ideas and teamwork.* Chapman Taylor

*The practice's ethos of the 'continuous collective' instils in our teams a sense of family and, as a family of studios, we aim to be more inclusive, more supportive and more encouraging.* BDP

These extracts position the ideal architectural practice as naturally democratic and egalitarian, such that bureaucratic forms of management are superfluous. Diversity is implied by their celebration of teamwork and collaboration, and the avowed goal of meaningful inclusion. However, it is something that is argued to occur organically, with no acknowledged need for formal management.

This utopian ideal of transcending diversity is not limited to the websites of leading employers. Interviewees also suggest that organisational hierarchies can and should be bracketed off in the production of the 'best' design.

Neil, now an ambitious practice manager, recalls his early experience as an Architectural Assistant at a practice led by a charismatic architectural grandee. He recalls such an atmosphere of egalitarian collaboration:

*I was a year-out student with all these serious professional architects. One felt one could say 'well what about this? He [the practice owner] would listen to everybody.* Neil, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Bruce, a practice owner who shows a genuine commitment to tackling inequalities within architecture, similarly contends that the production of 'design', the most highly valued form of architectural activity, exists in an egalitarian sphere, which is free of social identities:

*I do think design on the other hand isn't 'classed' in a way...It doesn't matter who comes up with a good idea - it's a good idea.* Bruce, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

These extracts signal a belief that diversity consists of different individuals working together in an inclusive environment, free of tensions caused by dynamic relations of power. Such collaboration is predicated on different individuals having equal status as architects, irrespective of seniority as well as social identities. This utopian positioning of an exemplary inclusive culture effectively denies the validity of meaningful social group differences. It goes beyond a liberal ideal of equality of opportunity, which aims to remove any barriers associated with diversity, into the realm of diversity-denial, by

effectively elevating architects who focus on design creativity above more mundane concerns of diversity management.

Such diversity-denial can be further explained by architects' focus on completed architectural work, which takes priority over organisational practices and the internal cultures of architectural firms. Enrico is entrepreneurial architect, an owner-manager of a small practice and a planning consultancy. When asked about managing EDI at a large organisation where he had previously worked as a Design Director he immediately turns the conversation to architectural output rather than managerial practices:

*One of the priority teams was about inclusion. And it's good to talk about this. But to me, it's like, it's so inside the object, that it can't be a subject on its own to talk about. Architecture is inclusion. It's inside the work, you know a painting or a masterplan or a square or an open space. An open space is about inclusion. Because it's probably already so much inside us.* Enrico, Consultant and Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 1-2

Enrico paints a portrait of architecture (as built environment) as ideally, organically and necessarily inclusive in a way which deflects from prosaic concerns about the management of EDI. Despite his initial endorsement of inclusion – 'it's good to talk about this' – the nature of architecture soon undermines this need, as inclusion is, somewhat enigmatically, 'already so much inside us'.

This contrast between architecture as output and organisational practice is borne out by Emily, a Director in a practice renowned for leading on environmentally sustainable forms of architecture. Emily recalls an outsider's take on the company culture:

*One of our friendly critics, so someone who knows the practice really well, apparently said that we were known for being very progressive in our architecture, but we were surprisingly unprogressive with our own culture. And that was said to the senior partners and I think they were absolutely taken aback* Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

As senior partners take pride in their progressive architectural product, their attention is diverted away from their firm's internal culture, such that an outsider's critique comes as a revelation. An architectural focus on completed works problematically distracts from reflecting on equitable working practices.

In sum, despite a superficial endorsement of liberal/neo-liberal EDI throughout the field, digging deeper in interview research reveals different ways in which, knowingly or unknowingly, managers deflect, dismiss or deprioritise EDI. Managing EDI thus becomes, at most, a second order issue, below design-related activities associated with the dominant forms of creative capital. Thus class, as well as

any other aspects of diversity rooted in social disadvantage, has less purchase as an issue in the field of architecture.

### Negative Actions

Earlier, I highlighted positive actions, which aim, within a liberal ideal of EDI management, to establish a level playing field. In line with the dismissal and undermining of EDI, I also find evidence of managerial practices, particularly in relation to recruitment, which contradict this liberal ideal. These 'negative actions' perpetuate a highly unequal playing field.

First, particularly in smaller practices, recruitment is often informal, relying on word of mouth and personal connections. Practice owners often have active relationships with certain universities, serving as teachers or guest critics, and use these relationships to seek out junior employees. As previous chapters have shown, attendance of 'elite' higher educational institutions is highly class-structured in the field of architecture.

Second, against the liberal ideal of equality of opportunity as the matching of individual skill-sets to job roles, managers admit to highly subjective evaluations. In particular, they gauge the 'fit' of candidates in relation to organisational cultures and working environments.

Colm, who owns his own micro-practice of around 5 staff, occasionally recruits junior Architectural Assistants or newly qualified Architects. Working in a small studio space, he consciously prioritises getting on with staff members in a sociable office environment:

*We weren't asking people if they liked certain radio stations or things like that, but you are conscious of the fact that you're taking on someone you've got to be able to get on with. I want to work with someone I enjoy.* Colm, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 6-8

Colm hints at the importance of cultural affinity, which is highly structured by class, even as he denies this: 'we weren't asking people if they liked certain radio stations'. Margaret, a Director at a large practice renowned for innovative design projects, goes a stage further:

*Because actually, if you like similar things, similar art galleries, maybe there's a connection there and probably that's alright... You are working in a creative industry, and there's a similarity there in terms of an approach or sensibility, which is what we are wanting to produce in any case* Margaret, Design Director, Large Practice, NS-SEC 3-5

In this extract, Margaret rejects both a liberal ideal which points out the unfairness of recruiting by homophily (Rivera, 2012) and the 'business case' argument that greater diversity improves

organisational creativity (Zanoni et al., 2010). Instead, a shared affinity for cultural practices and tastes is itself valued. Rather than valuing diversity, Margaret's formulation posits sameness as beneficial.

Tina, the HR Director of a large practice, has developed a suite of formal policies and organisational practices to ensure fair and equal treatment according to a liberal ideal. However, she also advocates for the importance of cultural fit in recruitment. Tina explains that her practice welcomes candidates who suit the firm's more family-oriented atmosphere:

*So, it's super friendly - everyone here is like one big family...they are generally looking for that same vibe off the person. We don't want people to come in who are completely super corporate background... through natural selection, I suppose, rather than here's a set of questions that we want you to answer in the correct way to fit the culture. I don't think that works that well.* Tina, HR Director, Large Practice

Tina rejects the use of a bureaucratic measures associated with a liberal ideal, 'a set of questions' used as a consistent tool of evaluation, but suggests instead, that an assessment of organisational fit should be achieved informally, based on the 'vibe' of the candidate.

Recruitment consultants are more blunt in their appraisal of architectural employers' lack of commitment to a fair assessment of candidates. Luke, who has run his own recruitment agency for the last decade or so, argues that many practices are overtly prejudiced, making snap decisions based on gender, geography, nationality, ethnicity and higher education institution:

*If you want to be a designer and you're from Essex, no one will touch you...The worst one is the University of East London. No-one will employ you. Normally they like people from the university they went to. There is a bias. That's a big influencer.* Luke, Owner, Recruitment Consultancy

Whether Luke's bleak summation is somewhat of an exaggeration, there is evidence of managerial practices that fall short of a liberal ideal. Instead of a purely objective assessment of candidates' abilities to carry out task related duties, managers endorse different forms of cultural discrimination to effectively recruit their preferred candidates. This has a clearly regressive impact on the relationship between class and career progression.

In sum, common recruitment practices contrast with the superficial endorsement of liberal/neo-liberal EDI throughout the field. They serve, instead, to perpetuate an unequal playing field and may exacerbate class inequalities.



### 3: EDI Responsibility and Positional Power

In this section, drawn again from interview research, I focus on those who lead on the work of EDI in architecture, and who show a greater personal commitment to EDI.

Most of the architectural managers I interviewed owned or worked for small organisations of around 10-20 employees. This is in line with the structure of the labour market in architecture, which is numerically dominated by sole practitioners and micro-practices (ACE, 2016). These firms have relatively few formal HRM systems and policies. In so far as diversity is managed according to a liberal ideal, which requires bureaucratic procedures, there is less chance that it will take hold in such micro-practices. Indeed, as I have already outlined, small business owners invoke their small practice size in ways which undermine the viability of effectively managing diversity.

Only a handful of architectural managers I interviewed counted Human Resource Management among their primary organisational responsibilities. And those few who did, even if highly personally committed to manage EDI effectively, held positions of lesser authority within their practice than architect owners.

For example, Tina, an HR director at a larger practice, is strongly committed to EDI in relation to social justice. She is aggrieved that senior partners allocate work experience to clients' children and favour prospective candidates from elite educational institutions. She also recognises the injustice in favouring employees for promotion who display a particular form of social confidence:

*When I was sat down as part of the promotions review with the principals this year, one principal said, that that person needs to be more outgoing, he needs to be more social, more able to network, much like so and so. And I thought that that was not based on merit and I thought that that's probably based on their background.* Tina, HR Director, Large Practice

However, she is relatively powerless to counter this behaviour. When asked whether anyone was able to challenge the discriminatory behaviour of senior managers, Tina admits:

*No. Kind of. A bit. We had a bit of a conversation. But that was his opinion, and we didn't challenge it. So, that's a problem.* Tina, HR Director, Large Practice

Stacey, a Business Director at a larger practice, agrees that decisions on EDI issues are typically made by architects who own their practice, and who enjoy greater positional authority than HR directors:

*I think within architecture, most practices are owner-managed. And so even where you've got people doing HR it's still unusual to see someone doing HR on the board, and it can be quite difficult*

*I think in some practices for HR people to challenge and to question the decisions that they're making. And I think that that can be a bit of an issue. Stacey, Business Director, Large Practice*

Finally, Emily is a partner and practising architect, who has been vocal to senior management about issues of gendered oppression at her large architectural firm. Her 'reward', however, is to be made a 'diversity champion'. Without the power to effect organisational change, Emily questions whether this is a worthwhile undertaking:

*I was asked if I would be our diversity champion a few years ago, and I said 'well what's the point?' One person can't be a diversity champion – I'm not doing the interviewing or the recruiting or the promoting, so where do I exercise my championship? Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2*

As a result of my approach to recruitment, I interviewed approximately equal numbers of male and female managers, who also came from different class backgrounds. This is very different from the architectural field overall, which is strongly skewed towards white middle-class men (Friedman and Laurison 2019; Symes et al., 1995).

I found that those interviewees who did not conform to this "somatic norm" (Puwar, 2001) were both more genuinely committed to working out how to address EDI issues in practice and had greater insight into what the problems entailed.

This is most clear in relation to gender. Emily recalls a consultant who was brought in as a 'friendly critic' to assess her firm's corporate culture, and the shocked reaction of all the all-male board to her findings:

*I'm not sure if she used the word sexist, but she said something that the DNA of the practice is white male as in it's just not inclusive at all, it's just not. And I think people were quite shocked to hear that Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2*

Pauline, a practice manager with no architectural training, points out that in her practice, 'the design work is built primarily by white men of a certain age'. Pauline understands how the priority given to design sensibilities in recruitment perpetuates this lack of inclusion:

*Well people hire people they are comfortable with who are the same as them. Which is nothing to do with creativity if you ask me, so that's a big problem...there's this thing about wanting to hire people who have the same sort of sensibilities and understand the practice and have design aspirations and all the rest of it, but you can end up with just more of the same. Pauline, Practice Manger, Large Practice*

Pauline feels that senior management, although supportive of EDI aspirations in the abstract, both have little insight into how EDI may require different forms of management and fail to identify how their actions serve to perpetuate inequalities:

*They don't even see them [EDI issues] I think. It's not that they're not on board, if you said, they would be very supportive, but I think they don't recognise that there's another way, different ways of thinking about things....There's the work, the design work is built primarily by white men of a certain age, and then there's the make-up of the practice and staff within it, and I think at an abstract level, they'll understand issues of diversity and inclusion, but as far as their responsibility, position and actions in just perpetuating that, they don't see it.* Pauline, Practice Manger, Large Practice

Emily agrees, arguing, semi-jokingly, that senior managers' clichéd markers of progressive attitudes – reading the Guardian, riding bicycles – absolve them of any personal responsibility:

*[The Partners say] I read the Guardian, how can I possibly have any baggage about these things? We all ride bicycles, we must be socially progressive.* Emily, Partner, Large Practice, NS-SEC 1-2

Managers from working-class backgrounds are similarly attuned to issues of exclusion. Kevin, a practice owner from an intermediate NS-SEC background, feels that architecture is making, at most, very slow progress in relation to classed inclusion. He also contrasts his own insight into the struggle for classed inclusion with individuals with a family history of architecture, for whom the profession is 'part of their life':

*When I'm talking to friends and colleagues in architecture, because if they have come from a background where it's been father, mother and grandfather and it's not a thing, it's just part of their life, it's always been there so it's just an organic thing. Whereas for some of us, it's a very, it's a struggle. And I'm not putting that in a dramatic sense, it is.* Kevin, Small Practice Owner, NS-SEC 3-5

Finally, Tina attributes her insight into understanding the classed nature of discriminatory management practices to her own class background. When she takes issue with a partner who bases promotion criterion on an employee's social ease, Tina counters:

*I thought that that was not based on merit and I thought that that's probably based on their background. It is, for example, somebody like myself, I don't come from that sort of background, very much working-class...Because I'm not naturally good at networking, I'm not naturally good at being social and outgoing at a Friday drink.* Tina, HR Director, Large Practice

Early research found that diversity professionals are strongly committed to social justice (Cockburn 1991), but are often positioned as misfits within the management of their organisations (Kirton et al., 2007). This holds true in the field of architecture, even as specialist diversity professionals are absent. Individuals who show greater commitment to thinking through how to effect inclusion in architecture sit outside the 'somatic norm' of middle-class, white, male practice owners. However, such individuals represent only a small minority of managers in architecture, and often lack positional authority. This represents a major challenge to progressive change.

## Summary

In line with a mainstream external policy orientation, The RIBA, leading employers and small practice owners advocate liberal and neo-liberal approaches to managing EDI. Although these holders of managerial power signal the radical aspiration of true equality of representation and genuine inclusion, the policy levers they endorse are firmly liberal. These entail the removal of barriers to professional access to allow individuals to progress according to their talents, thereby improving professional and organisational performance.

From a critical perspective, this is highly problematic. There is a risk that EDI activities are abandoned if they do not bring short-run, commercial benefits. Further, a neo-liberal orientation frequently tasks individuals to transform themselves to solve the problems of inclusion through individual competition. There is less recognition that key institutions within the field – leading employers, and elite higher educational institutions – need undergo profound cultural change.

In any case, an avowed commitment to the liberal promotion of equality of opportunity masks organisational behaviour which is straightforwardly regressive. This is clearly evident in relation to recruitment. The use of personal contacts and favouring of candidates with similar cultural sensibilities from particular universities is common practice in the field.

The diversity discourse of architectural managers frequently undermines their stated desire to manage diversity to improve architectural quality. First, a common belief that talent is a natural characteristic of an individual, which exists independently of social identities, suggests a diversity blind approach as an appropriate managerial strategy. Second, some architects reject EDI issues as a corporate managerial agenda, which is less highly valued than architecture's self-avowed professionalism. Third, a focus on the progressiveness of architectural output may distract attention from issues of organisational culture. Fourth, architects' belief in their own inherent social progressiveness and in the equal status of architects as architects undermine the need for diversity management to address issues of social disadvantage.

Diversity discourse often extends well beyond disadvantaged social groups in architecture, signalling broader differences, related to experiences, ideas and personalities. In this way, diversity is made up of myriad traits, so that diversity management is both individualised and depoliticised. The framing of diversity in ways which deny the validity of social disadvantage serves, in particular, to downplay class as a characteristic of diversity.

The absence of class from diversity discourse carries certain regressive implications. First, it is not measured, and therefore does not readily lend itself to overt forms of management. Second, any class talk can easily become deflected into conversations about other aspects of diversity and difference. Third, employees lack the opportunity to raise issues related to class. There is a danger, therefore, that classed privilege may reproduce itself unchecked.

The structure of the field of architecture also serves to weaken the progressive potential of diversity management. The numeric domination of micro-practices with few formal HRM systems means that diversity management, if positioned as requiring formal, bureaucratic management within a liberal ideal, is less likely to take root. Further, in larger practices, individuals tasked with leading the management of diversity, for example Heads of Human Resources, have less positional authority than senior architects and practice owners. Finally, individuals outside architecture's white, male, middle-class somatic norm, who show both a greater commitment and insight into the progressive potential of diversity management, are severely under-represented in senior positions within the field.

However, progressive potential is also evident. Architecture attracts individuals who are strongly motivated to effect progressive change, and who aim their focus on internal culture as well as architectural output. There are also some signs of a more radical approach to diversity management which goes beyond a liberal ideal. Most notably, co-operatives which distribute ownership and managerial decision-making are proposed as ideals which could underpin genuine inclusion and career fulfilment.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

### Introduction

In this chapter, I outline some broad conclusions from my explorations of the interrelations of class and careers in architecture, before making a final point of reflection about the generalisability of my research. I organise this chapter into three main sections. In the first, I reiterate my contribution to the sociology of the professions. By bringing together cultural class and Bourdieusian field analyses, I unsettle two contrasting analytical narratives which are evident in the contemporary sociology of the professions. These are professional decline on the one hand, and resilient professional power on the other. Both these narratives serve to mask architecture as a social arena which affords certain individuals the possibility of accruing substantial material and symbolic rewards. Equally, therefore, they draw attention from the structuring role played by class in the distribution of such rewards.

In the second section, I consider some of the limitations and absences of my PhD research. In so doing, I outline some further research questions and modes of analysis, which could productively build from my research. This includes more detailed ethnographies in particular parts of the field, studies of class in intersection with ethnicity and an analytic focus on the political economy which structures class as exploitation.

In the third section, I consider the policy implications of my research. This builds from my last empirical chapter on architecture and diversity management. Against the policy recommendations of the social 'mobility industry', I outline how the field could be made more meaningfully progressive in relation to class. In particular, I consider ways in which public service capital could be leveraged in the field.

### Cultural Class Analysis Within Bourdieusian Fields

In this thesis, I have brought together a cultural class analysis of individuals with theorising the profession of architecture as a Bourdieusian field.

In relation to the former, I have defined class as a multi-faceted construct, encompassing the inheritance and mastery of different forms of capital, as well as highly ambivalent and contingent class identities. This has allowed me to address how class is consequential for careers, in ways which do not reify class as a stable, individual trait.

In relation to the latter, I have outlined the different forms of capital which structure the positions and relations of key organisations and institutions within the field. I have shown how these different actors take positions according to their possession and mastery of field-specific forms of capital. In outlining the power relations which structure field positions, I have shown that the symbolic domination of

more elite parts of the field is integral to how architecture functions. I have also argued that individuals within the field of architecture tend to reproduce its symbolic order, even as they offer occasional resistance.

By theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field, I have rejected the ideal of the classic sociology of the professions, which implicitly positions 'the profession' as a unified actor, whose boundaries are policed by formal systems of education, registration and regulation. Such an approach downplays intra-professional divisions and problematically implies that individuals are equally contained and embedded in the profession. A field approach, by contrast, broadens the scope of inquiry to consider all actors who struggle to achieve authority, irrespective of their formal status as registered professionals.

My first contribution, therefore, is to set out the different forms of capital which structure the architecture field – creative, public service and commercial - and show that class, theorised in relation to individuals, is integral to the field's dynamics and distribution of rewards.

My second contribution is to critical diversity literature. Of course, the broad shift from equalities as social justice to the business case for diversity management has long been considered highly problematic to scholars from a critical perspective. This evolution hides, rather than resolves, inequitable relations of power.

I have shown that theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field provides further explanatory power as to why diversity management fails to take hold in architecture. The managerialism of the business case for diversity clashes with dominant values in the field. In particular, the primacy of creative capital demands that design innovation should emanate 'naturally' from an ideal professional identity. As a result, holders of managerial power downplay or dismiss the need for diversity management.

In order to further illustrate the analytic value of theorising professions as Bourdieusian fields, I now position my research within contemporary developments in academic scholarship. In reviewing recent work on the professions, I outline two overarching, and contrasting, narratives. The first emphasises professional decline, while the second foregrounds the productive power of professions. I briefly outline both, in turn, to show how my research interacts with and problematises these two perspectives.

#### Unsettling The Narrative of Professional Decline

First, I consider professional atrophy. In this narrative, prevalent in different strains of recent scholarship, the professions enjoyed their hey-day in the middle of the twentieth century. This period

was characterised by small private practice, professional collegiality, high income and social status (Gorman and Sandfleur, 2011). Since then, professions have lost prestige, power, and influence.

This decline has been theorised in different ways: as 'deprofessionalization' (Haug, 1988: Ritzer and Walczak, 1998), proletarianization (Derber, 1983) and post-professionalism (Kritzer, 1999).

Ritzer and Walczak (1998) draw from Weber to propose their thesis of deprofessionalization. Analysing developments in medicine in the US, they argue that grand "contemporary social changes", including bureaucratization, corporatization, and ever more "sophisticated medical technology", serve to displace the value centred substantive rationality of clinical professionals with the formal rationality of managers (ibid: 12-15). This leads to a decline in public service ethos and various aspects of professional power: "altruism, autonomy, authority over clients, general systematic knowledge, distinctive occupational culture, and community and legal recognition" (ibid: 6). Haug (1988: 49-52) argues further that rapid increases in direct access to medical knowledge works to undermine an attitude of "doctor-knows-best" and leads to "increasing mistrust of formal physician care".

Whereas deprofessionalization draws from Weber, the proletarianization thesis is Marxian. Derber (1983: 310) argues that, "with professional markets now increasingly profitable", capital flows serve to proletarianize professional workers. As a result, formerly self-employed professionals are absorbed into "large-scale organizational corporate and state bureaucracies", which leads to "heteronomous management, authority and control, and to slow degradation of status and reward" (Derber, 1983: 310). This historical process is different from earlier proletarianization of craft workers in nineteenth century industrialisation. Instead, Derber concludes that professionals are subject to "ideological proletarianization" as workers "whose integrity is threatened less by the expropriation of his skill than his values or sense of purpose" (ibid: 316). Professionals may maintain some dominion over their technical skills, but have lost control of their moral compass.

Finally, in his post-professionalisation thesis, Kritzer (1999) also signals professional decline. Despite the name, Kritzer does not propose the extinction of professions. Instead, his hypothesis is of a transformation of formerly expert professionals into more generalist knowledge workers. These new workers have lost the social status, which was previously underpinned by having exclusive control over the production of professional services. This is due principally to changes in technology, which allows for the proliferation of expert knowledge beyond professionally controlled borders.

Of course, none of these different theorists espouse a simple or abrupt shift from point A (a state of 'pure' professionalism) to point B (deprofessionalization, proletarianization or post-professionalism, respectively). All are keen to emphasise their theories are hypotheses rather than simple predictions



(Haug, 1988), “broad generalizations” rather than perfect mirrors to reality (Kritzer, 1999: 719), and contingent analyses of certain professions at particular points of time (Ritzer and Walczak, 1998). Despite these important qualifiers, and substantive differences in their theoretical underpinnings, I argue that they all both share and contribute to an overarching narrative of professional decline. The professions and professionalism are weakened, and professionals suffer as a result.

Various overlapping and overarching reasons are proposed for this decline. These include evolutionary changes in capitalist modes of production (Derber, 1983), the political ascendancy of the New Right and resultant deregulation in the name of market competition (Muzio and Ackroyd, 2005), technological advancement which facilitates the distribution of knowledge beyond professional boundaries (Kritzer, 1999; Gorman and Sandfleur, 2011) and concomitant growth of an ideology of managerialism (Ritzer and Walczak, 1998).

I certainly do not reject the importance of these broad, societal, political and economic trends in shaping professional life. Nor do I argue that architecture is a special case, immune to such influences. Indeed, as I outlined earlier, architecture’s professional power can be seen to have been weakened by the deregulation championed by the New Right, which led to the abolition of fixed fees and allowed encroachment from ‘competitor’ professions. Furthermore, Ahuja and colleagues’ recent qualitative research sheds light on the struggles of practising architects to maintain their identity as creative, autonomous professionals with the reality of working lives in large, bureaucratically ordered organisations (Ahuja et al., 2017; 2018; 2020).

However, there is a danger that an overall narrative of professional decline serves to distract from the persistent reality that the field of architecture constitutes a social arena in which certain individuals reap substantial material and symbolic rewards. Such a distraction is particularly problematic in the light of increasing levels of material inequalities, driven by ever greater accumulation of wealth at the top end of the social hierarchy (e.g. A. Atkinson, 2015; Dorling, 2014).

As I outlined earlier, one of the advantages of theorising architecture as a Bourdieusian field, is that any positive connotations of professionalism are rejected *ab initio* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In this way, by conceptualising architecture as a value-neutral ‘field’, rather than a value-laden profession, there is less temptation to succumb to a misleading narrative of overall decline. Instead, an analysis of the unfolding of individual careers within a Bourdieusian field shines a light on which individuals accrue greatest rewards. My research highlights the integral role played by class in structuring individual rewards.

## Unsettling The Narrative of Professional Power

The second narrative, evident in the scholarship of neo-institutionalists, emphasises the primacy of professionals. By contrast with an overarching narrative of decline, Scott (2008) argues that professionals continue to hold considerable power. Indeed, as “lords of the dance” (ibid: 219), they play a leading role in driving processes of institutionalisation. Professionals achieve this in three ways. First, they establish the dominant “cultural-cognitive frameworks”, which shape how the social world is perceptually ordered in accordance with their professional jurisdiction (ibid: 219). Second, their work creates the normative standards which aim to govern “what individuals, groups, organizations, and states ‘should’ do (ibid: 225). Finally, some professions, principally those associated with the police, law and wider criminal justice, aim to regulate what must be done.

In theorising the agency of professionals from a neo-institutionalist perspective, Scott argues that scholars should move beyond “the individual practitioner or professional organization” to work instead at the “level of the organizational field” (ibid: 227).

This advice is heeded by fellow neo-institutionalists, who contend that there has been “a shift of professional activity to organizational settings” (Muzio et al., 2013: 701) pointing out that “a majority of new professional occupations, such as management consultants...are borne directly out of organizational contexts” (ibid: 703). Further, it is argued that “today’s professionalism is not a small-scale affair, as the work of expert occupations is increasingly dominated by large organizations. The cases of law and accountancy are highly indicative of such trends” (Muzio and Kirkpatrick, 2011: 390). In particular, many scholars emphasise the emergence and importance of Professional Service Firms (PSFs), which form the basis of their empirical research (e.g. Suddaby and Viale, 2011; Suddaby et al., 2007).

In addition to this shift of emphasis from the professional community of private practitioners to professionals bounded within PSFs and other large organisations, neo-institutionalism productively opens new lines of inquiry in relation to professional agency. Through analytic constructs including “normative isomorphism”, “institutional entrepreneurship” and “institutional work”, neo-institutionalism “has the conceptual tools and vocabulary to account for professional agency” (Muzio et al., 2013: 704).

In contrast with the earlier focus on professional and social closure within the sociology of the professions (e.g. Larson, 1977), neo-institutionalism productively theorises how professions carve out novel domains, “by defining a new space for economic enterprise or social activity” (Suddaby and Viale, 2011: 428) or “populating social spaces with new categories of legitimate social actors” (ibid:

430). Neo-institutionalism, in comparison with more defensive strategies which dominate earlier theories of closure, works well to theorise how professions act with agency to fashion the new.

Again, I argue that this work has clear applicability to the field of architecture. In line with Scott's (2008) typology of professional work, architects clearly play a pre-eminent role in establishing cultural-cognitive frameworks in their area of professional jurisdiction. Most obviously, architectural critics and journalists play a principal, if highly contested, role to establish a discourse of how the built environment should be read and understood by a lay public<sup>24</sup>.

Further, architects are by no means immune to the emergence of large organisations as domains which house professional work. Again, the scholarship of Ahuja and colleagues draws from the working lives of trained architects in multi-disciplinary organisations including PSFs (Ahuja et al., 2017; 2018; 2020).

However, the 'agentic turn' in neo-institutionalism tends to position agency at the level of 'the profession'. In parallel to my overarching critique of the classic sociology of the professions, I argue that this takes insufficient account of both *individual* agency and organisational heterogeneity. My research, therefore, serves to temper the 'agentic turn' in the sociology of the professions, and emphasise the continuing need to consider agency at the level of the individual.

Further, I would argue, from my research, that there is a danger of relying too much on the emergence and assumed dominance of large employer organisations such as PSFs to make general points about 'the professions'. Notwithstanding Ahuja's contributions, this ideal builds mainly from a rather narrow set of occupations deemed 'professional'. In particular, scholars' empirical work draws principally on research among lawyers, accountants, and consultants that tend to populate and dominate leading PSFs (Muzio et al., 2013; Suddaby et al., 2007; Muzio and Kirkpatrick, 2011).

In architecture, at least, PSFs do not dominate numerically. The vast majority of firms remain micro-practices (ACE, 2016). And more substantively, as I have shown, greatest symbolic acclaim is reaped by the owners of smaller, design-led studios. Indeed, in the time I have been writing these conclusions, the fourth volume of *New Architects in Practice* has been published, to some critical fanfare within the field (Architecture Foundation, 2021). Since 1998, this publication has publicly lauded the small, innovative, design-led practice as the pinnacle of architectural achievement. However, these practices

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<sup>24</sup> As witnessed by the number of television series which celebrate the high-design homes of the wealthy and which are presented by architects and architectural critics, e.g. *Grand Designs* (Kevin McCloud), *The World's Most Extraordinary Homes* (Piers Taylor), and *George Clarke's Amazing Spaces*.

are dominated by a social elite; more than half of their founders were educated privately (Dezeen, 2020). There is a danger, in architecture at least, in overemphasising the emergence of the PSF.

### Research Limitations and Potential New Lines of Enquiry

Although my thesis provides original insights into the structuring role of class in the field of architecture, there are inevitably limitations in a project of this size. In this section, I reflect constructively on my research, in order to point towards potential new lines of research inquiry and complementary modes of class analysis.

My first point of reflection is how broad my thesis has been, in terms of both sample design and interview coverage. While fieldwork on working lives often relies on organisational case studies, I chose to interview individuals spread across the field of architecture. I deliberately included individuals whose careers had taken them beyond traditional professional boundaries. This research design sprang partly from reflections on the project I worked on as Research Assistant, which informed *The Class Ceiling* (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). The architectural organisational case study for that research was highly unusual in class terms. It had been set up by an architect from a working-class background, who was also very influential in shaping the firm's culture and working practices. Although there was no evidence of a clear 'class ceiling' in that organisation, I felt strongly that this should not be taken as indicative of architectural firms more generally.

I have also been broad in my selection criteria. In lieu of a sample design comprising only fully trained and registered architects, I chose to interview individuals who have found a place in the field without completing all (or any) of the three parts of a formal architectural education. Similarly, I interviewed not only practising architects, but those who work as teachers to reproduce the next generation of architects, as well as those whose careers centre more on architectural discourse.

Of course, casting such a wide net was not accidental. It was integral to my research focus. It allowed me to take account of the composition of the organisations, institutions and individuals that constitute the field of architecture. I could also consider internal heterogeneity within the field and analyse whether individuals were equally embedded within the field. Against the ideals of professional closure based on credentials and regulation, this allowed me to explore whether certain classed individuals could bypass formal requirements and yet reap substantial material and symbolic rewards. Much of the originality of my research comes from the fact that this approach has not been taken before in architecture.

However, this generates a huge amount of interview material. The evidence I collected through life-history interviews was extremely wide-ranging. While I present my analysis of the field at a single point

in time, this is made up of evolving career histories of individuals of all ages. These accounts range from an octogenarian with a personal family connection just one generation removed from the Bauhaus, to a cluster of architects whose early careers have been structured by the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. While my career histories orbit around a particular geographical location, based on the happenstance of interviewees coinciding with my fieldwork in the global architectural hub that is London, their career histories and future ambitions span the globe.

During the painful process of analysis and editing, and as my supervisor warned me early on in my PhD, a lot of material 'ends up on the cutting room floor'. I remain acutely aware that there are lots of stories in my data, which remain unreported, as they do not speak directly to my research focus. Positive stories of career successes, hopes and ambitions on the one hand, and negative stories of thwarted ambitions and career regrets on the other. A substantial programme of life history interviews generates much more material on architectural careers than I could hope to do justice to, given my particular focus on the issue of class.

Although class was the primary lens through which I analysed my data, I did not assume its primacy in structuring differential career outcomes. In light of both statistical data which evidences gendered exclusion (ARB, 2017) and the small body of research which details gendered forms of oppression in architecture (e.g. Fowler and Wilson, 2012), I maintained a particular openness to the intersections of class and gender. This was reflected in both my sample design and approach to analysis.

By contrast, my research is silent on issues of ethnicity. Minority ethnic architects are poorly represented as architects (ARB, 2017), with black architects, in particular, chronically under-represented. In contrast with research on gender, relatively little has focused on ethnicity in architecture, beyond a small body of work, which has analysed how the curriculum and pedagogical practices effectively discriminate by ethnicity (e.g. Groat and Ahrentzen, 1996). There remains a pressing need for research studies which centre the career experiences of minority ethnic architects, as well as research on architectural careers which analyses ethnicity in intersection with class.

Finally, my research findings point to how a narrower focus would also be productive in future research among architects. In so far as careers continue to unravel, at least in part, within single organisations, ethnographic studies of leading architectural practices would be valuable. Given the high symbolic value assigned to setting up and running a design-led studio, a focus on a range of new practices would be equally insightful. In contrast with my research approach, which reconstructs careers in the discourse of a research interview, observational methods, for example of managerial discussions on recruitment and promotion, would yield granular and detailed material on the machinations of class and architectural careers.

## Class as Exploitation

My second point of reflection is the mode of class analysis I chose to undertake. To facilitate this, I consider how it contrasts with an overarching framework for class analysis, which has been proposed by the Marxist scholar Erik Olin Wright.

In early sociological research, the pre-eminent early form of class analysis in sociology was Marxian. However, as I outlined in my literature review, Marxists came under sustained pressure from many sides, including the critiques of feminists, Weberians and 'reflexivity' theorists. At the same time, with history failing to unravel as a crude Marxism predicted, and with the demise of the Soviet Union in particular, Marxist analysis became a very minority position.

As a leading Marxist scholar, Wright spent a lot of time fighting defensive theoretical battles. Towards the end of his career, Wright came to advocate analytic pluralism in class analyses. He abandoned his early career phantasy of "the valiant Marxist knight unseating the bourgeois rival in a dramatic quantitative joust" (Wright, 2005: 1). In lieu of the "Grand Battle of Paradigms", Wright proposes a "pragmatist realism" (ibid: 2). Specifically, he argues that three different traditions of class analysis – Marxist, Weberian and 'individual attributes' – can be used to address different research questions. (Wright, 2015: 2).

The first, a Marxist "domination and exploitation approach", focuses on issues of economic ownership. In classic Marxist tradition, this works "to identify the fundamental class division connected to the capitalist character the economy: the class division between capitalists and workers" (ibid: 12). As normative constructs, domination – the control over others - and exploitation – the extraction of profit from such control - "imply a moral judgement rather than being simply a neutral description" (ibid: 9). For Wright, the goal of such scholarship is explicitly emancipatory.

The second, which Wright attributes principally to Weberian scholars, analyses processes of social closure. Wright foregrounds credentialing and licensing as key mechanisms by which occupants of high-status occupations work to exclude unqualified others, and so retain social rewards for themselves. This form of analysis, therefore, centres "the ways in which social positions give some people control... while excluding others from access to those resources" (ibid: 3).

The third, stratification by "individual attributes", explores "how people acquire the attributes that place them in one class or another" (ibid: 5). In isolation, this mode of analysis takes no account of the political economy or institutional order which structures economic rewards. Instead, it analyses how class, as an attribute typically derived from early upbringing and so termed "class background", works to allocate an individual's position within the taken for granted social system.

Wright argues that the three approaches identify “different clusters of causal processes” (ibid: 2). As such, each may be used individually and in isolation to answer specific research questions. However, all three are needed in combination to carry out a “fully elaborated class analysis”, which requires a combination of a “dynamic macro model of conflict and transformation with the macro-micro multilevel model of class processes and individual lives” (ibid: 14).

Of course, my research goal was somewhat more modest, and was also circumscribed by the practicalities of what is possible within a single PhD! I did not aim to carry out a “fully elaborated class analysis”, but focused instead on class in relation to careers in a particular occupational field. None the less, Wright’s schema does shine a light onto aspects of class that are relatively untouched in my own research, and which would benefit from further investigation.

So, how does my research map against the ideal set out by Wright? Although my theoretical positioning of class is absolutely not a simple attribute of a person, my mode of analysis clearly operates at the level of the individual. I explicate the inheritance of resources in the form of economic and cultural capital that shape a classed habitus and contingent class identities, which serve to structure material and symbolic rewards throughout individual careers.

By theorising class in relation to fields, my research sits also within the second mode of analysis. By analysing individual class in relation to fields, I set out the ways in which the historical evolution of a field, and the resultant constellation of organisations and institutions, serves to advantage some at the expense of others. The interrelation between the individual and the organisational/institutional, and resultant distribution of rewards, therefore, is at the heart of my analysis. Furthermore, my work provides evidence of how class works in relation to informal closure. From a Bourdieusian perspective, I show how “cultural style, manners, accent” (ibid: 7), as signifiers of class, serve to facilitate and/or hinder inclusion in and progression through the field of architecture.

What about the final, macro level of analysis? Of course, my research has not ignored the realm of politics. External pressure from the political sphere, in the form of social mobility policy arena, plays a central part to my research inquiries. I have shown how this neo-liberal policy domain has begun to impact on managerial discourse and practice in architecture.

On the other hand, I have not focused explicitly on issues of economic ownership under capitalism, and resultant forms of control and exploitation. My research says little on issues of political economy. As such, future studies of architectural careers, and indeed other occupational arenas deemed professional, could productively focus more extensively on issues of ownership, state regulation, the power of commissioning clients, and the pressures exerted by various political actors.

In addition to any 'top down' analysis of the political economy of architecture, further research studies could fruitfully explore issues of exploitation as presented in individual careers. In my research, architects recalled various instances of exploitative work practices, particularly in their early careers. These include low pay, as well as enforced and unpaid over-time. Such practices were rarely centred overtly on class as an attribute of an individual. In such accounts, architects were not simply being exploited due to being 'read' by their employers as coming from a working-class background (although, of course, certain individuals may escape positions of exploitation more easily than others due to their classed stock of capitals). Rather, such exploitation was grounded in the relationship between owner-manager and worker under capitalism. Industry surveys of Architectural Assistants finds ample evidence of exploitative working practices, including unpaid internships, payment below the level of Real Living Wage and Minimum Wage, and failure to provide a contract of employment (Architects Journal, 2021). Charles Umney's (2018) research details how exploitative processes, rooted in the relationship between labour and capital, shape the world of work in call centres and restaurants in the United Kingdom. A similar study could fruitfully explore the professional milieu of architecture in these terms.

### Policy Implications

In this final section, I focus on issues of policy. In particular, I consider the progressive potential of architecture in relation to classed inclusion. I, therefore, address a key normative question, which lies at the heart of my research inquiries. In this light, it is worth reiterating why classed inclusion in architecture matters. There are, I would say, three principal reasons.

The first centres social justice. According to liberal ideal of justice as fairness, society should afford individuals a fair and equal chance to develop their capabilities, find fulfilment and live the good life (e.g. Rawls, 1972; Nussbaum and Sen, 1993). In this light, systematic discrimination, prejudice and exclusion against individuals fails to live up to this ideal. Alternatively, to a less individualistic conception of social justice, social groups who have been historically disadvantaged and oppressed need to be able to find redress (Young, 1990). Whether theorised individually (fairness as equality of opportunity) or collectively (fairness as redress), social justice requires equitable treatment in relation to class.

The second, closely related, centres on the distribution of rewards. Despite the narrative of professional decline I outlined earlier, occupations deemed 'professional' continue to accrue high material rewards in the labour market (ONS, 2020). Furthermore, at least certain professions continue to achieve high levels of public acclaim (Ipsos MORI, 2020). One way of legitimising such an uneven



distribution of material and symbolic rewards, is for professions to demonstrate that they offer equitable treatment of different individuals and social groups.

Finally, architecture takes its place among the cultural and creative industries. The legitimacy of this sector is often based on fair representation, grounded in the need to be inclusive (Create London, 2018). All individuals and social groups need to have equal possibility to shape cultural output by telling their stories and making their voices heard. Although this argument is made less frequently in relation to architecture, the principle applies none the less. More prosaically, everybody is a 'user' and beneficiary of the built environment, and so the shaping of the built environment needs itself to be genuinely inclusive.

The normative question of architectural inclusion is rather different from previous sociologically informed studies of practising architects. These have typically taken architecture's professional struggles as a starting point, with the aim of bolstering the commercial viability of the profession (Gutman, 1988; Symes et al. 1995; Blau, 1984). For example, Robert Gutman's (1988) important study on the state of the profession, although entitled *Architectural Practice: A Critical View*, reads more as consultancy than sociological critique. The stated goal is to "assure the independence of architectural practice in future years" (ibid: 111). After setting out professional challenges associated with the changing nature of work in a competitive market economy, Gutman outlines different strategies for success. These aim to improve employee morale so that practices can be run more effectively and cost-efficiently, in order to provide client-focused services.

As a Professor of Architecture and honorary member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), Gutman is an architectural insider. As such, his works aims to safeguard 'the profession', implicitly those who hold managerial power. More contemporary studies which analyse the professionalism of architecture are also written by architectural insiders with the explicit aim of protecting the future of practising architects (Samuel, 2018; RIBA, 2019c).

My position is different. As a critical outsider, I have no vested interest in whether architecture maintains any professional kudos, or whether those who presently reap material and symbolic rewards continue to do so. I am free to conclude that the profession of architecture is not worth saving, or, to put in more Bourdieusian terms, that the game of architecture is not worth playing. In this light, I can pose more open questions. I thus consider whether, in relation to class, there is any progressive potential within the field of architecture? And, if so, how can that be realized?

In my previous chapter, I set out how a neo-liberal ideal of diversity management, itself largely regressive, has failed to take deep root in the field. Interpreted as a managerialist agenda, it clashes

with the primacy of creative capital, and is often dismissed or downplayed. On the other hand, the status quo, i.e. the field as it currently exists, is clearly regressive in terms of classed inclusion and the classed distribution of rewards in the field. The field of architecture is predicated on classed exclusion and serves to reproduce classed exclusion.

I now cast my net more widely to consider broader policy solutions propagated by the social 'mobility industry', to evaluate their potential to effect progressive change in architecture. The Social Mobility Commission includes policy recommendations in its studies of law, accountancy and professional service firms (Ashley et al., 2015) as well as life sciences and investment banking (Moore et al., 2016). Friedman and Laurison (2019) collaborated with The Bridge Group to outline 10 ways to break the 'class ceiling'. The Bridge Group (2020) has also recently published a cross-industry employer toolkit to tackle issues of socio-economic diversity.

These different works report very similar recommendations to enact progressive change. I have grouped these into four broad themes - data collection, organisational culture, removal of individual barriers and discussions around talent – which I evaluate in turn.

#### The Double-edged Possibilities of Data Collection

First, it is argued that progressive change requires the collection of data on individual class background. The Social Mobility Commission's first qualitative report into socio-economic barriers to career progression recommends "more and better data, in order that we can continue to track the demographic profile of new entrants to the professions at all levels, according to a wide range of social mobility indicators, and use this data to improve the quality of interventions" (Ashley et al., 2015: 104). The need for 'accurate measurement' is the first policy recommendation of the 'Class Ceiling' and improved data collection forms a cornerstone of the Bridge Group's cross-industry toolkit.

The Bridge Group recommends that data should be published, so that individual firms can benchmark their performance against others and carry out cross-sector comparisons. Knowing precisely what to measure is an acknowledged problem, given the wide range of different socio-economic indicators. The 'Class Ceiling' endorses parental occupation as the best single measure, while the cross-industry toolkit includes 'type of school attended at age 11–16', 'free school meal eligibility' and 'highest parental qualification'. Friedman and Laurison (2019: 232) also promote the use of more sophisticated quantitative analysis to measure the 'class ceiling' in relation to grade, position or pay.

This call for more effective measurement and reporting of issues of class data is, at best, double-edged. On the one hand, it may effectively shine a light on many areas of the field which lack basic data. Most obviously, the Architects Registration Board (ARB) does not report any data on the class

background of registered architects. Further, my research shows how class structures rewards in particular parts of the field, for example in relation to arts-centred schools of architecture and design-led studios. Quantitative data would very usefully provide more detailed measurement of issues of how class structures rewards, inclusion and patterns of progression than is possible with my qualitative approach. This, in turn, could illuminate which parts of the field require most fundamental change.

On the other hand, it remains highly questionable as to why the mere act of collecting and publishing diversity data should lead to progressive outcomes. As Vaughan (2015: 115) concludes in his assessment of legal profession, the reporting of diversity data is, in itself, unlikely to “change ingrained behaviors, unconscious biases, and long-standing practices of working”. Without effective regulation from either a professional leadership body or the state, there is no need to change. And, in any case, given the multiplicity of class indicators, it is likely that architectural firms could manipulate data reports to portray themselves in the most positive light.

Finally, if made to work within a neo-liberal framework, which emphasises individual and organisational competition, more sophisticated data may exacerbate rather than weaken current levels of inequality. As I highlighted in the previous chapter, more granular data on the return to investment of an architectural education may incentivise middle-class parents to ensure it is *their* children who attend the architectural schools associated with greater career earnings.

### The Difficulty of Organisational Culture Change

The second theme I consider is cultural change at the level of the employer organisation. This is central to the Bridge Group’s cross-industry toolkit. This promotes a singular, hard culture, led by senior management, to “ensure a compelling, shared vision across your organisation” (Bridge Group, 2020: 17). As an integral part of the vision, employee diversity should be positioned as an unequivocal good.

A strong culture is predicated on top-down management. Appointed “social mobility champions” need to be “in a leadership position”, and senior managers need to be held accountable for achieving diversity (Moore et al., 2016: 118). This requires “compulsory training for all hiring managers on issues surrounding social background and ‘fit’”, so as to “reduce informality in relation to final selection decisions” (Moore et al., 2016: 117).

Beyond issues of recruitment, leading employers should “shut[ing] down informal progression tracks” routed in one-to-one mentorship relations, which “disproportionately reward the privileged” (Friedman and Laurison: 235-6). As summarised in the *Class Ceiling*, the goal in terms of organisational management is to “formalise the informal” (ibid: 235).

In contrast, *informality* is encouraged for employees from working-class backgrounds. Employers should provide “informal support networks” (Friedman and Laurison: 236) as well as “informal mentoring to students from non-traditional backgrounds” (Ashley et al., 2015: 19).

The problems with instigating organisational change through top-down, cultural management are well-rehearsed (e.g. Grey, 2013: 67-71). While it is easy to advocate for a ‘compelling, shared vision’, based on the values set out by senior management, organisational culture rarely falls into line. At most extreme, organisational culture is considered “natural, spontaneous” and so “relatively impervious to intervention” (Grey, 2013: 68-9, drawing from Meek, 1998). In less extreme formulations, organisational cultures are plural and contested (Gregory, 1983). As such, top-down attempts to manage culture produce unanticipated outcomes. Predicated on the imposition of a managerial world-view, they are also highly ethically problematic (Willmott, 2002). In this light, the idea that the informality of social relations between all members of an employer organisation with different positional status can be wholly or substantially formalised appears, at best, somewhat naïve.

When considered in relation to diversity and inclusion, the ethical implications are particularly problematic. Top-down cultural management works explicitly to an ideal of a monoculture, based on an organisational vision, values and goals shared by all employees. This is clearly at odds with ideal of valuing employees in so far as they are diverse. Furthermore, the distinction between formal approaches required of management and the informal allowances provided to ‘the diverse’ is itself troublesome. It positions the working-class who are encouraged to benefit from informality as dependent. They are positioned in a subordinate role to be supported by a paternalistic cadre of non-diverse managers. There is a danger, therefore, that this approach reifies differences of class and naturalises the distinction between middle-class managers and the working-class managed diverse (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000).

Despite my strong reservations, I certainly do not say that any activity that falls under the aegis of organisational change management should simply be jettisoned. It may be that certain forms of training on issues of diversity in recruitment lead to progressive outcomes. However, the overarching strategy of enacting classed inclusion through strong cultural management is not something that can or should be realised.

#### The Limits to Removing Individual Barriers

The third theme centres on the liberal ideal of facilitating professional access and progression by carrying out “work to remove or reduce roadblocks for non-privileged candidates” (Moore et al., 2016: vii). This involves outreach work to communicate basic information about what different professions do to school students. Events and digital activities should aim “to engage under-represented groups”,

and include visible “role models from a variety of backgrounds” (Bridge Group, 2020: 21). Additionally, employers should offer paid work experience and internships, which should be ringfenced for underrepresented groups (ibid: 20).

Employers should consider apprenticeships and other non-graduate routes into the profession. Non-graduate recruitment should be from “social mobility coldspots” rather than main urban centres (Ashley et al., 2015: 23), while graduate recruitment should extend to “a wider range of universities” (Moore et al., 2016: vii) and involve “coaching and support to students beyond preferred universities” (Ashley et al., 2015: 17).

The removal of barriers to progression necessitates changes to selection practices.. Strong positive actions, including “CV blind recruitment techniques” and “no longer screening on academic credentials gained at secondary school” aim to contextualise or discount educational advantages associated with social background (Moore et al., 2016: 113). With a similar aim, employers are encouraged to “take into account differential access to “extra-curricular activities” (Bridge Group, 2020: 21), and hire on potential and skills (rather than experience and qualifications) (ibid: 21).

In relation to architecture, such activities have the potential to increase professional access. Indeed, the various initiatives I reported in my previous chapter - outreach work, mentoring programmes and apprenticeships – carry such progressive potential.

On the other hand, by focusing on facilitating individual pathways, such actions downplay the need for more fundamental change in the field. Without more radical change, there is also a risk that individuals who benefit from such programmes find employment in parts of the architectural field which are less highly rewarded. My research suggests they are less likely, for example, to set up the design-led studios which represent a professional ideal. Research in other professional contexts, law and medicine, has found that, at times of increased professional access, individuals from “lower status” groups tend to be filtered to paraprofessional and less highly esteemed professional roles (e.g. Sommerlad, 2016).

### The Reluctance to Talk Talent

Finally, each report recommends a critical interrogation of issues of merit and talent (e.g. Ashley et al., 2015: 18). Employers need to consider whether their “‘objective’ measures are intrinsically linked to how merit is “performed”, which may be related to class background (Friedman and Laurison, 2019: 232-3). Following this critical self-examination, employers should communicate “a clear definition of talent in each section of the organisation, and an explicit narrative about what experiences and

behaviours should not contribute to progression” (Bridge Group, 2020: 22). In this way, employer organisations should divorce issues of social background from evaluations of actual talent.

This is no easy task. Even when merit is conceived in relation to technical task performance, Young (1990: 202) outlines four principal challenges, which render this impossible in practice. First, tasks are highly complex. Second, tasks are frequently carried out by teams rather than individuals. Third, tasks often require discretion and judgement. Finally, managers whose role is to evaluate merit do not necessarily have the same technical expertise as their subordinates.

I would add that this is even more challenging in a profession grounded in the indeterminacy of aesthetics. From my research, I would certainly concur that it would be productive for holders of managerial power to start a conversation around what is meant by talent. As I showed, the contradictions in how academics read students’ talent signal that talent is by no means consistently evaluated and may well be rooted in social background. And this professional blind-spot continues in practice. However, I would argue that a more productive goal of such conversation would be to debate the ways in which social identities work to shape definitions of talent in particular contexts. The idea that they can be neatly disentangled in an “ideal of impartiality” is wholly unrealistic (Young, 1990: 202).

#### Overall Evaluation of ‘Mobility Industry’ Policy Proposals

In sum, the proposals of these reports are all predicated on a simple invocation of the ‘business case’ for diversity (Moore et al., 2016; Friedman and Laurison, 2019, Ashley et al., 2015, Bridge Group, 2020). However, empirical evidence suggests there are no non-contingent business benefits (BIS, 2013). There is a danger, therefore, that issues of diversity and inclusion are rejected insofar as they do not lead to short-run improvements in business performance. Further, the business case does nothing to redress inequitable relations between socially disadvantaged and powerful groups within organisations; instead it obfuscates issues of organisational power and control (Zanoni and Janssens, 2003).

Equally problematic is that these policy recommendations rarely include any explicit theory of organisational or professional change. Instead, it is as if the communication of a compelling vision, collection of accurate data and resultant performance benchmarking will in themselves drive progressive change. This seems very unlikely, given the decades of accurate data, for example, about gendered exclusion and the gender pay gap. The one exception is Ashley et al. (2015: 103), who posit professional social exclusion as a ‘wicked problem’, which requires experimentation, an awareness that policy goals may produce “unintended consequences”, and a “devious spirit”, open to creative solutions.

Similarly, there is no requirement to change. While employers may choose to gather robust data, carry out meaningful outreach work, instil and evaluate particular training programmes and hold a professional conversation around talent, there is no compunction for employers to do so in good faith.

Finally, these policy recommendations take the political economy under which the professions operate as a given. With the sole exception of Friedman and Laurison's (2019: 237) invocation for professions to lobby for changes in Equalities legislation so that class can be afforded legal protection, they afford no room to challenging the broader status quo. As such, the policy recommendations are rather timid.

### Architecture's Progressive Potential

This brings me back to my central question as to what, if anything, could be done in architecture to effect more progressive change? First of all, I reiterate the clear need for structural and systemic changes, beyond the field of architecture. The leading sociologist of social mobility, John Goldthorpe, has argued that the best way to solve the problem of social mobility is obliquely, by creating greater equality of condition within society, rather than directly, via educational policies or specific 'social mobility' initiatives (LSE, 2013). As Goldthorpe argues, greater equality of condition at once facilitates social fluidity and makes any residual immobility inherently less troublesome. As such, many of the policy levers required to effect greater societal equality of condition lie well beyond the direct reach of even the most influential players in the field of architecture.

I now turn to the potential for endogenous change within the field of architecture. Architecture, theorised as a Bourdieusian field, is in a constant state of flux. As I have shown, the field of architecture is characterised by relational struggles and tensions, between individuals, organisations and institutions, whose histories set them on particular trajectories.

Bourdieu is often criticised for having an overtly deterministic or pessimistic view of change (e.g. Jenkins, 1992: 74-82). Further, Bourdieu was highly suspicious of any invocation of professionalism, and the associated positive values of trust and collegiality, to argue for the potential for progressive change (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). In this way, Bourdieu is more aligned with professional power theorists, and argued that professionalism was an ideological chimera, which camouflages agonistic competition. Garry Stevens (1998), the sociologist who first theorised the profession of architecture as a Bourdieusian field, concurs. He argues that the dominant capitals in the field of architecture serve to delegitimize political action, such that change within the field is driven by status games among the architectural elites in ways which undermine progressive potential.

My conclusions are somewhat less pessimistic. In particular, my research reveals public service capital as one of the three principal capitals, which structures symbolic and material rewards in the field. While there is always a danger that the values associated with public service capital – social progression, civic minded and public service – are mere stakes in a status game, I argue that they drive action which is more genuinely progressive. This is apparent in my research in the political motivations of individuals, which take concrete form in various ways, including the setting up of feminist and community-oriented practices.

This is further evidenced by the number of bodies which have sprung up outside organisational boundaries in architecture, and which aim to improve the inclusion of historically disadvantaged groups. An inexhaustive list includes New Architectural Writers, Paradigm Network, Black Females in Architecture, Women in Architecture, Future Architects Front, Built By Us and Power Out of Restriction. Although by no means uniform in their approach, these groups work to a different vision of inclusion from the top-down ideal of diverse interest groups contained within large employers, which is propagated by managerial approaches to diversity and inclusion. Instead, they tend to emphasise mutual support, and cooperative forms of pedagogy as a form of collective empowerment. They do not always aim to integrate excluded groups into the field of architecture as is, but aim equally to change and disrupt.

Unionisation forms a further path to progressive change in the field. Following long term declines in membership, recent years have seen an increase in membership in the United Kingdom (Roper, 2020). In this context, the 2019 establishment of the Section of Architectural Workers (SAW), part of the United Voices of the World (UVW) union, may prove more productive than earlier attempts to unionise the profession. The SAW's initial demands focus on exploitative work-place practices, particularly in relation to overwork and poor levels of pay. Supported by influential critical voices within the field, early career architects, in particular, are encouraged to no longer see themselves as "temporarily disadvantaged creatives", but as exploited workers, with unionisation one of the principal ways to collectively improve their work situation (Wagner, 2021, drawing from Deamer, 2020).

Co-operatives and employee-owned businesses (EOBs) provide a further model for how public service capital could be leveraged to effect progressive change within the field. EOBs have a long and successful history as architectural practices in the United Kingdom (RIBA Journal, 2019). As I touched on in my previous chapter, they are well regarded within the field.

There are at least two ways in which EOBs offer progressive potential in architecture. First, collective ownership facilitates democratic decision making. Indeed, the distribution of decision-making is



intrinsic to this organisational form. As such, EOBs sit well with early considerations of equalities as social justice, which, despite the dominance of the business case, continue to have contemporary relevance. Young (1990: 12) argues that a “hierarchical division of labour that separates task-defining from task-executing work enacts domination, and produces or reinforces at least three forms of oppression: exploitation, powerlessness and cultural imperialism”. In other words, in hierarchically ordered organisations, owned and directed by a separate cadre of owner-managers, employees lose autonomy and creativity, as they work for the benefit of others.

EOBs aim to diminish these forms of oppression by distributing power and decision-making. In theory, at least, architectural practices are ideal EOBs, given that they are, in large part, made up of trained architects who share a professional identity and status. They offer the possibility of a fairer distribution of tasks, shared managerial responsibilities, and a democratic allocation of work.

Second, I argue that the democratic ownership of EOBs facilitates a more democratic production of the built environment. In such a model, architectural design is considered a social exercise, which centres community consultation and engagement, such that buildings are more effectively co-produced between architects and end-users. The pride with which interviewees recalled community-led projects of this type is testament to the potential of public service capital to underpin progressive change.

Finally, to shift emphasis to issues of economic and commercial viability, EOBs carry different organisational benefits, including productivity and efficiency gains (Pencavel et al., 2006) and a greater investment in human capital (BIS, 2012). EOBs are therefore better placed to weather recessions, while issues of succession, an acknowledged problem in owner-managed firms of architects, is sidestepped by the ownership model itself (BIS, 2012; Pencavel et al., 2006).

This is not to say that EOBs represent a panacea, which would effectively solve the inequities of diversity and inclusion, while safeguarding architecture from future economic shocks. Empirical research on EOBs reports a mixed picture in relation to diversity and inclusion. At times, an emphasis on the “shared values” required to become a partner within an EOB has worked to favour privilege. This has “implicitly excluded or disenfranchised members of subordinated groups” (Meyers and Vallas, 2016: 103). Further, despite nominally flat structures, dominant groups may “conceal their cultural capital advantages”, while at the same time accruing “more opportunity and reward”. In sum, Meyers and Vallas (ibid: 103) conclude that “a broader distribution of power to workers does not uniformly ensure more equality”.

Meyers and Vallas' (2016) qualitative comparative research among two employee-owned firms also evidences both the difficulties and progressive possibilities of EBOs in relation to diversity and inclusion. In one of their firms of study, a utilitarian diversity regime "served to obscure the structural and cultural sources of inequality among workers, implicitly reaffirming the individualistic account of job segregation that predominated at this firm" (ibid: 121). However, in the other, a "communitarian diversity regime", which "actively defined the workplace as an arena in which antioppression tactics were to be energetically pursued...enabled workers of all groups to establish and defend an egalitarian and democratic distribution of power and resources" (ibid: 122). This latter firm underscores the progressive potential of EBOs, predicated on active and continuous programmes against oppression.

While none of these three avenues of change – the emergence of campaigning and social interest groups, moves towards unionisation and the promotion of EOBs – offer a clear pathway towards classed inclusion in the field, all offer potential. They signal realistic possibilities for progressive change in architecture.

#### Architecture as Emblematic and Exceptional

As a final reflection, I consider the issue of generalisability. I ask, therefore, whether my narrow focus on the field of architecture should be interpreted as evidence of its uniqueness, or whether I should conceptualise my work as an analytic case study, from which to draw more general conclusions about the structuring role of class in other 'professional' milieus.

As outlined earlier in this thesis, architecture is, if not unique, certainly unusual. Unlike any other profession, it is both central to construction and yet classified within the 'creative and cultural' industries (DCMS, 2013). Further, Stead (2012) argues that an architectural elite has cultivated an air of exceptionalism, which aims to limit eligible critics to those who are formally trained. Finally, the sociology of the professions tends to posit architecture as a profession, which struggles, and frequently fails, in its projects of professionalization (Larson, 1983; Kaye, 1960).

In her early work, Larson (1983) considers whether architecture is emblematic or exceptional as a profession. On the one hand, she emphasises that "architecture is an exceptional profession because it cannot, by definition, establish a monopoly" (Larson, 1983: 75). Its reliance on the indeterminacy of aesthetics means it is unable to set out a scientific knowledge base to protect itself from professional interlopers. However, Larson argues that architecture is none the less emblematic of a professionalization project. Its struggles and failings reveal what is required for the more successful professionalization projects of engineering, medicine and law: 'a demonstrably scientific [knowledge] base' underpinned by 'the state's coercive powers'. Further, what is required for a successful professionalization project is itself culturally contingent. Architecture, argues Larson, just happens to

fare poorly, because “*in the cultural situation of our time* it is simply easier to resist and challenge than a demonstrably scientific base, such as medicine and engineering can claim” (Larson, 1983: 75, emphasis mine). In a different historical and cultural context, therefore, Larson implies that the indeterminacy of aesthetics may have been what is required for successful professionalization projects.

In a similar way, I argue that architecture can be considered at once exceptional and emblematic in terms of the interrelation of class and the rewards that are distributed through individual careers. It is the case, of course, that the field-specific capitals I have identified - creative, public service and commercial capital - as well as the structural position of organisations and institutions, are particular outcomes of the historical evolution of architecture. Similarly, the numeric dominance and symbolic importance of smaller, young firms, while not necessarily unique to architecture, is unlikely to be simply replicated in all other professional fields. Finally, the downplaying of diversity management by holders of managerial power springs from the values which derive from architecture’s field-specific capitals.

In this light, architecture is exceptional. A similar focus on any other professional arena would require its own empirical research. This would show, for example, whether the values embedded in a neo-liberal diversity management agenda clash or chime with the dominant values which drive the professional milieu under study. On the other hand, I would argue that the analytic approach of considering the values of diversity management in relation to field specific capitals is itself transferrable. Given both the prominence of diversity management as an accepted common sense (Vertovec, 2012), and its neo-liberal formulation, which problematically masks relations of power (Zanoni and Janssens, 2003), I argue that this would be a highly productive undertaking in many other occupational arenas.

Similarly, new empirical research would be required to ascertain how different aspects of an individual’s class - forms of capitals, classed habitus and class identity - structure career progression through the field in question. However, as an analytical template, the analysis of class in conjunction with particular fields, is itself generalisable, rather than unique to architecture. I argue that such an analytic approach helpfully brings greater focus onto how class structures the distribution of individual rewards within particular occupational arenas. It may also point towards more progressive possibilities. Given the contemporary reality of rampant and rising levels of material inequalities, such an approach within the sociology of the professions is more timely than ever.

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## Annexes

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## Annex A: Field Materials

### Field Materials A: Project Information Sheet



### Careers in Architecture

#### Information Sheet for Research Participants

##### Background

Ensuring individuals progress in their careers according to their talents and efforts is considered a key measure of a meritocratic society. Surprisingly little academic research has explored how social class may affect individual career progression in the field of architecture and whether this may differ by gender. This research aims to fill this gap.

##### Who is carrying out this research?

The research is being carried out by Ian McDonald, a student undertaking a PhD in the School of Management at Royal Holloway University London. His research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

##### How will this research be used?

This research forms an integral part of Ian's PhD. It will be used to inform his thesis on the role played by social background on architectural careers.

##### Is participation anonymous?

Yes. In the PhD dissertation and any other academic reporting, it will not be revealed which individuals participated in the survey. Individuals' comments will be fully anonymised.

##### Who is being interviewed?

The aim is to carry out around 50 interviews with people at different stages of their career. Fieldwork will involve a range of practising architects, journalists, critics and academics.

**What does participation involve?**

Professionals who choose to participate will be interviewed individually. Ian will administer a short self-completion survey and carry out one-to-one interviews, using open questioning. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to aid analysis.

The interview will cover your own background, career experiences and attitudes to social class as an issue of Diversity and Inclusion.

**Is participation voluntary?**

Individual participation is entirely voluntary. Your participation may be withdrawn at any time.

**How long will the interview take?**

An interview should last around one hour. This will vary slightly from individual to individual.

**How will data be stored?**

Audio files and transcripts will be kept securely on a password-protected PC.

**Any other questions?**

Please contact Ian McDonald [ian.mcdonald.2016@live.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:ian.mcdonald.2016@live.rhul.ac.uk)

## Field Materials B: Consent Form



### Careers in Architecture: Consent Form

**Title of Project:** Careers in Architecture

By signing this form I am showing that I have read the project Information Sheet and have had the opportunity to ask any further questions about the study. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

### Statement by the Researcher

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all questions have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that consent has been given voluntarily.

Print Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

## Field Materials C: Pre-Interview Questionnaire

### ARCHITECTURAL CAREERS

Please complete this questionnaire which covers demographic information, your family background, education and career history. If there's a question you do not wish to answer, please leave this blank.

Family Background

**Q1 Where did you grow up? Please select where you spent most of your childhood**

- London
- South East England
- South West
- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East of England
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Elsewhere in Europe (please write in country) \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Elsewhere in the world (please write in country) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2 Would you say the family you grew up in was better or worse off than the average family in the same country?**

- Much better off
- Slightly better off
- About the same
- Slightly worse off
- Much worse off
- Don't know

**Q3 What was your postcode when you were fourteen?**

- UK post-code – Please write in \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Grew up outside UK

**Q4 What was the tenure of your home when you were fourteen?**

- Owner-occupier, i.e. owned outright or bought with a mortgage
- Council housing, rented from a local authority
- Rented from a private landlord
- Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5 What type of occupation did the main income earner in your household have when you were fourteen?**

- Higher Professional and/or Managerial - such as doctor, accountant, engineer, CEO, finance manager
- Lower Professional and/or Managerial - such as nurse, teacher, artist, social worker, middle manager
- Clerical, skilled manual or self-employed - such as secretary, electrician, shopkeeper, police officer, farmer, office admin, foreman
- Routine and Semi-Routine - such as labourer, cleaner, factory worker, sales assistant, lorry driver
- If unsure, please add job title and details of work carried out below

\_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION

**Q6 Did you ever receive free school meals at school?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q7 What type of schools did you attend?** Tick one box for primary, secondary and sixth form

	Primary (age 5-10)	Secondary (11-16)	Sixth form
State school – non-selective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State school – selective	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q8 At which universities did you study architecture?** Write in each institution below.

Part 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Part 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Part 3 \_\_\_\_\_

- Studied another subject at university (Write in subject and institution)

\_\_\_\_\_

- Did not attend university (Write in your highest educational attainment)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Q9 Did your parents complete university/higher education?**

- Yes, father (Write in name of Higher education institution) \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, mother (Write in name of Higher education institution) \_\_\_\_\_

- No

WORK AND CAREER EXPERIENCE

**Q10 Please write in details of your career from first architectural job to current role? Include details from the first time you worked in architecture, including as work experience or as an Architectural Assistant. Include jobs outside architecture. If easier, please provide your CV.**

	Name of Organisation	Position held/job title	Approximate dates
First job			
Second			
Third			
Fourth			
Fifth			
Six			
Seventh			
Eight			
Ninth			
Tenth			

**Q11 Is your current job full or part-time?**

- Full-time  
 Part-time

**Q12 Approximately, how many hours do you work in a typical working week?**

Hours



INVOLVEMENT IN ARCHITECTURE
-----------------------------

**Q13 Which of the following apply to you?** Tick all that apply

- I am a member of RIBA
- I am an ARB registered architect
- I am a member of another professional association or trade union (Write in any below)

\_\_\_\_\_

- None of these

**Q14 Have you been nominated for or won architectural competitions, awards or prizes?** Please give details below

**Q15 Have you been involved in architectural reform? (e.g. Farrell Review, RIBA review of education etc.). This could be as a panel member, attending a workshop or responding to a call for evidence** Please give details below

DEMOGRAPHICS
--------------

**Q16 What is your age?**

- Under 20
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

**Q17 What is your gender?**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe \_\_\_\_\_

**Q18 Do you have any primary or joint caring responsibilities?**

- Yes, for child/ren aged under 16
- Yes, for other family/household members
- No

**Q19 What is your ethnic group or background?**

- White - British
- White - Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Asian - Chinese
- Asian - Pakistani
- Asian - Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- Black - African
- Black - Caribbean
- Black - Black British
- Black - Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- Mixed - White & Black
- Mixed - White & Asian
- Mixed -other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

CLASS IDENTITIES
------------------

**Q20 Do you ever think of yourself as belonging to any particular social class?**

- Yes, middle class
- Yes, working class
- Yes, Other class (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- No
- Don't know

**Q21 Do you think you are in a different class to your parents?**

- Yes, parents more working class, I am more middle class
- Yes, parents more middle class, I am more working class
- No, we are broadly the same
- No, I never think of myself or my parents in terms of class

- Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- Don't know

**Q22 Do you think your own class has changed during your lifetime?**

- Yes, I have become more middle class
- Yes, I have become more working class
- Other (Please write in) \_\_\_\_\_
- No, have stayed the same
- No, never think of myself in terms of class
- Don't know

## Field Materials D: Topic Guide

### Topic Guide – Careers in Architecture

#### Introduction

- Confirm nature and purpose of research interview
- Collect pre-interview questionnaire and signed project information sheet
- Ask permission to audio record

#### Life history

- *Please tell me about your early life growing up.* Probe for parental occupations, perceptions of family's standard of living, childhood hobbies, family outings and holidays, cultural activities and schooling

#### Career history

- *How did you come to work in architecture?* Probe for initial interest, family and/or school encouragement
- *How did you find studying architecture?*
- *Please talk me through your career history, from your first job to current position* (Ask for CV or refer to Life history questionnaire)

#### Current position

- *What do you like/dislike about current role(s)?*

#### Career trajectory

- *How has your career matched your early expectations?*
- *What are your career aims and ambitions?*

#### Progression in Architecture

- *How do people progress in architecture?*
- *Is progression in architecture fair?* Prompt with list of stakeholders in the field of architecture as necessary

#### Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- *What equalities, diversity and inclusion issues are most pressing in architecture?* Probe for particular social groups, issues of class and social mobility, experience of discrimination
- If manager/practice owner: *What diversity and inclusion initiatives have you undertaken/are you planning?*

#### Class and Career Progression

- *Do you consider yourself to belong to a social class?*
- *How has class affected your career?* Probe for colleagues, architecture generally and changes over time

#### Conclusion

Anything to add? Check agreement to follow up further areas and get self-completion questionnaire.

# **The Field of Architecture**

Design-led architectural practices

Delivery-led architectural practices

Multi-disciplinary companies, e.g. Atkins

Building developers, e.g. Barratts

Design & Build firms

Design Consultancies

Architectural Clients

RIBA

Heritage groups, e.g. English Heritage

Architectural Association

Your university

Architectural Academics

Architectural Critics

The Architectural Press

## Annex B: Statistical Data on Architectural Practices, Pay and Diversity

**Table A: Trends in Number of Architects Registered in the UK**

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	% increase 2012 to 2016
34,328	34,520	35,411	36,932	38,511	+12.2

Source: Architects Registration Board (2016)

**Table B: UK Architectural Labour Market**

No. Staff (No.s in brackets used for total staff calculation)	No. Practices	% of Practices	Approx total staff (my calculation)	Approx % staff (my calculation)
1	4,257	60.5%	4,257	16.9%
2	878	12.5%	1,756	7.0%
3-5 (4)	1,134	16.1%	4,536	18.0%
6-10 (8)	398	5.7%	3,184	12.6%
11-30 (20)	273	3.9%	5,460	21.6%
31-50 (40)	63	0.9%	2,520	10.0%
>50 (100)	35	0.5%	3,500	13.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,037</b>		<b>25,213</b>	

Source: Architects Council of Europe (2016)

**Table C: Architectural Pay**

	Typical Salary			London % premium over North West
	London	South East	North West	
<b>Architects</b>				
- Partner	£85,000	£65,000	£65,000	30.8
- Associate	£64,500	£50,000	£45,000	43.3
- Architect	£45,000	£42,000	£36,000	25.0
- Architectural Assistant Part 2	£30,500	£28,000	£25,000	22.0
- Architectural Assistant Part 1	£21,500	£21,500	£18,000	19.4
<b>Technicians</b>				
- Senior CAD Technician	£40,000	£38,000	£36,000	11.1
- Technician	£33,000	£33,000	£30,000	10.0
- CAD technician	£30,000	£28,000	£26,000	15.4
- BIM manager	£55,500	£45,000	£47,500	16.8
<b>Interior Designers</b>				
- Senior Interior Designer	£46,000	£38,000	£34,000	35.3
- Interior Designer	£38,000	£32,000	£27,000	40.7
<b>Planner</b>				
Town Planner	£35,000	£34,000	£27,000	29.6
Assistant Planner	£27,000	£25,000	£18,000	50.0

Source: Derived from Hays (2017)

**Table D: Class Background and HE degree in the UK**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Age adjusted Percentage of students from NS-SEC 4-7</b>
Medicine & dentistry and veterinary science	18.3
Historical & philosophical studies	24.2
Languages	25.9
Mathematical sciences	27
Physical sciences	27.4
Engineering & technology	31.1
Social studies	31.1
<b>Architecture, building &amp; planning</b>	<b>31.7</b>
Biological sciences	33.8
Law	34.1
Combined subjects	34.7
Creative arts & design	34.9
Business & administrative studies	35.3
Mass communications & documentation	35.6
Subjects allied to medicine	37.1
Computer sciences	38.9
Agriculture & related	39.5
Education	41.4
<b>Average across all subjects</b>	<b>32.3</b>

SOURCE: Guardian (2010) Analysis of HESA (2008/9) data [online] Available from <https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/sep/28/social-class-university-data>



**Table E: Social Exclusivity of Professions**

	Stable <sup>25</sup>	Short-range mobile	Mid-range mobile	Long-range mobile	N
Medical practitioners	52.3%	22.4%	20.6%	4.5%	260
Law	40.9%	18.9%	23.8%	16.6%	219
Other Life Science Professionals	37.2%	19.9%	31.8%	11.3%	183
Other Professionals	33.5%	23.0%	25.7%	17.9%	148
Finance	30.3%	16.0%	39.3%	15.6%	253
Scientists	29.0%	23.9%	31.7%	15.3%	256
Higher Education Teaching Professionals	29.0%	26.1%	30.3%	15.0%	170
Business Professionals	27.0%	21.7%	31.3%	20.0%	977
Accountants	25.6%	18.8%	40.3%	15.7%	330
<b>Built Environment Professionals:</b>	<b>25.5%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>37.2%</b>	<b>20.3%</b>	<b>151</b>
- <b>Architects</b>	<b>28.8%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>	<b>43.2%</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>62</b>
- Chartered Surveyors	23.4%	17.1%	39.6%	18.9%	58
- Town Planning officers	21.5%	21.5%	35.4%	20.0%	31
Managers and Directors in Business	24.4%	17.7%	36.7%	21.2%	788
Protective Civil Service	24.2%	11.8%	35.9%	28.1%	83
Information Technology	23.9%	24.3%	33.0%	18.9%	752
Engineers	21.1%	21.2%	36.9%	20.7%	462
Public Sector Managers & Professionals	16.2%	23.7%	31.3%	24.2%	113
Total	27.6%	20.9%	33.4%	18.2%	5,335

Source: Labour Force Survey derived from Laurison and Friedman (2016: 676)

**Table F: Social Exclusivity of Architecture vs Cultural and Creative Industries**

	Stable	Short-range Mobile	Mid-range Mobile	Long-range Mobile	N
Publishing	43.2%	17.7%	27.1%	11.9%	133
Advertising and marketing	30.8%	24.0%	26.3%	19.0%	372
Music, performing and visual art	28.3%	25.0%	32.9%	13.8%	147
<b>Architecture:</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>13.5%</b>	<b>105</b>
- <b>Architects</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>53</b>
- Town planning officers	25%	29%	24%	22%	26
- Architectural and town planning technicians	18%	31%	37%	14%	23
IT, software, and computer services	22.5%	25.4%	32.6%	19.6%	478
Museums, galleries, and libraries	27.8%	24.5%	22.2%	25.6%	43
Crafts	12.9%	14.8%	43.1%	29.2%	106

Source: Labour Force Survey derived from O'Brien et al. (2014: 124)

<sup>25</sup> Stable means intergenerationally socially stable. It is comprised of individuals who grew up in a household whose Chief Income Earner (CIE) when aged 14 held an NS-SEC 1 occupation; short-range mobile CIE held an NS-SEC 2 occupation; mid-range mobile CIE held an NS-SEC 3-5 occupation; long-range mobile, CIE was NS-SEC 6-8.

**Table G: Diversity Data of Architects Registered in the UK**

Registered Architects	%
Male	74
Female	26
Aged under 35	24
36-50 (sic)	38
51-65	27
Over 66 (sic)	11
White British	54
White Irish	4
Other white background	27
Chinese	3
Any other ethnic group	6
Prefer not to say	6
Heterosexual	80
Homosexual or bisexual	3
Prefer not to say	17
Disability – Yes	1
No	93
Prefer not to say	6
Christian	39
Other	16
Non-religious	27
Prefer not to say	18

Source: Architects Registration Board (2016)

## Annex C: National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)

The eight analytic categories that make up the National Statistics Socio-economic classification (NS-SEC) are shown below (ONS, 2018)

- 
- 1 Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations
    - 1.1 Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations
    - 1.2 Higher professional occupations
  - 2 Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations
  - 3 Intermediate occupations
  - 4 Small employers and own account workers
  - 5 Lower supervisory and technical occupations
  - 6 Semi-routine occupations
  - 7 Routine occupations
  - 8 Never worked and long-term unemployed
- 

Source: Office for National Statistics (2018)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatisticsocioeconomicclassificationnssecbasedonsoc2010> (Accessed 18/09/2018)

Annex D: Charts on The Field of Architecture Reproduced in Landscape

Figure 1: The Field of Architecture: Forms of Capital

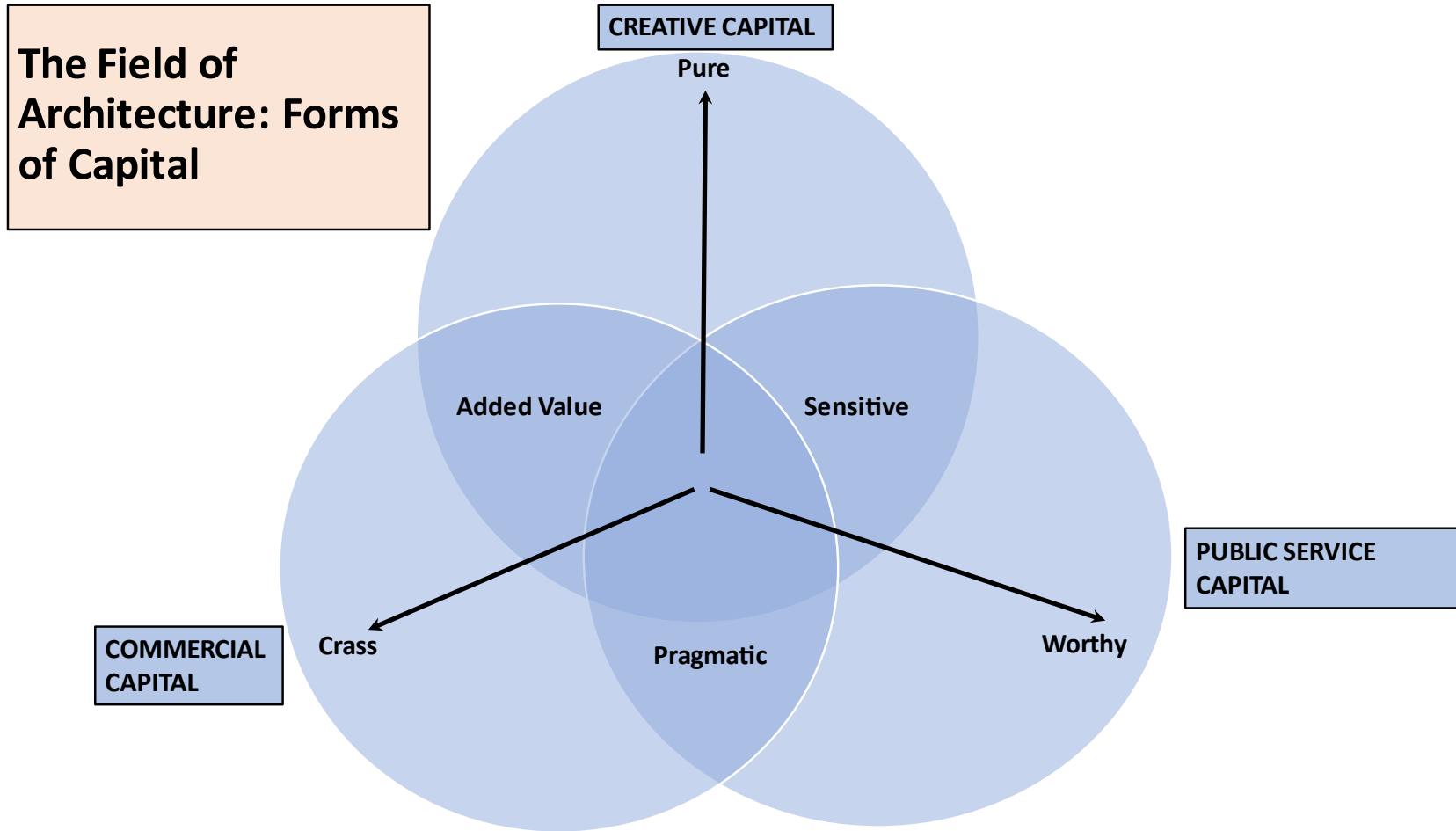


Figure 2: Populating the Field of Architecture

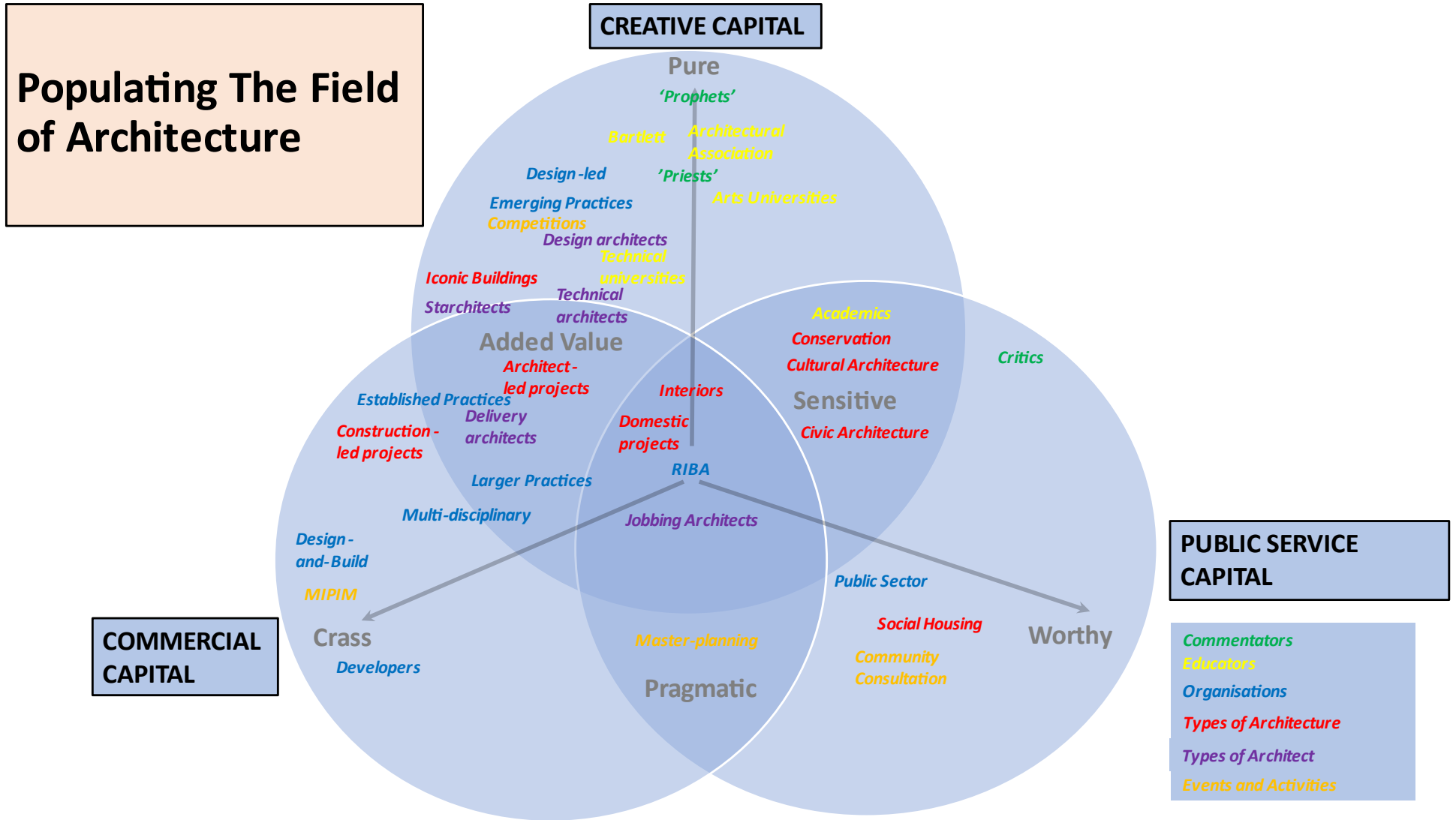




Figure 4: Career Position of Individuals from Working-class backgrounds

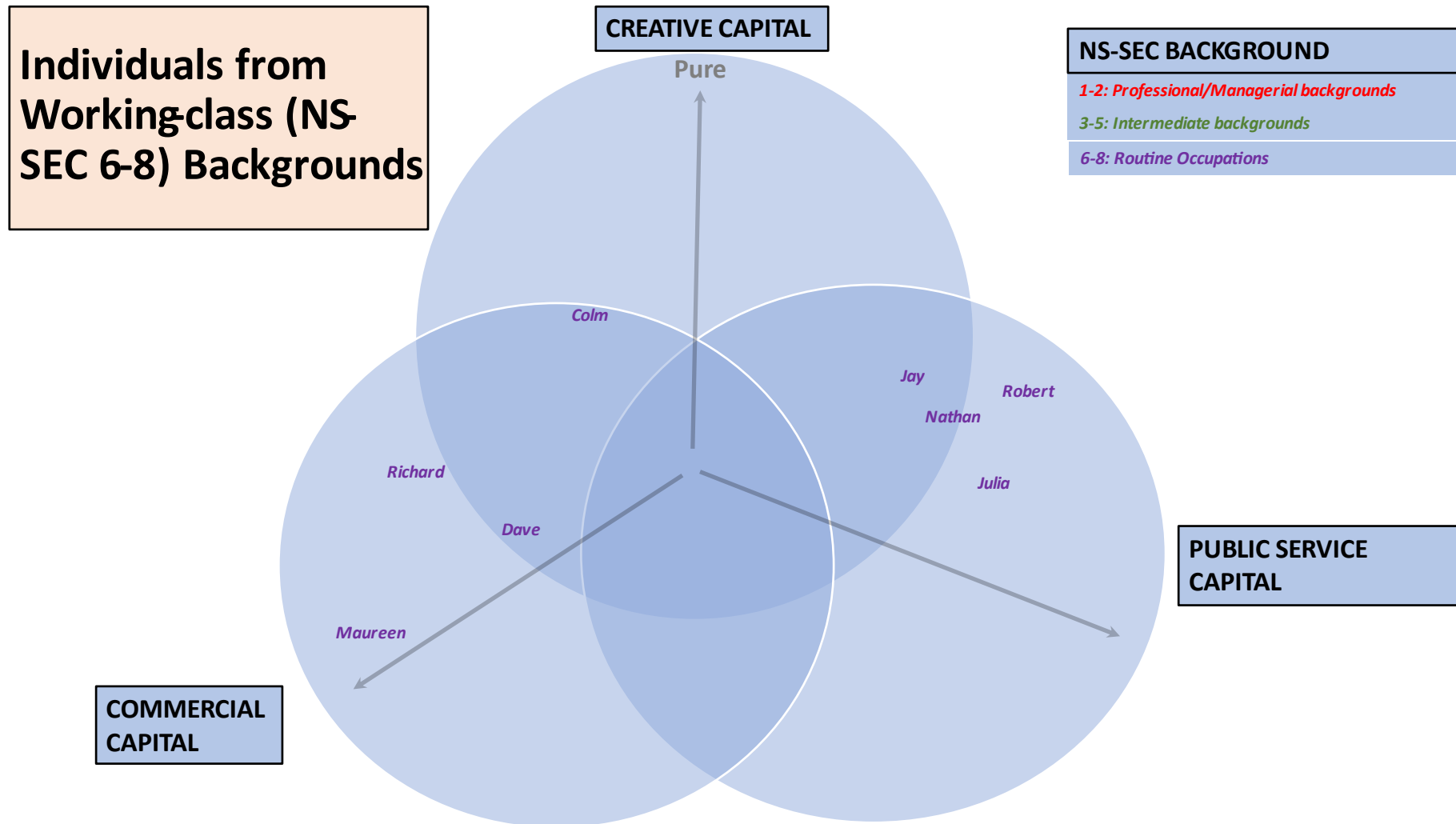


Figure 5: Career Position of Individuals with high inherited cultural capital by NS-SEC

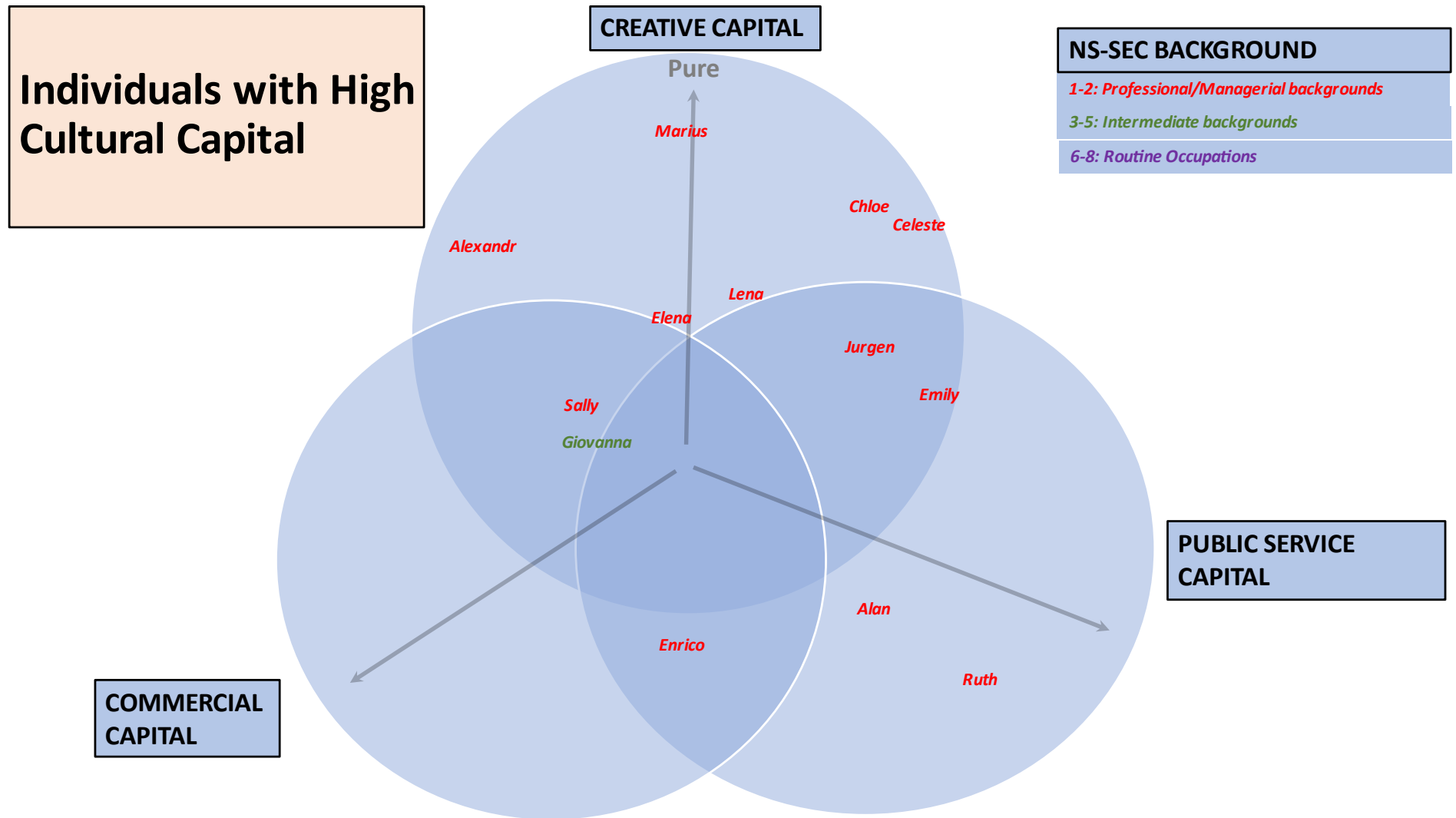
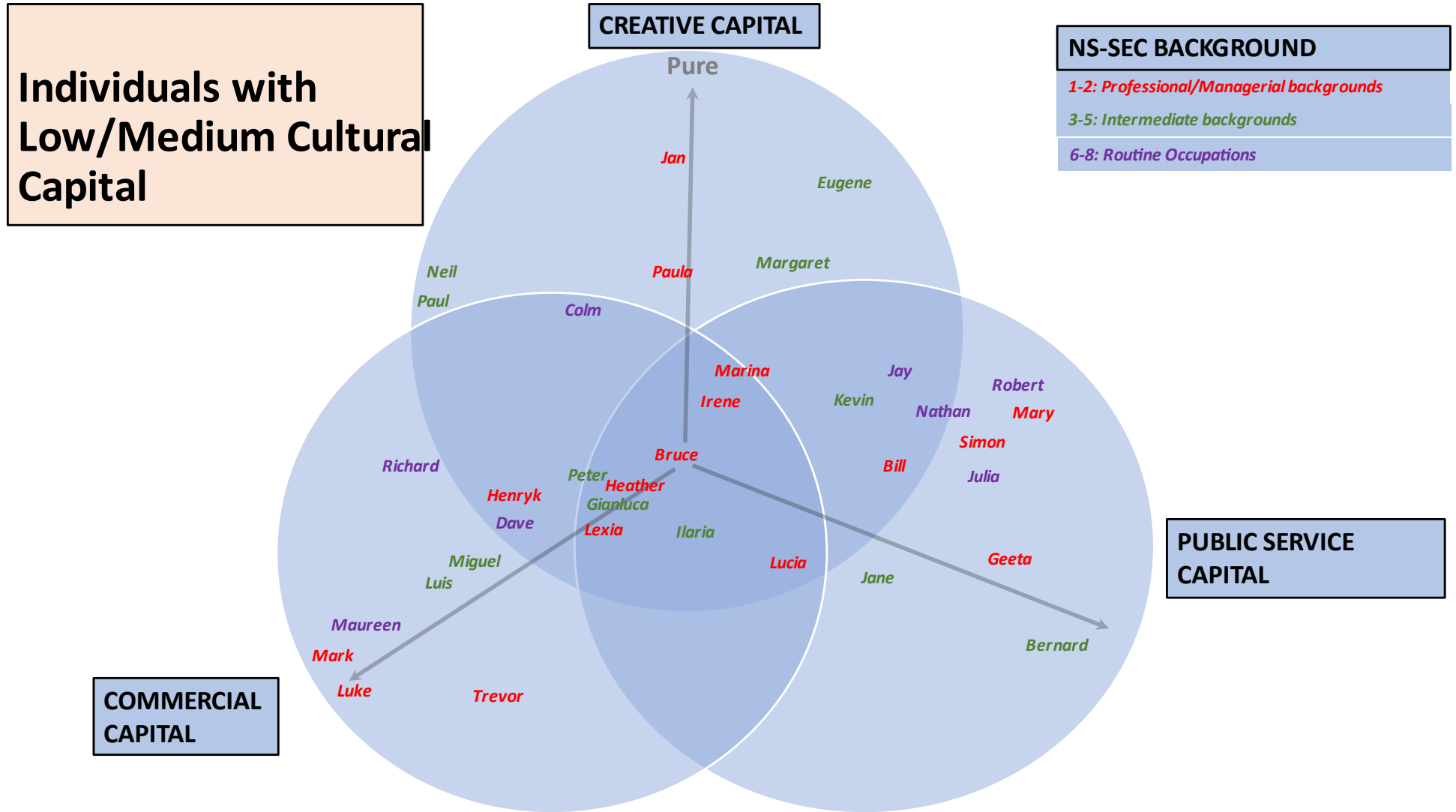




Figure 6: Career Position of Individuals with low/medium inherited cultural capital by NS-SEC



## Annex E: Code-frames with Examples from Interview Material

**Table H: Class as Background: Different Forms of Inherited Cultural and Economic Capital**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Childhood hobbies (Legitimate cultural capital)	Cultural capital	"I read a lot of <i>art history</i> ...from young because I like to do design. I saw a lot of books on art, on <i>renaissance art</i> . I drew Leonardo and Botticelli", "I needed to exercise every day, <i>two or three hours on the piano</i> . It was really hard"
Childhood hobbies (Other cultural capital)	Cultural capital	"I was always sedentary, reading, playing chess, board games, computer games, these sorts of things", "Sport, so handball and football", "Computers, programming. Early 80s, I had a ZX81".
Family outings (Legitimate cultural capital)	Cultural capital	"Quite often we would go up in the evening and meet my father after work and go to the <i>theatre</i> ", "We used to go on trips up to London occasionally and things or go to local <i>museums and galleries</i> . Go to the library a lot, go to <i>theatre</i> and things as well"
Family outings (Other cultural capital)	Cultural capital	"A typical outing would have been to go on the Moors...craft centres, beaches, not an awful lot to do in Devon", "Probably went to the pub. We would socialise with our parents...hanging out with other families, with other kids"
Family encouragement of childhood hobbies	Cultural capital	" <i>My father insisted</i> I did art, the art teacher said she's no good at it, but he was very pleased", "Because my uncle was downstairs. <i>And he started us off on painting, which is where this love of painting came</i> "
Barriers to family encouragement	Cultural capital	"I mean, <i>we didn't have very much money</i> .... We didn't as a family go to museums or art galleries.", "Mainly just not educated. Both my parents left school at 14, because that's how it was then and so <i>probably just wasn't guided</i> [in art]"
Childhood cultural activities as markers of distinction	Cultural capital	"It was not so much the very touristic parts... <i>We were more into more particular, more difficult to find</i> [places]", "the first time you get graded on things, where you are in the world. <i>It seemed that I excelled at art</i> "
Naturalisation of distinction	Cultural capital	"[my family] encouraged an appreciation of the arts. It was something that was accepted; <i>that is what you did</i> ", " <i>Typical country upbringing</i> . I went to school locally up to 11 and then <i>I went to boarding school, girls boarding school</i> "
Confidence of recalled cultural activities	Cultural capital	"My father assembled a huge library of books...an <i>extraordinarily well-educated</i> man. And, therefore, <i>I grew up in a house that was literally stuffed full of books</i> ", "I guess <i>from that point I was very interested in travel and seeing other parts of the world</i> ",
Hesitancy in recalled cultural activities	Cultural capital	" <i>So, I suppose my hobby was building things</i> ", "Colouring ( <i>laughter</i> )...And I really wanted to go to Art school, and I applied... <i>So I didn't really have the maturity</i> , I was gutted when I didn't get in, but I remember I showed them my portfolio...(laughter)"
Standard of living growing up	Economic capital	"I think it was much better, in comparison to other families in the village", "If you want to put a name on it, upper-middle class I guess", "An affluent area"
Masking of privilege: Parental sacrifice	Economic capital	"My sister and I were both privately educated, so there wasn't a huge amount of money left... <i>I don't know how my parents did it – huge sacrifices</i> ", " <i>We'd take a house</i> . We'd sort of go to Cornwall... <i>Certainly we didn't go abroad. None of that went on</i> "
Discomfort of privilege	Economic capital	"I came up from <i>middle, normal Italian family</i> of the 80s, but I had a lot of opportunity..I am conscious that <i>I am really lucky</i> ... I don't know, middle-class. I don't really know. <i>It's horrible these things, that's horrible in a way</i> ",
Naturalisation of privilege	Economic capital	" <i>Pretty average</i> ...my father had a good business, earned money, they <i>managed to buy a house and then a flat in the city</i> ", " <i>I'd never really thought about that</i> [family wealth]. And looking back now, I can say well actually we were pretty bloody lucky", "I went and had riding lessons. My sister though <i>saved her pocket money from the age of 6 and at the age of 15 had enough money</i> "
Masking of deprivation	Economic capital	" <i>Like most children, we were poor</i> . But, like most children, you don't really realise. <i>I was never deprived in any sense</i> " " <i>We were fine</i> ..we grew up in a mix of cultures, where we didn't seem poor, we didn't seem rich, we didn't go without...We didn't sense that we were... But I guess also because we didn't move out of the circle"
Impact of inherited family wealth in later life	Economic capital	"I was lucky with property. So age 20, I bought my own flat", "But I always had that security net in the back, knowing that if I'm ending up on the streets, probably I can ask if somebody can support me for a while"

**Table 1: Class Typifications: Identities, Attributions and Class Terms**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Personal class identities	Identification	"I'm aware that I've got all of the privileges of the middle classes, but I would still identify with the working class", "I had inverted working-class snobbery, that I really knew what was real and all these people from public schools were a little bit of a joke really"
Family class histories	Identification	"My mother married down, she should have married better... she was always trying to get us back on the ladder", "The story goes that my great great grandfather came down from Edinburgh and he had a cobblers shoe barrow on Wandsworth Bridge Road",
Positioning of Class: Britishness	Attributions	"I would say that class in Italy is completely different. It's more fluid", "People here are really class aware...Somebody opens their mouth if they didn't force themselves to change their accent, you can box them", "In Germany it's a very egalitarian structure"
Refusal of class: General	Attributions	"I never, ever, ever talk about class", "We're all working-class if you work for a living I think", "My mother is American, she rejects this all. She says that we are intelligentsia"
Refusal of class: Complexity	Attributions	"How are you defining it? Is it from people's accents, you know?", "Class or money or whatever you want to call it"
Refusal of class: individualisation	Attributions	"Think you are trade...it's just individuals. It's not a systemic thing"
Undermining of class: Historic	Attributions	"Doesn't training in a meritocracy mean that we've done away with this?", "Hard to judge who working class is nowadays. Before you could define it by an accent", "I would expect class to become more fluid, more meaningless anywhere"
Classed judgements	Attributions	"Two or three people who are purely working-class on my team, and I know some of the responses have been quite judgemental", "Hindered my career because maybe the [working-class] accent",
Class as 'fit'	Attributions	"It made me feel – I was really aware that I just sounded or looked more working-class", "Just felt really uncomfortable (laughter). Lots of very wealthy students, from abroad, which is probably still the case. Edinburgh was just very posh"
Class as resource: Cultural capital	Attributions	"There are certainly people who are more confident in the boardroom say... who use their middle-class culture as a skill. And it's a skill I don't have" "people would always gravitate to him... he was middle class white guy, slightly plummy voice"
Class as resource: Social capital	Attributions	"I think it [my career] would have been quite different. The connections you make in the right schools, in the right social circles, matters", "they both got their commissions building houses from their in-laws"
Class as resource: Economic Capital	Attributions	"She comes from a very, very wealthy émigré Iraqi family, so she was a very, very wealthy individual who could afford to do it", "they have the ability to work and not really worry about income, they've got a nest egg or something"
Class terms: Occupation	Associations	"Blue collar", "White collar", "Professional", "Labourer"
Class terms: Wealth	Associations	"Very, very wealthy", "wealthy middle-class parents", "poor", "destitute",
Class terms: Characteristics	Associations	"Confidence", "intelligent", "kindness"
Class terms: Embodied	Associations	"Slightly plummy voice", "Posh accent", "big Brummie accent", "estuary English accent", "thick accent"
Class terms: Dress	Associations	"Pinkie rings" "Suit and tie"
Class terms: Education	Associations	"Privately educated", "Public school boy", "elite universities"
Class terms: Political	Associations	"Labour supporters. And working-class"
Class terms: Leisure	Associations	"Hunting, shooting, fishing"
Class terms: Intersectional	Associations	"Middle-class white guy", "white men of a certain age"
Class terms: Positive	Associations	"Kindness", "Intelligence", "High class", "Upper class"/"Real", "thinking working person", "salt of the earth bloke",
Class terms: Negative	Associations	"Posh boy", "Public school boy", "snooty schools"/"Low achievement parents", "a chav from East London", "lower class", "wide", "barrow boys".

**Table J: Mapping the Field: Code Frame**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Architectural Values: Progressiveness	Field-specific capitals	"When we design anything..it's for the community. So you have to be really willing to do something for others", "The type of work, to be contributing socially", "Whilst we could pursue clients with deeper pockets, we debate at board level the ethics of clients",
Architectural values: Design/creativity	Field-specific capitals	"So always always gravitated to design-led studios, and I've taken pay cuts", "If you haven't been in the entrance hall of the British Library, it's a wonderful space - and that's his design", "These two guys who are very design-led"
Architectural values: Commercialism	Field-specific capitals	"design first and business later", "They're mostly refurbishment... corporate. Under the radar – they're not going to win any awards (laughter)", "You either have to be a brilliant architect, or you have to be somebody who brings work in"
Professionalism/ professional status	Structure of Relations	"I personally do get annoyed if people are calling themselves architects and they haven't [qualified]", "I'm very fortunate in my life. I've always felt that it's a real wonderful thing to have architecture and planning as my work"
Orgs/Individuals: Types of architect	Structure of Relations	"He's a really good <i>delivery architect</i> , but he's not a great <i>designer</i> ", "I'm not a design architect, I'm very much a <i>detailer</i> ", " <i>Nuts and bolts guy</i> ", "senior positions...underneath it you've got a lot of <i>jobbing architects</i> ", " <i>project architect</i> , that means you are the key person", "I was a <i>technician</i> , really interested in the nuts and bolts"
Orgs/ Individuals: Types of Practice	Structure of Relations	<i>Size</i> : "It's always basically just been myself. I started as a sole practitioner", "quite small and boutiquey", "a small studio" <i>Age of practice</i> : "It was a really nice, young design studio", "old-school firm", "50 years old...slightly sleepy" <i>Specialism</i> : "I worked in a landscape architect's office", "specialist conservation practice", <i>Projects undertaken</i> : "Interior design", "domestic market", "High-end residential", "commercial development", "fit outs", "commercial refits", "office interiors", "conservation projects", "heritage architecture", "estate regeneration", "masterplanning", "social housing", "cultural stuff" <i>Value judgements</i> : "a cool architectural studio", "old-school, old guys", "Old-school...directors...remarkably talentless" <i>Design-led vs delivery</i> : "Delivery-led practices are not getting the sort of glamour and credit", "very design-led", "top design-led"
Orgs/Individuals: Starchitects	Structure of Relations	"Fosters will be doing the concept and the gloss", "like a branding agency. They're not a studio, I don't think of them as architects", "brands in a way, it's like Nike or Reebok. Sir Norman Foster is never there, he's a signature"
Org/Individuals: Critics	Structure of Relations	"It's philosophy, it's crazy, but don't get me wrong, I love it. When I'm not talking about my career", "academic big punchers, so I don't think I'd feel particularly comfortable", "I think somebody said, 'never condemn, complain or criticise'. Definitely not a fan of architectural criticism"
Orgs/Individuals: Developers	Structure of Relations	"Really horrible developers who were telling me to make bedrooms smaller in the social housing", "hard-nosed", "even in cut-throat developers, you can see the ones that are more liberal, because there's a spectrum"
Orgs/Individuals: Design-and-build	Structure of Relations	"Very fast-paced industry", "Design and build contracts...turn it into something very pedestrian", "intense working environment for a local design-build company and thoroughly enjoyed it. Thrown in the deep end", "I call in the Burger King or the McDonalds of offices"
Orgs/Individuals: The RIBA	Structure of Relations	"The RIBA is finally starting to be quite good on this sort of thing [diversity management]", "I don't think the RIBA is a fantastic organisation", "It's not really clear what the RIBA stands for and I think people find that frustrating"
Orgs/Individuals: Universities	Structure of Relations	"Bartlett at UCL is much more crazy ideas and experimental", "South Bank was the opposite, it was like forget details, just go crazy", "much more focused on material, technical, detail", "not really a designer school. It was much more practical. They taught you to do brick detailing"
Orgs/Individuals: Local authorities	Structure of Relations	"And in the 60s or 70s, you would have architects working for local authorities, you'd never know their names, and they did brilliant schemes", "I mean Islington I quite enjoyed because I managed to carve out somewhere where I was effectively left alone"
Orgs/Individuals: Design-led firms	Structure of Relations	"Design and doing a good building, the end product, and that's what they're all striving to achieve, not necessarily for a profit", "we're coming up through the grubby unglamorous work...so to become a more design-led practice is the aspiration".
Orgs/Individuals: Jobbing Architects	Structure of Relations	"Senior positions...underneath it you've got a lot of jobbing architects" "small domestic projects, but they're not the things that drive me. That's not the stuff that gets me out of bed", "That's where I learnt to be an architect by doing the details, meet clients, just do the architect's job"

**Table K: Accessing the Field: Code Frame**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Initial interest in architecture	Accessing the field	"It's difficult to put my finger on it, but part of growing up where I did, it had quite a history of mid-twentieth century buildings", "When my father was Mayor, I got more and more interested in the work he was doing improving the city..that's when I got more and more interested in architecture", "When I was doing my Art A levels, I came across Edward Hopper, who drew paintings of buildings and people", "When I was a kid, I liked playing Lego, the kind of stuff that teaches you to construct something from a set of components. So, I guess maybe it started from play and then turned into something that had more of a career focus"
Family connection to architecture	Micro-class Reproduction	"I had a very vague idea of what architecture was about since my Dad was an architect", "And I remember my [architect] dad going round cities that he had never visited before... and he would be awestruck like a child. And that really did something to me, seeing him being so overwhelmed by this experience. So, I had this cultural interest in architecture", "I'd been with my [architect] father, I'd been shadowing my father for years, doing surveys, small projects with him"
Positive framing	University experience	"So from day one it was just fantastic", "Loved it. Even more than school, because it was everything I liked, all the subjects I liked". "You get to meet an incredible amount of different people. And you see that whatever you thought about your approach to architecture, there are just one of many, many ways, and that opens your eyes"
Negative framing	University experience	"It was really tough. I mean they tried to break us", "Pretty disastrously. Because I hadn't done any technical drawing, and nobody realised that... I got chucked out after the first year to take a year out", "work hung up for everybody to tear to shreds"
Lack of fit/classed habitus	University experience	"Just felt really uncomfortable. Lots of very wealthy students..just very posh", "lots of adjustment. There was exposure to a group of people I'd never been exposed to before", "I didn't particularly have a great experience, just because I felt there was a class and diversity issue. Just full of white kids from private school"
Fit/classed habitus	University experience	"It always felt like it was a thing I should be doing", "Just thought, this is for me. This is the profession for me. No doubts about staying", "Really. I absolutely loved it..It was fantastic. From straight away. Yes. I liked it because it wasn't prescriptive, there was an open mind about things...You were never told that you weren't good enough or that you didn't have the right background or that sort of thing"
Gender/gendered discrimination	University experience	"It felt quite cruel at times, and the crits were harsh, I think particularly as women", "So it was just a male atmosphere, quite tough, not a lot of care, pastoral care of students", "There was this one tutor...he would just pick men"

**Table L: Progressing through the Field: Code Frame**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Family/caring commitments	Turning Points	"My daughter was born in 1995, and I was scratching a living doing freelance jobs...no architectural practice would touch me", "with my second child, I had to make a choice and I decided to only do university, part-time initially... I didn't go back to practice"
Recessions/redundancies	Turning Points	"The recession was so, so, so strong in Portugal...and I always wanted to go abroad", "We had another recession 89-91.... I was made redundant", "I was brought in to do a specific role and that role disappeared...because the recession hit...I was made redundant"
Deciding to set up practice	Turning Points	"What seems now like a foolhardy idea to set up my own practice. Just me, working in a backroom doing house extensions", "We wanted to do our own things. I had a bit of work, she had a bit of work, and we combined forces"
Leaving architecture	Turning Points	"I now need a job which will pay me significantly more", "I've kind of reached a ceiling in terms of what I can achieve by way of a salary in architecture, and I'm just doing the same old thing over and over again, and it's wearing on me"
Expanding the field	Turning Points	"I do see emerging a much more exciting way of being in architecture... I said for a while now that I feel closer to architecture than I ever did working at a practice", "I enjoy all the good things about architecture...talking about architecture whichever way I feel like"
Opportunities/happenstance	Turning Points	"I was given a very lovely project for a hotel and some housing in Warwickshire by an old friend of mine" "And he was proposing to go out and open a practice, specialising in conservation...And he asked me to go with him. So we left and set that up together"
Intra-organisational progression	Motivations/Ambitions	"I would love to become an Associate within my office", "I'd rather just spend my time and energy trying to work up somewhere I like rather than setting up on my own and having all of that financial worry"
Professional development	Motivations/Ambitions	"Acquiring new skills", "maybe just working more in sectors that I haven't worked in, just experience it all"
Setting up in practice	Motivations/Ambitions	"To be honest, my ambition would be to start my own practice at some point", "as much as possible I would like to have opportunities to create a design that I could be proud of myself", "my ambition would be to build properties near my home"
Ambitions beyond career as ascent	Motivations/Ambitions	"Ambition is if I can live and work in a place where I feel regenerated, possibly by nature", "my ambitions for now is developing myself more the Feng Shui side and the wellbeing consultant side"
Working hours	Negative aspects	"Really long hours. And the timeframes and schedules were very, very tight all the time.", "the slavery of working hours", "Being expected to pull all-nighters, I think.. not having time for the children"
Pay	Negative aspects	"I was paid shit money. I used to work like, 12, 14 hours a day", "there's a huge gender pay gap in architecture", "I almost left. I had to call a meeting with the bosses. I had to go to a room and say look I can't stay at work because I can't afford it"
Exploitation	Negative aspects	"And they said you can come here but we can't pay you", "at the end of that month, they didn't even pay us", "my internship, yes, I worked for free"
Nature of role	Negative aspects	"It was stimulating at first. Then it got a bit repetitive", "boring work... supervising contractors...really boring", "it was a big sort of practice.. people who were just doing a formula of dull residential projects".
Problems with employer	Negative aspects	"Without suitable support from the senior team, so it was very stressful and not fun", "the atmosphere there was poisonous", "partners having arguments"
Sexism	Negative aspects	"On site, there's certainly been difficulties being female", "people would get pay rises, I wouldn't... oh she's married she doesn't need", "if you get like a really old-school firm, and there's older men directors and things, they can still be a bit backward"
Classism	Negative aspects	"They used to call me Del Boy .... I found that quite offensive", "I've worked a lot in the Royal Gardens at Windsor and so on, you will meet people who regard themselves as important and are not worried about showing it to you. And who think you are trade"
Organisational fit	Negative aspects	"They all had pinkie rings and they were all really posh. It made me feel.. I was really aware that I just sounded or looked more working-class", "Well I felt intimidated in the first practice I worked at because they were all.. I couldn't speak. I've never been a really articulate speaker... My vocabulary was very poor, and that was often exposed".

**Table L: Progressing through the Field: Code Frame (Cont)**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Nature of role: Design-led projects	Positive aspects	"We did the Serpentine gallery, we did the Tate gallery, we were a small practice, but we were doing amazing jobs", "It was a really nice, young design studio, and actually it was a really positive experience...we were doing like little nightclubs and the xxx library, so it was quite cute, artsy, bar sort of stuff", "It was brilliant. [working on] something that I studied at university. So, it was amazing",
Nature of role: Autonomy/responsibility	Positive aspects	"I was given complete carte blanche in terms of basically anything I drew, it was like 'yeah, let's do that', which was like wow!", "Thoroughly enjoyed it. Thrown in the deep end", "I was given responsibility. In lots of ways it was good"
Nature of role: Respect/Voice	Positive aspects	"I was a year-out student with all these serious professional architects. One felt one could say 'well what about this? He [the practice owner] would listen to everybody", "the studio was great, you could have a voice, you didn't need to be a director necessarily"
Nature of role: Other	Positive aspects	"The realisation I like, the realisation of construction", "I enjoyed seeing built what I was designing", "a very good practice to be in because they rotate people around so you get to work on a lot of different projects at different stages"
Organisational/Positional fit	Positive aspects	"I have enjoyed it; it's become more like a family to be honest", "quite a small practice... for me it was like living a dream"
Work-life balance	Positive aspects	"The balance between life and work here is very, very good", "It's not knacker. They got quite a good attitude to work-life balance, I can still manage to work on good projects"
Business/commercial skills	Skills needed	"Need to be able to win pitches and bring work in", "a lot of it is about networking...you have to be somebody who brings work in", "You can be better at meeting the client, taking the brief out, selling the product",
Project management/delivery skills	Skills needed	"You might specialise more in the technical delivery or managing the process", "Managing the client and the contractors is a big part of what architects do"
Design skills	Skills needed	"You need a level of creativity", "One of the three partners is a creative director, and he would literally during the interview sketch out a beautiful fit out. And the drawings are brilliant", "I fully believe that to get to the top you have to be gifted"
Social skills	Skills needed	"Negotiation skills. I feel now I could go and work for the UN and deal in war zones", "people who are promotable, I think there is something to do with someone's ability to network"
Personal skills	Skills needed	"You certainly need to be driven, because there's a tough side. You need to be resilient", "Generally, an architect is self-employed... you have to have good relationship skills, to deal with people", "I'm good at developing good relationships with clients"
Hard work/dedication	Effort needed	"The painful route, where you work long hours for no money in a very small practice", "they do well because they work really hard. And keep going", "Don't get me wrong, they work very hard"
Luck	Factors needed	"I got really lucky, because a friend of mine found two jobs, so she had to turn one down, so she recommended me for the job she turned down", "Having the great luck of having met xxx", "Amazing lucky break really".
Personal Attributes, e.g. Confidence	Attributes needed	"You've got to be confident in what you want or else they'll walk over you, and they'll make you change your things without getting paid", "Imposter syndrome. Massively, I suffer from that every day of the week"
Personal Connections	Attributes needed	"The connections you make in the right schools, in the right social circles", "it's the son...they get hand-me-down projects basically"
Family wealth	Attributes needed	"I always had that security net in the back, knowing that if I'm ending up on the streets, probably I can ask if somebody can support me for a while", "He's very wealthy...he's got his own practice and he's got work and he's building houses..nobody else I know has started his own practice, he's the only one", "they've got a nest egg that enables them to spend time maybe promoting themselves"
University attended	Attributes needed	"If you're in the AA, you kind of want to set up your own practice", "The guys at Lincoln will become good, competent architects, but they won't be top architects and they won't be in top firms either", "after he first met me, he knew that I'd gone to the Bartlett and then the AA, just from like talking to me. And since then, he's always kept in touch and offered me opportunities to speak"

**Table M: Managing EDI: Code Frame**

Primary Code	Secondary Code	Examples from Interview Data
Recruitment	Management Practices	"They've had recruitment training, so they understand issues around discrimination and what you can and can't ask people.", "things like redacting people's names and personal details and photographs off the CVs now."
Promotion	Management Practices	"We have criteria. We promote people to senior architects and then to associates.", "It is gut feel, it's not through forms or analysis or scoring or anything like that. It's from gut feel and knowing people's ambitions".
Flexible arrangements	Liberal Positive	"So I think we're quite open to trying these sorts of things [job-share]", "We've, when we advertise a job, we always say it's flexible hours, we do flexitime"
Apprenticeships	Liberal Positive	"We have had conversations about taking on apprenticeships..you'd have to shift the mindset as to why we are recruiting people as well. Rather than hiring what the best is", "We are looking at potentially supporting an apprentice landscape architect"
Work placements	Liberal Positive	"We do do work placements and that used to be just nepotism and we now have lots of links with local schools and different programmes", "certainly with the work experience people we get in. We get the majority of them from state schools.
Mentoring	Liberal Positive	"Some of them are involved in mentoring...I started doing a mentoring thing; 'fluid diversity'", "I mentor people in the studio. I put my name forward actually to do some mentoring with the New London Architecture"
Homophily	Negative Practices	"Because actually, if you like similar things, similar art galleries, maybe there's a connection there and probably that's alright", "Well people hire people they are comfortable with who are the same as them! Which is nothing to do with creativity if you ask me"
Stereotypes	Negative Practices	"If you want to be a designer and you're from Essex, no one will touch you", "Men are designed, biologically, this is what I believe. We grew up with a very specialised range of skills, and they're mainly to do with hunting...men have a better spatial awareness"
Liberal	EDI Orientations	"We really do recruit the best that comes in", "We just do employ people on merit", "We don't have positive discrimination"
Neo-liberal	EDI Orientations	"And obviously, the most diverse you are, the better"
Radical	EDI Orientations	"At the end of the day, the best thing [for EDI] is shared intellectual and financial property"
Instrumental	EDI Orientations	"Many clients will ask if you have those policies.", "just to have to show to the people that you are diverse. You show your staff pictures"
Dismissive	EDI Orientations	"We don't have to worry as much about political correctness as we're very open", "People will say this has to be a women, because our numbers are down or whatever", "I get a lot of earache.. about trying to keep the balance about 50/50"
Transcending Diversity	EDI Orientations	"I do think design on the other hand isn't classed in a way", "I was a year-out student with all these serious professional architects. One felt one could say 'well what about this?' He [the practice owner] would listen to everybody"
Transcending Managerialism	EDI Orientations	"These people are professionals.. they should jolly well manage themselves", "Even phrases like line manager. We do use that phrase now, but we only use it with our support staff", "We don't have direct, formal progress for career progression that's laid out"
Class	Groups subject to EDI	"From what I knew of him he was from a working-class background but yeah it's not discussed. It's another big whitewash thing", "how you would measure it without making an issue...when it comes to social background, how would that look on your form?"
Gender	Groups subject to EDI	"There's 'women in architecture' group", "there are certainly less women at a senior level than we would like. We've done some work trying to look at that to see what that's about, training people to increase retention levels"
Ethnicity	Groups subject to EDI	"We work with the Stephen Lawrence Trust, trying to get kids into the profession", "Because most of the top directors are white males... I think it's more to do with the consequence of the general position of people in the field, rather than the company"
Disability	Groups subject to EDI	"We do ask them, people if they need any special access requirements, that sort of thing.", "there's a guy who works here, and has been for 18 months now, he's deaf and they're paying his salary and they're paying for an interpreter...Which I think is really great.",
LGBT+	Groups subject to EDI	"Set up community groups to capture diversity and inclusion to support it and say that there is a space for you to join these groups. So we've got LGBT group", "Australian guy, gay, and he became a partner. So clearly, neither sex nor origin affected his career".