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Jon Lawrence

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In the late 1960s, the sociologists John Goldthorpe and David Lockwood, with their colleagues Frank Bechhoffer and Jennifer Platt, famously demolished what had come to be known in Britain as the *embourgeoisement thesis*—the theory that post-war affluence was rendering industrial workers increasingly "middle class".[1] Initially in a series of influential think-pieces, and subsequently over three volumes of *The Affluent Worker* study, they argued that although manual workers' outlook was becoming more home-centered ("privatised") and more money-orientated ("instrumental"), in other respects their lives remained quite distinct from those of the non-manual workers they lived alongside in the southern, industrial boom town of Luton the team chose for their intensive, survey-based case study. Affluent workers, they argued, were prag-

[1] John H. Goldthorpe / David Lockwood, "Not So Bourgeois After All," New Society, 1/3 (1962), pp. 18–19, and *idem*, "Affluence and the British Class Structure", Sociological Review, 11/2 (1963), pp. 133–163. John H. Goldthorpe / David Lockwood / Frank Bechhofer / Jennifer Platt, The Affluent Worker, 3 vols., Cambridge 1968–1969. These studies built on David Lockwood's studies of clerical labour, The Blackcoated Worker: A Study in Class Consciousness, London 1958; and class "imagery", "Sources of Variation in Working-Class Images of Society," Sociological Review, 14/3(1966), pp. 249–267.

matic rationalists who had sacrificed job satisfaction, autonomy and older traditions of workplace solidarity for high wages.

Conducting their fieldwork between late 1962 and mid-1964, the *Affluent Worker* team interviewed 229 well-paid manual workers from three of Luton's largest industrial companies: Vauxhall (vehicles), Skefko (bearings) and Laporte (chemicals). In 1964 they added a smaller sample of 54 clerical workers from Skefko and Laporte in order to demonstrate the continued distinctiveness of affluent manual workers' lives. Only married men aged between 21 and 46 were selected (older men were excluded in case they had direct, personal experiences of inter-war unemployment which it was argued might influence how they viewed post-war "affluence").[2] Manual workers, who had to be earning at least £ 17 per week, were interviewed twice, first at work and subsequently at home with their wives. Workplace interviews tended to take about an hour, but those conducted at home were longer and more open-ended, especially in their interrogation of the men's attitudes to social class, and often took three to four hours generating masses of qualitative material that sometimes proved hard to integrate into the published studies (the non-manual workers were only interviewed at home).[3] Most of the men interviewed were semi-skilled (machinists, assembly workers and process workers), but 79 were skilled craftsmen or machine setters at Skefko and Laporte.[4] Significantly, apart from a cluster of Laporte workers living in "three 'satellite' communities" the team decided only to interview manual workers who lived "in Luton itself or in immediately adjacent housing areas."[5] This was an odd decision given that approximately forty per

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[2] John H. Goldthorpe *et al.*, The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure (vol. 3), (see note 1), p. 38.

[3] See Mike Savage, "Working-class Identities in the 1960s: Revisiting the Affluent Worker Study," Sociology, 39/5 (2005), pp. 929–946.

[4] John H. Goldthorpe *et al*, The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes (vol. 1), (see note 1), p. 5 and p. 11.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 4. The adjacent area was the large Houghton Regis "overspill" estate built by the London County Council. In practice the surviving files show that a few

cent of Vauxhall workers were known to be daily commuters by the early 1960s.[6] Given the powerful selection effects associated with choosing to live in a commuter town or village, focusing only on Luton residents is unlikely to have had a neutral impact on the project's findings, especially given that this residential requirement was dropped for the non-manual sample.[7]

Although the *Affluent Worker* team insisted that there was no evidence of manual workers becoming assimilated into the middle class, they did acknowledge evidence of a "normative convergence" in the values and attitudes of "some sections of the working class and of some white-collar groups" shaped largely by broader social changes affecting each group equally. Social hierarchies, they insisted, remained little altered, and there was no reason to believe that shop-floor workers were becoming "middle class" (whatever that meant).[8] The *Affluent Worker* study focused on establishing the limits of class "convergence"—the logic of its polemic against "*embourgeoisement*" demanded this—but in two respects it conceded that workers' lifestyles might be converging significantly: in attitudes to children's education, and in the primary focus of male workers' social lives on the nuclear family.[9] But non-manual workers' lifestyles and attitudes were not analyzed for their own sake (this was a project first and foremost about the effects of working-class "affluence"). Indeed, the non-manual sample appears to have been something of an after-thought. The fieldwork was conducted at the end of the project, using a single home interview with a modified questionnaire, and it excluded clerical workers from the

individuals were included from nearby towns and villages, including a Skefko worker in well-to-do Harpenden, see John H. Goldthorpe / David Lockwood, Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, 1961–1962, (2010) [data collection], UK Data Archive, SN: 6512, Luton Home Interview (henceforth: LHI), case 197.

[6] Ferdynand Zweig, The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry, London 1961, p. 236; Graham Turner, The Car Makers, London 1963, p. 103.

[7] Ray Pahl, Urbs in Rure: the Metropolitan Fringe in Hertfordshire, London 1964; Goldthorpe *et al.*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 6.

[8] Goldthorpe *et al.*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 26.

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 107–109 and pp. 139–140.

massive Vauxhall (General Motors) car plant, even though 37.5 per cent of the manual sample was drawn from this firm (all semi-skilled assembly workers).[10] Moreover, whereas the team consistently disaggregated their analysis of the 229 shop-floor workers into five sub-groups based on skill-level and occupation, the 54 "white-collar" workers were treated throughout as a homogeneous bloc. In practice they were anything but homogeneous. More than a third were on the weekly pay-roll and generally earned less than shop-floor workers, sometimes considerably less if there was no overtime to be worked. By contrast, those on monthly salaries often earned more than shop-floor workers even without overtime (which they were often expected to work unpaid—at Laporte the first sixteen hours per month over contract went unpaid for those on the monthly payroll).[11] Many staff also had significant managerial responsibilities, with one in four workers on the monthly pay-roll directly managing a dozen or more employees. Conversely, more than 40 per cent of clerical workers had no direct subordinates. As we will see, attitudes varied widely across this diverse group, with "normative convergence" most pronounced among clerical workers in the least privileged staff occupations.

This article revisits the issue of "normative convergence" through a re-analysis of the Luton study's interview transcripts. It is based on a close reading of the original transcripts for all 54 interviews with non-manual workers, and for the 173 manual workers whose interviews have been fully or partially digitized by the UK Data Service.[12] It does not seek to minimize the distinctive features

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 52; the white-collar interviews were conducted between 6 February and 2 June 1964.

[11] Luton Non-Manual Home Interviews (henceforth: LNMHI), 526, Q49.

[12] The original work interview transcripts have been consulted alongside the digitized interviews. These are held by Albert Sloman Library Special Collections, University of Essex, on behalf of the UK Data Archive (SN: 6512). For digitized samples see: Selina Todd (2009), Affluent Worker in the Class Structure: a Digitised Sample of the Luton Study, 1961–1962, [data collection], Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive, SN: 4871, http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-4871-1, and J. Lawrence (2016), *Affluent Worker* Study 1962–1964: questionnaire files, [data collec-

of the shop-floor workers' experience, especially within the work-place itself. For these men, work was generally dirtier and hours more anti-social, and, as Goldthorpe and Lockwood rightly noted, many could only match the earnings of more senior clerical staff by working considerably longer hours, eating into family leisure time and leaving them considerably more fatigued.[13] Although the three Luton companies provided all employees with access to pension and sick-pay entitlements, in other respects each firm maintained the historic distinction between "staff" and "works" (i. e. between white-collar and blue-collar employees). Office staff received fixed weekly, fortnightly or monthly salaries, whereas shop-floor work-ers were either paid by the hour or on piece-rates (or by a combi-nation of the two).[14] In theory this favored office staff since they could be paid even if they missed work, and had to be given longer notice of dismissal, but only one-third of manual workers ex-pressed a preference to be salaried. Most preferred the certainty that they would be paid for any additional hours worked ("over-time"), the tangibility of being paid in cash, and the mutual flexibil-ity of their existing contracts—as Goldthorpe and Lockwood re-ported they perceived a greater "moral pressure on the salaried worker not to take days off."[15] Mike Savage has written eloquently about this shop-floor culture, arguing that it sprang, paradoxically, from deep-rooted traditions of "rugged individualism" among British workers. Shop-floor workers, he argues, took pride in being more independent and free than white collar workers, who were ex-pected to be loyal "company men" (and women).[16]

tion], Colchester, Essex: *UK Data Archive*, 10.5255/UKDA-SN-852166.

[13] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), pp. 60–61, 97–98; John Rule, "Time, Affluence and Private Leisure: the British Working Class in the 1950s and 1960s," Labour History Review, 66 (2001), pp. 223–242; Selina Todd, The Peo-ple: the Rise and Fall of the British Working Class, 1910–2010, London 2014, pp. 258–261.

[14] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), pp. 68–69.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[16] Mike Savage, "Sociology, Class and Male Manual Work Cultures," in: John McIlroy *et al*. (eds.), British Trade Unions and Industrial Politics: Volume Two: the

In practice, attitudes among "white collar" workers were rather more diverse. Some conformed to Mike Roper's model of the post-war "organization man," displaying a strong emotional identification with management, but others voiced narrowly instrumental attitudes to work more reminiscent of Savage's shop-floor culture.[17] Paying close attention to workers' original testimony is vital here. Building on the important work of Mike Savage and Selina Todd, the discussion that follows uses interview transcripts to explore how workers, both manual and non-manual, discussed a range of key issues that can shed light on similarities and differences in the outlook of white- and blue-collar workers in order better to understand the extent and nature of "normative convergence."[18] Particular attention is paid to how respondents discussed three issues which, in contrast to education and family-life, appear on first inspection to *uphold* Goldthorpe and Lockwood's insistence on the sharp distinctions between manual and non-manual workers: the provision of segregated works canteens, differential perceptions of the prospects for (and desirability of) promotion, and contrasting degrees of enthusiasm for setting up independently in business. Broad differences in outlook are acknowledged—for instance, office workers were on average more optimistic about promotion and less keen to set up in business—but it is suggested that the underlying attitudes of the two groups may not have been so sharply divergent. Much depended on the wider context of questions and on their precise wording. We also need to pay attention to aberrant voices—to the significant minority of office workers who saw promotion as unlikely or hopeless, and to the shop-floor workers who

High Tide of Trade Unionism, 1964–79, Aldershot 1999.
    [17] Michael Roper, Masculinity and the British Organization Man since 1945, Oxford 1994; also Mike Savage, "Affluence and Social Change in the Making of Technocratic Middle-Class Identities: Britain, 1939–55," Contemporary British History, 22/4 (2008), pp. 457–476.
    [18] Mike Savage, "Working-class Identities" (see note 3) and Mike Savage, Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method, Oxford 2010; Todd, The People (see note 13), chapter 12.

saw it as desirable and achievable. Finally, we need to take workers' hopes and dreams more seriously than social-scientists were prone to do in the 1960s. Three-quarters of shop-floor workers, and more than half of clerical workers, professed themselves keen to escape the world of paid employment by setting up in business. In the *Affluent Worker* study these aspirations were dismissed as unrealistic dreams,[19] but we need to be attentive to the role that dreams could play, not only in making shop-floor and office life bearable, but in providing a common language of escape.

The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure was not the last socio-logical study to assert the distinct class identity of manual as opposed to non-manual workers, but the tide did begin to turn after 1970 (perhaps in part because the distracting idea of *embourgeoisement* had been laid to rest by its authors' endeavors).[20] A series of studies emerged which questioned Goldthorpe and Lockwood's concept of a "traditional working class," and the broader emphasis on "ideal-types" which under-pinned their neo-Weberian approach to class.[21] At the same time, Ray Pahl adapted Harold Wilensky's idea of the "middle mass" to insist that routine non-manual and skilled manual workers generally had more in common than his fellow sociologists were willing to acknowledge.[22] According to Pahl, the vital social divide in urban Britain was now between a relatively

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[19] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 132; Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3, p. 77.

[20] Stuart Middleton, "'Affluence' and the Left in Britain, c. 1958–1974," English Historical Review, 129 (2014), pp. 107–138.

[21] Martin Bulmer (ed.), Working-Class Images of Society, London 1975; Kenneth Roberts / F. G. Cook / S. C. Clark / Elizabeth Semeonoff, The Fragmentary Class Structure, London 1977; André Gorz, Farewell to the Working Class: an Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism. Translated by Michael Sonenscher, London 1982. See also John Goldthorpe, Intellectuals and the Working Class in Modern Britain, Colchester 1979; reprinted in: Richard Rose (ed.), Social Stratification and Economic Change, London 1988, pp. 39–56.

[22] Harold L. Wilensky, "Orderly Careers and Social Participation: the Impact of Work History on Social Integration in the Middle Mass," American Sociological Review, 26 (1961), pp. 521–539.

comfortable, consumption-orientated middling group of workers in skilled, technical, clerical and other intermediate occupations and a growing, if smaller, "underclass" bearing the brunt of deindustrialization and urban decline.[23] Pahl's intervention was prompted by his concern that planners and politicians focused unduly on the aspirations of this emerging "middle mass" at the expense of the less advantaged, but it is likely that he also relished the opportunity to invert Goldthorpe and Lockwood's arguments about the continued salience of the manual / non-manual divide.[24] Writing for the proto-Thatcherite *Centre for Policy Studies* in the mid-1970s, Ferdynand Zweig insisted that "normative convergence" represented a more fundamental social reconfiguration than Goldthorpe and Lockwood allowed, while from the Left Harry Braverman reasserted earlier Marxist arguments about the "proletarianization" of clerical labor.[25] Braverman's arguments were widely challenged, with Goldthorpe in particular stressing that high levels of social mobility ensured that white-collar workers continued to enjoy an objectively different class position to those on the shop-floor.[26] But as Crompton and Jones demonstrated, given the genuinely high levels of routinization and deskilling in office employment, this mobility was only sustainable because promotion opportunities were reserved almost exclusively for the minority of clerical employees

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[23] South East Joint Planning Team, Strategic Plan for the South East, Studies Vol. 2: Social and Environmental Aspects, London 1971, pp. 14–29; discussed more fully in Ray Pahl, "Patterns of urban life in the next fifteen years", The New Universities Quarterly, 30 (1976), pp. 402–419 and *idem*, Divisions of Labour, Oxford 1984, pp. 6–7.

[24] Ray Pahl, "Poverty and the Urban System", in: Michael Chisholm / Gerald Manners (eds.), Spatial Policy Problems of the British economy, Cambridge 1971, pp. 126–145.

[25] Ferdynand Zweig, The New Acquisitive Society, Chichester 1976, especially pp. 15–19; Harry Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capitalism, New York 1974; cf. F[rancis]D[onald] Klingender, The Condition of Clerical Labour in Britain, London 1935.

[26] John H. Goldthorpe, Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain, Oxford 1980, pp. 258–259.

who were men.[27] Crucially, Crompton and Jones also suggested that half of all male junior clerks would never be promoted, thanks in part to heavy turnover rates, although for those who stuck around—the loyal "company men"—the prospects were much brighter. By no means did every male clerk experience upward social mobility.[28]

Analyzing responses from the 54 non-manual workers (all male) interviewed for the *Affluent Worker* study certainly demonstrates considerable diversity in both background and outlook. Perhaps because these were manufacturing companies, 44 per cent reported having previously worked in a manual occupation, and 50 per cent reported that their father's principal employment had been manual. Following the logic that Goldthorpe and Lockwood used to analyses manual workers' voting preferences, three in every four Luton clerical workers could be said to have "bridges" to the (manual) working class through either employment or upbringing.[29] Less than half the clerical workers were employed on monthly contracts, while more than half remained eligible for paid overtime.[30] Strikingly, not only did 62 per cent of office staff earn less than £ 17 per week (the minimum threshold for manual workers to be included in the study), but almost a third of these was aged over 40, even though the survey excluded anyone older than 46.[31] Even among those earning less than £ 13 per week, more than one third (36.4 per cent) were over 40.[32] These junior staff were not all young men who could confidently expect soon to be joining the higher

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[27] Rosemary Crompton / Gareth Jones, White-Collar Proletariat: Deskilling and Gender in Clerical Work, London 1984, pp. 3–5.

[28] *Ibid*., pp. 91, 101.

[29] John H. Goldthorpe *et al*, The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour (vol. 2) (see note 1), pp. 50–57. In total 44 of 54 clerks answered both questions of whom only 12 (27.3 per cent) had both a purely non-manual work history and a non-manual father.

[30] 26 clerical workers (48 per cent) were recorded as being paid monthly, and 28 (52 per cent) claimed to do work paid overtime.

[31] In all 53 clerical workers gave details of their earnings, 33 earned less than £17 a week on average, of whom 10 (30.3 per cent) were aged 41 or above.

ranks of the company staff. Older workers in the lower income bands were also the most likely to report being Labour voters, with 40 per cent claiming to have voted Labour at the last election compared with 28 per cent of the full non-manual sample (the figure for shop-floor workers was 71 per cent).[33] And though trade unionism was weak, with only one office worker claiming to be a trade unionist, 41 per cent reported having been trade union members in previous jobs (the three Luton firms all discouraged unionization among salaried staff).

As voting preferences underscore, there were undoubtedly differences between manual and non-manual workers if we treat each as a homogeneous bloc. But it is profoundly unhelpful to treat them in this way. Many non-manual workers possessed strong family and life-course connections to (manual) working-class life, indeed many saw themselves as working class. Perhaps significantly, the *Affluent Worker* study did not report findings about white-collar workers' own sense of class identity, or their broader understanding of social class, but they were asked the same extended, open-ended questions about social class as the shop-floor workers. Nearly half (45 per cent) spontaneously defined themselves as either "working" or "lower" class (respondents were asked to identify what classes they believed to exist in modern Britain, and only then to assign themselves to one of the classes they had identified). Slightly more (55 per cent) said they were "middle class," but most of these explicitly stated that shop-floor workers were *also* middle class. Only twelve clerical workers (23 per cent) assigned themselves a different class identity from shop-floor workers.[34] Perhaps significantly only one in four of the workers choosing a narrow, so-

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[32] Eleven clerical workers earned less than £13 per week and four of these were in the oldest age group (40–46).

[33] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 2 (see note 1), p. 12.

[34] Analysis of original transcripts digitized as Lawrence (2016), *Affluent Worker* Study 1962–1964. In addition, two men refused to recognize any class differences, and in a third case the typed transcription of the respondent's answer has been lost. LNMHI (see note 11), 530.

cially exclusive class identity was on the weekly pay-roll compared with over half (56 per cent) of those defining themselves as "working class." In short, most non-manual workers embraced a very similar understanding of class and class hierarchy to the affluent manual workers; they emphasized their membership of a large mass of "ordinary workers" constituting the great bulk of the population.[35]

With hindsight, re-asserting the primacy of the manual / non-manual distinction just at the point when the routinization of clerical work was accelerating, and the propensity of routine non-manual workers to vote Labour was rising, appears especially misguided.[36] This determination to draw the lines of class narrowly coincided with a sharp acceleration of deindustrialization which saw employment in manufacturing fall from 45 per cent of the workforce in 1961 to less than 20 per cent in 1991. Drawing the lines of class membership tightly at this moment arguably made it harder to sustain a viable politics of the "working-class" against the difficult economic and political back-drop of the 1970s and 1980s: a politics capable, unlike Pahl's language of the "middle mass," of demonstrating that all those who lived from week to week by the fruits of their labor—as most Luton workers did regardless of whether they were "works" or "staff"—shared a common class identity and interest. Instead, social-scientists reification of the manual / non-manual distinction helped to fix an increasingly anachronistic conception of what it meant to be "working class" rooted narrowly in male manual labor.

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[35] Mike Savage, "Working-class Identities" (see note 3), and Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), pp. 147–149.

[36] Ivor Crewe / Anthony Fox / Neil Day, The British Electorate, 1963–1992: A Compendium of Data from the British Election Studies, Cambridge1995), p. 20 (Table 1.13: "Vote by Occupational Status"), data for 1964–1970 elections, the trend reversed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Segregated Dining

In many ways the provision of separate canteens in new, high-tech post-war factories appears to symbolize how class distinctions were written into the fabric of everyday life in post-war Britain. All three firms had different canteens for shop-floor, clerical and managerial employees, with Skefko operating *five* different canteens (one for the "works" and four for non-manual staff according to their level of seniority: weekly, monthly, managerial or executive).[37] It seems obvious that more progressive managements could have devised ways of dealing with the perceived practical barriers to operating common catering facilities. Indeed, a Skefko market researcher in his early twenties said exactly this, pointing out that the firm could easily create one large dining hall and still have an area where employees paid extra for table service (and where anyone out of overalls would be entitled to sit, regardless of their grade).[38] It is therefore interesting to see how many shop-floor workers refused to accept that segregated dining represented a class issue. The question on works canteens was part of the workplace interview for manual workers, and featured approximately half way through office workers' home interview. In both cases the issue was raised before the more overt questions about social class, but many men nonetheless recognized that its sub-text concerned the acceptability of class distinctions. Men were asked: "In your firm there are different canteens for shop floor workers, office workers and managers. Do you think this is on the whole a good thing or should all canteens be open to everybody?"[39] Across the firms many workers,

[37] LNMHI(see note 11), 508, 519 and 520. Skefko had approximately 6.000 employees in Luton in two plants.

[38] LNMHI (see note 11), 551.

[39] Their answers were coded "Good thing," "One canteen," "Other" or "Don't Know," and interviewers had space to write down respondents' comments; Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), pp. 70–71, reports that 53 per cent of shop-floor workers approved of the present segregated arrangements, 35 per cent disapproved and the remainder either did not know or favored other arrange-

of all grades, pointed out that the system was merely a practical recognition of the difficulty of mixing dirty overalls and clean suits and dresses.[40] A Laporte chemical worker insisted that it was "not a question of snobbery," but rather reflected the dirty nature of the job they did, while another simply replied: "Why?—Look at the state I'm in!"[41] Others signaled their approval of the question's democratic spirit, before explaining why it could not work in prac‐ tice. A Laporte production worker started his answer with: "Gen‐ erally speaking you should only have one", but then explained that "here they ought to have 2, because production workers get really dirty." A Vauxhall assembly worker took a similar stance, com‐ menting that he "would like to see canteens more open but there would be difficulty over suits. [It's] probably best as it is."[42]

It is striking how often shop-floor workers explicitly stated that they were concerned about ruining the work clothes of the firm's office staff. One of the Vauxhall workers describes the main works canteen as "too dirty for men in suits," while another argues that it would "not [be] fair for men in new suits."[43] These comments ap‐ pear to show an appreciation of the requirement on the office worker to wear "a good suit," echoing the emphasis on equality in difference found in inter-war labor movement arguments designed to assert the common interests of "workers by hand and by brain."[44] Gender also played its part here. A number of workers specifically expressed concern that female staff could have their best clothes ruined.[45] But this was not the only concern. Like the shop-floor, the "works" canteen was a male preserve, and some

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ments (those without white-collar 'affiliations' through employment or family being most likely to disapprove of segregated dining arrangements).

[40] *Ibid*., pp. 70–71.

[41] Luton Work Interview (henceforth: LWI), p. 208 and LHI (see note 5), p. 218.

[42] LWI (see note 41), 201 and 039.

[43] LWI (see note 41), 010 and 056.

[44] Jon Lawrence, "Labour and the Politics of Class, 1900–1940", in: David Feld‐ man / Jon Lawrence (eds.), Structures and Transformations in Modern British His‐ tory: Essays for Gareth Stedman Jones, Cambridge 2011, pp. 237–260.

[45] LWI (see note 41), 009 and 044.

workers made it clear that they wanted gender segregation pre-served. Some feared that they would have to modify their behavior—"If girls were there you couldn't chat to your mates as you usually would" (almost certainly an implicit reference to social taboos about swearing in front of women).[46] Others worried that it would be an uncomfortable environment for women because the men's behavior would not be sufficiently modified. According to one man, those with daughters working at Vauxhall "wouldn't want her to go into [the] same canteen as [the] men" (though he did not spell out that this was a personal issue for him: his own daughter worked as a Vauxhall manager's secretary).[47] Sadly the research team did not interview women workers, but the fact that none of the three female fieldworkers undertook workplace interviews suggests that they too were conscious that gender as much as class structured the workplace environment (even if they did not theorize it in such terms).[48]

Although one in three manual workers said they would prefer a common canteen, very few elaborated on their choice, perhaps because they felt they were confirming the question's underlying premise. But there was a small minority of shop-floor workers who did feel strongly about class segregation in the workplace. One Vauxhall car worker asked: "What's the matter with us, we're not contagious," while another declared: "There should be no kind of Class Distinctions—'all are one'."[49] Interestingly, approximately

[46] LHI (see note 5), 038.

[47] LWI (see note 41), 049 (and also his matching file LHI (see note 5), 012 at p. 23). See also LWI (see note 41), 020. The firms' "Staff" canteens were already mixed—these were statements about shop-floor masculinity, and whether it should (or could) be modified.

[48] The interviewers were given gendered codes, only M1, M2, M3 and M4 conducted workplace interviews. Female interviewers were used extensively for home interviews, which also involved workers' wives. See "Frank Bechhofer Life Story Interview with Paul Thompson" (2001), from Paul Thompson, "Pioneers of Social Research, 1996–2012" [data collection] 2nd Edition, UK Date Service, University of Essex, SN6226 (http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6226-3), p. 33.

[49] LWI (see note 41), 065 and 016; also LWI, 012.

one in five clerical workers also favored one canteen.[50] Once more, not many offered an explanation, but when they did so it was practical issues, rather than social equality, that loomed large in their thinking. A Skefko clerk resented paying for service in the staff canteen, complaining "it's the same food on the other side of the counter", and a number of clerks said they always ate in the works canteen anyway because it was quicker and cheaper (though one of these complained about workers who did not wash their hands before eating).[51]

But for some, defense of the status quo was about defending class-based social segregation in the workplace. This took two main forms. Those who sought freedom from the ears and eyes of superiors, and those who claimed to understand why others, be they workers or managers, might want to dine separately. As with the question of gender segregation this may partly reflect different strategies of self-presentation, but one can also identify underlying differences in respondents' orientation to work. Turning first to those who sought to escape the managerial gaze, most feared that they could not "be themselves" if their foreman or manager was present. One Vauxhall production worker declared: "I wouldn't want to sit next to a manager when having my dinner. I want to sit next to the boys and talk;" while another commented that "having foremen with [the] men would spoil the fun."[52] But others just thought it would make them feel socially awkward—like the man who felt his speech "would be more jumbled up than ever […] sitting next to a manager."[53] Office staff could express similar feelings. A Skefko sales clerk, and former skilled manual worker, earning only £ 13 per week, felt uncomfortable at the idea of eating with

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[50] The Affluent Worker Study did not report findings from the non-manual sample but slightly fewer (48 per cent) favored current arrangements, 17 per cent wanted one canteen and the remainder (35 per cent) favored other arrangements or did not know.

[51] LNMHI (see note 11), 503, 514, 517.

[52] LWI (see note 41), 021 and 030.

[53] LWI (see note 41), 042.

managers, commenting that "most people feel embarrassed to have their boss breathing down their neck at lunch."[54] Another clerk, also on a weekly contract, drew on his experience of the army "mess" system to argue that it was good to be able to "talk about the officers in your own mess without any prejudice or fear of interruptions" (with National Service continuing until 1963, most men interviewed for the study would have had direct experience of the rigid, class-inflected hierarchies of the British armed forces, and many called on this experience to make sense of class in civilian life).[55]

Concern for the privacy of others was also shared by both shop-floor and office workers. A Vauxhall assembly worker, who claimed to have no ambition for promotion, nonetheless acknowledged that "foremen want to be left alone at lunch to discuss problems that crop up—they don't get a chance at other times."[56] If this man had internalized the logic of maximizing production, others had done the same with the prerogatives of management. A Vauxhall production worker argued that managers should have a separate canteen to avoid "too much familiarity," while a Laporte fitter stressed that managers needed to be able "to entertain" visitors.[57] But such attitudes do appear to have been more common among office staff, who spoke of managers needing to be able to "sit back and discuss anything," including matters that were "not for the normal personnel's ears."[58] Indeed a dispatch clerk, recently promoted to the monthly pay-roll, went further, championing their right to social exclusivity: "Bosses should have their own—I'm sure they can't expect the sweep-up to be able to go in & order his dinner & a glass of wine, it wouldn't look right!"[59] Clerks can also be found ex-

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[54] LNMHI (see note 11), 523.
[55] LNMHI (see note 11), 548; Richard Vinen, National Service: Conscription in Britain, 1945–1963, London 2014.
[56] LWI (see note 41), 068, pp. 12 and 16.
[57] LWI (see note 41), 041 and 202.
[58] LNMHI (see note 11), 500 and 515; also LNMHI, 510.
[59] LNMHI (see note 11), 513.

pressing empathy for shop-floor workers' social exclusivity—albeit often in patronizing terms: "The men themselves want them separate; from the point of view of social contacts, they can talk with one another, the social atmosphere is better" (the interviewer then comments, apparently approvingly, "it's not because of the class distinction that he approves it").[60]

This man's language might be that of "officers and men," but his observations nonetheless reflected what many of "the men" actually said: that separate canteens worked, and should not be read by the researchers as a mark of class distinction. This attitude strongly echoes Mike Savage's broader analysis of the Luton manual workers' sense of class identification, and in particular their determination to resist classificatory practices which sought to fix their position at the bottom of a hierarchical system of supposed worth.[61] It also echoes his earlier work on shop-floor workers' "rugged individualism" and their desire to preserve some semblance of autonomy at work. Here was a space where workers could be themselves, if only briefly, and they had no wish to lose it in favor of an illusory "classlessness." Arguably the fact that most workers declined to endorse integrated canteens tells us more about their strategies for resisting Sennett's "hidden injuries of class" than about the symbolic importance of the works / staff distinction in 1960s factories (though distinguishing between interview strategies and life strategies is not easy here).[62] But if most simply wanted a space where they could "be themselves," if only briefly, as Jack Saunders reminds us, works canteens could also be valuable spaces where trade union activists could seek to stiffen workers' sense of their collective identity and willingness to resist management.[63] It is striking, therefore, that the office workers we hear echoing comments about

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[60] LNMHI (see note 11), 553; also LNMHI, 534, who backed a common canteen but added "it wouldn't be welcomed too much by the workers".

[61] Savage, "Working-class Identities" (see note 18).

[62] See Jon Lawrence, "Social-science Encounters and the Negotiation of Difference in Early 1960s England," History Workshop Journal, 77 (2014), pp. 215–239; Richard Sennett / Jonathan Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class, New York 1973.

the desirability of safe spaces away from the eyes and ears of management tended to be those in the weakest employment positions: those still on weekly contracts despite being in their thirties or forties.

Seeking Promotion

The *Affluent Worker* study reported a sharp contrast between manual and non-manual workers' attitudes towards promotion, with white-collar staff seeing promotion as both more likely and more desirable. Whereas only 49 per cent of shop-floor workers said they wanted to be a foreman either "very much" or "quite a lot," 87 per cent of white-collar workers responded positively to the prospect of "promotion."[64] In turn, 45 per cent of shop-floor workers rated their chances of promotion as "fairly" or "very" good, compared with 66 per cent of office workers (though it is worth noting that only 13 per cent of office workers thought their chances "very good"). This meant that just 22 per cent of the shop-floor sample both wanted promotion and thought their chances at least "fairly good;" among office workers the figure was 57 per cent.[65] These starkly contrasting responses led the researchers to conclude that among shop-floor workers:

"Promotion is not almost automatically accepted as desirable, as with white-collar employees for whom a career is a moral expectation; nor is it widely rejected out of group or class solidarity, as with some more traditional industrial workers. It is, rather, criti-

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[63] Jack Saunders, "The British Motor Industry, 1945-77: How Workplace Cultures Shaped Labour Militancy" (PhD Diss., University College London, 2015), pp. 24, 99, 118, 123–126, 311.

[64] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 120. Only one office worker claimed to have no interest in promotion, LNMHI (see note 11), 512.

[65] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 128, and vol. 3, pp. 75–76. My own re-coding suggests that 63 per cent of non-manual workers thought their chances of promotion "fairly" or "very" good.

cally assessed in terms of its costs and rewards in relation to the individual's present work situation."[66]

There is no doubt that there are real differences of outlook and expectation here, but there are, nonetheless, a number of problems with this analysis. Firstly, once again the attitudes of white-collar workers were not closely interrogated—their moral compulsion to seek promotion was largely assumed.[67] As we shall see, it is equally plausible that office workers subjected promotion to the same cost / benefit analysis as manual workers, but that for them the objective conditions for promotion were simply different. Secondly, and crucially, the two groups of workers were asked *different* questions. Shop-floor workers were asked specifically about becoming a foreman, whereas office workers were asked about their attitude to promotion *in general*. Not only was it widely acknowledged that becoming a foreman often meant more responsibility for less money (because of lost overtime payments), but shop-floor workers could in fact secure promotion by other routes. At Skefko machinists could (and frequently did) hope to be promoted to the better-paid, more skilled job of machine setter. At all the firms there were also opportunities to move into inspection and time study roles, or even into clerical work, while skilled workers could seek promotion to draughtsman, technician, or even assistant engineer.[68] Indeed, an assembly worker at Vauxhall rated his chance of promotion to foreman as "not too good" because he was "too

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[66] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 130.

[67] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 73 softens this to say promotion "may well be a moral expectation" for clerical workers.

[68] In the home interview there was a single question in which husband and wife were asked jointly whether they had discussed either promotion (in general) or setting up in business. The discussion of promotion in the *Affluent Worker* study did not draw on this question, although the responses elicited underscored that being promoted was not just about becoming a foreman, see LHI (see note 5), 172, 183, 188, 192, 206, 209, 216, 218, 222 (all Q36); also LHI, 037, 132, 144 (all Q64). Goldthorpe *et al*, The Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 72 calls promotion to foreman "the first major step on the promotion ladder".

sharp with people," but elsewhere we learn that he was taking company evening classes to qualify as an inspector.[69]

Finally, the question contained an in-built assumption that "promotion" meant social, or even class, mobility, a view many of shop-floor workers rejected (as Young and Willmott had argued in the mid-1950s).[70] The question asking manual workers to rate their own prospects began: "One way a worker might *improve* his position (even if you aren't too keen on the idea) is by getting promotion."[71] This clash of attitudes is nicely demonstrated by an exchange between an interviewer and a Vauxhall car worker who had claimed that it would be easy for him to get an office job at Vauxhall:

"Q: Would this move you up a class?

A: No I don't think so. I've got a couple of mates who work in the office and they haven't. You might think so, everybody is entitled to their opinion."[72]

Perhaps understandably some workers proved sensitive to the question's implication that their current position might be considered "lowly" by their Cambridge-based interviewers. A machinist at Skefko explained that he would have to wait to be promoted to setter because this was based largely on seniority, and then added: "I could have had fairly good jobs in London, but moving here forced me not to take them."[73]

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[69] LWI (see note 41), 001, Q4 section II and Q7 section VI.

[70] Michael Young / Peter Willmott, "Social Grading by Manual Workers," British Journal of Sociology, 7/4 (1956), pp. 337–345; also Savage, "Working-class Identities" (see note 18) on the Luton workers' rejection of these normative assumptions about status.

[71] Luton manual workers' workplace interview schedule, question 7, p. 24 (emphasis added), Goldthorpe *et al*, The Affluent Worker, vol. 3, Appendix D, Q7, pp. 211–212.

[72] LHI (see note 5), 008 (Q64).

[73] LHI (see note 5), 188, p. 20. Issues of class (and gender) inter-subjectivity in the Luton interviews are explored more fully in Lawrence, "Social-science Encounters" (see note 62).

This may also explain why shop-floor workers sometimes stressed that they would welcome promotion as a chance to shed badges of manual labor such as overalls, masks and goggles, as well as the dirt and dangers from which these things were intended to protect them. One Vauxhall worker wanted to be a foreman so that he "wouldn't have to wear dirty overalls," while the man who wanted to transfer to inspection work explained that "you don't have to wear protective clothing like goggles and gloves and mask and apron."[74] Others stressed the attraction of staff "privileges," particularly being paid for days absent and having better pension rights, or said they would need a less strenuous job when older.[75] The sometimes fraught cross-class dynamics of interviews may also help to explain why men who played down their own chances of promotion (perhaps to avoid appearing boastful or keen not to be a worker) nonetheless insisted that in principle it was relatively easy to "get on."[76] Asked about seeking promotion one Skefko worker replied that his motto was "he that expects nothing will never be disappointed." But later, in an open-ended discussion about social class, the same man argued that anyone could succeed if they had the willpower and ability, and to illustrate the point he told the story of a man in his fifties who had come to Skefko "as a common operator like I did," but by excelling at night school had been able to get a good technical job: "He's got himself a lovely car, a nice home, a good family."[77]

As here, manual workers were generally more forthcoming about the qualities needed to gain promotion when they could discuss the matter indirectly, rather than personally. In doing so they tended to stress three main factors: education, psychology and sociability. Evening classes—or "night school"—was often seen as the

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[74] LWI (see note 41), 071 and 001 – also LHI (see note 5), 037 and LWI, 210.

[75] LWI (see note 41), 002; LHI (see note 5), 160 and 097.

[76] Lawrence, "Social-science Encounters" (see note 62).

[77] LHI (see note 5), 163 (Q36 and Q64); see also LHI, 144 and 150.

working man's best hope of promotion, as it long had been.[78] Vauxhall was large enough to provide its own classes for those keen to "get on," but others made use of the local technical college, which had a good reputation in the town.[79] Such classes allowed men to make good deficiencies in their school education, as well as gain technical and professional qualifications. But the same was true for clerical workers, who often felt the need to redress the educational gulf between themselves and people who had been educated at private school or university.[80] This was not an easy option, especially for men with a young family, or those working shifts, and a number comment on having to give up without securing additional qualifications.[81]

Workers themselves often turned to popular psychology to explain why some men succeeded, against the odds, while others failed. They talked about needing to be strong-willed, determined and self-confident, and often explained their own lack of prospects in terms of their lack of these qualities.[82] Again, clerical workers displayed the same pattern, with a sales clerk explaining his limited chances of securing promotion in terms of his nervousness and propensity to worry.[83] Indeed, as Matthew Thomson has demonstrated, psychological concepts had long become a part of everyday common sense, with a Skefko worker declaring that he would have "no inferiority complexes" about taking a middle-class job, adding that "people are often financially middle class without the social snobberies."[84]

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[78] Michael Sanderson, The Missing Stratum: Technical School Education in England 1900–1990s, London 1994. On education and social mobility see especially, Peter Mandler, "Educating the Nation III: Social Mobility," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 6th series, 26 (2016), pp. 1–23.

[79] LWI (see note 41), 001; LHI (see note 5), 097, 163, and 223.

[80] LNMHI (see note 11), 503, 528, 535, 545, 550.

[81] LHI (see note 5), 207 and LHI, 223.

[82] LHI (see note 5), 074, 109 and 163; LWI (see note 41), 077.

[83] LNMHI (see note 11), 553.

[84] LHI (see note 5), 216; Mathew Thomson, Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain, Oxford 2006.

It was in the sphere of what one *did* to get promoted that a clear difference can be identified between shop-floor and clerical workers, but this appears to owe more to their different work contexts than to underlying attitudinal differences. Shop-floor workers recognized that being sociable with superiors could play an important part in promotion, and one specifically stated that being active in the works sports teams was a good way to get to "know the right people" (he wasn't and didn't).[85] But as Goldthorpe and Lockwood noted, shift work and overtime made it harder for shop-floor workers to play an active part in works social clubs.[86] Interestingly, a Laporte worker who specifically complained that the social club was "for clerical workers [and] managerial workers" thought that his chance of promotion was no better than "several thousand to one" because all he could do was "be efficient and make my presence known."[87] By contrast, clerical workers had much easier access to superiors, even if they didn't play sports, and promotion carried few of the drawbacks (such as reduced earnings) often associated with becoming a works foreman.[88] Clerical workers who were particularly confident of being promoted had often worked directly with senior managers who had told them informally, or even formally in company reports, that their potential had been recognized.[89] Indeed one clerk justified his confidence in promotion with an observation usually voiced by the discontented: "It's who you know" (he knew the Company Secretary, having once worked alongside him).[90]

It is also important to recognize that promotion off the shop-floor did mean crossing a divide—moving from the "works" to the "staff." As Goldthorpe and Lockwood demonstrated, few Luton workers saw this in politicized, class terms—promotion didn't

[85] LWI (see note 41), 080; also LHI (see note 5), 109 and 150.
[86] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), pp. 90–92.
[87] LHI (see note 5), 011.
[88] LHI (see note 5), 183, 208 and 229.
[89] LNMHI (see note 11), 530, 535 and 545, p. 36.
[90] LNMHI (see note 11), 550.

mean going over to "the other side" or abandoning their class.[91] But it did mean ceasing to work with their hands—something that skilled workers, in particular, were often loathe to do, including one man who had qualified as a draughtsman, but declared "I prefer the mechanical side" (though it probably helped that he averaged almost £ 30 per week as a skilled engineer).[92] Others simply preferred the relative freedom of the shop-floor—not just the lack of responsibility, but also the greater ability to take days off, and the sense that the company didn't own their time, let alone their person.[93] As a fitter at Laporte explained, foremen were "expected to work night and day […] if there's a breakdown you have to be in—have to be in when they want you—my own foreman's been in 24 hours."[94] Add to this the fact that skilled fitters generally earned more money than foremen at Laporte and it's not hard to see why this man had no wish to change jobs.

Among those pessimistic about their chances of promotion clerical workers again tended to show a more concrete understanding of how the system worked, and hence why they were unlikely to benefit. Shop-floor workers often spoke generally about needing to be "in" with the right people, but rarely spelled out what this meant, or who "they" were.[95] By contrast, disgruntled clerical workers leveled some pretty serious allegations against their superiors' prejudices. Two suggested that promotion depended heavily on having the right politics, with one illustrating the point by mentioning a man who played tennis with his boss and joined the Conservative party (both men worked at Skefko where the Chief Executive had organized the local Conservative party's General Election

[91] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 122–124.

[92] LHI (see note 5), 218, also LHI, 198 who insisted he would continue to work with his hands while he still could, though he had "been asked many times to be a foreman".

[93] LHI (see note 5), 076.

[94] LWI (see note 41), 202.

[95] E. g. LWI (see note 41), 068; LHI (see note 5), 089, 137, 157 and 226.

campaigns throughout the 1950s).[96] Others argued that it was important to have gone to the "right" school, and that only those who were educated at public school could hope to reach senior executive positions.[97] Clerical workers also recognized that what was required of them was conformity. One man felt he had "been too outspoken" in the past to have much hope of promotion, another, declared that he "could never be a yes-man."[98] Shop-floor workers were not alone in feeling the appeal of "rugged individualism," it was just that clerical workers were under much more explicit pressure to be loyal company men and women.[99] A significant minority gave answers which suggested that they identified more strongly with the detached, instrumental ethos of the shop-floor than with the company ethos that managers hoped to instill in their "staff." But then it was not unusual for interviewers to comment that clerical workers' homes and habits were "very working class" or "completely working class," even if their published findings tended to obscure such messy complications.[100]

Getting Out

Perhaps one of the more surprising findings of the original *Affluent Worker* study was the high proportion of shop-floor workers who said that they would like to set up in business. In all, 74 per cent said that they would like to run a business, and 37 per cent had either done so in the past, were currently doing so part-time, or had made serious enquiries. The comparable figures for white collar workers were 56 per cent interested, and just 19 per cent who had

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[96] LNMHI (see note 11), 500 and 505; Memo P. G. Gower (CCO Agent Eastern Area) to Conservative Central Office, 17 June 1963, "Luton," CCO 500/18/71, Conservative Party Archive, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
[97] LNMHI (see note 11), 503 and 545.
[98] LNMHI (see note 11), 523 and 500.
[99] Savage, "Sociology, Class and Male Manual Work Cultures" (see note 16).
[100] LHI (see note 5), 518 and 543; also LHI, 503.

done something concrete about running a business.[101] Rather than explain why so many shop-floor workers might hold this aspiration, Goldthorpe and Lockwood concentrated on playing down its significance. They argued that "most aspirations for self-employment—as for promotion—were held with no great expectation that they would one day be fulfilled."[102] They also argued that the claims should not be taken at face value because only two-thirds of those saying that they had seriously considered self-employment had discussed the matter with their wives, while among those with a vaguer interest only one-third had done so (they apparently did not countenance the possibility that these might not be egalitarian, "companionate" marriages).[103] This allowed them to argue that "taking the sample as a whole, less than 1 man in 6 claimed both to have considered self-employment seriously and to have raised the matter within his family." They were fantasies, they suggested, that had not, and would not, be "transformed into 'projects'."[104] But fantasies matter, they are part of what it is to be human, whether or not they are shared with a spouse.[105]

The issue of setting up in business was raised in both the work and home interviews (in the latter case the question asked specifically if the matter had been discussed by the couple, although it is

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[101] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), p. 132.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[103] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 108. See Janet Finch / Penny Summerfield, "Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945–59", in: David Clark (ed.), Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change: Writings for Jacqueline Burgoyne, 1944-88, London 1991, pp. 7–32. The classic contemporary study mapping divergent models of marriage is Elizabeth Bott, Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families, London 1957.

[104] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), pp. 134–135.

[105] Sally Alexander, "Feminist History and Psychoanalysis" in her Becoming a Woman and Other Essays in 19th and 20th Century Feminist History, New York 1995, pp. 225–230; T. G. Ashplant, "Fantasy, Narrative, Event: Psychoanalysis and History", History Workshop Journal, 23/1 (1987), pp. 165–173; Michael Roper, "Psychoanalysis and the Making of History" in: Sarah Foot / Nancy Partner (eds.), Sage Handbook of Historical Theory, Thousand Oaks, CA 2012, pp. 311–325.

clear that many respondents missed this nuance and simply discussed their views about running a business). Goldthorpe and Lockwood reported that two-thirds of shop-floor workers blamed lack of capital for their failure to set up in (or stay in) business.[106] For some this was simply a vague comment about lack of finance, but many displayed a clear sense of the financial needs involved in setting up the business of their dreams. Although a great variety of businesses were mentioned, broadly speaking they fell into two camps: "companionate businesses," where husband and wife imagined themselves buying a going concern such as a shop, pub, guest house or small-holding which they would run together (occasionally with one of them retaining a paid job for security), and "breadwinner businesses," where the husband envisaged becoming self-employed, sometimes in partnership with a friend, and utilizing his "trade" (i. e. skill) to make a living. Indeed some couples assumed that this was the only meaning of setting up in business.[107] Strikingly, very few respondents displayed what we might call a classic Thatcherite version of the entrepreneur myth, in which the goal was to become wealthy by creating a dynamic and highly profitable business from scratch (with or without capital).

Turning first to those imagining a "companionate" business model, many explicitly stated that the key issue was "to have money first to buy a business."[108] One couple were actively saving to buy a guest house because the husband disliked factory work, and another had put in tenders for various businesses without managing to secure the necessary finance,[109] but most simply said that, if they had the money, they would like to buy a tea shop, garage, grocers or similar small business.[110] Two workers explicitly stated that they had considered buying a shop that could also be their

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[106] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 1 (see note 1), pp. 134–135. See Todd, The People (see note 13), pp. 258–261, discusses the appeal of setting up in business among Luton's shop-floor workers.

[107] LHI (see note 5), 011, LHI, 100; LWI (see note 41), 039.

[108] LHI (see note 5), 087 (Q. 64).

[109] LHI (see note 5), 130, LWI (see note 41), 234, LHI (see note 5), 118.

home, but had instead chosen to be an employee buying their house on a mortgage.[111] But finance was also an issue for men who envisaged becoming self-employed. One man cited the prohibitive cost of retraining as a mechanic; others mentioned the cost of machinery and tools associated with businesses as diverse as haulage, central heating installation and trophy making.[112]

As Selina Todd has recently argued, what attracted most shopfloor workers to running a business was not the prospect of riches, but the chance to assert some control over their daily work routines.[113] Some spoke explicitly of wanting "independence," that great ideal of nineteenth-century radical working men,[114] but others used more prosaic terms such as wanting to "be my own governor" or not always to be "working for someone else."[115] Others talked of wanting "to use my initiative," to "get away from the humdrum" or even to "engage in some business where I wouldn't be limited."[116] There were also workers for whom running a business was not an escape but a homecoming—migrants who dreamt of returning to their birthplace with enough capital to buy a shop or small-holding for their old age.[117] Finally, there were some who spoke of the desire to have a business that could be passed on to their children, including a sales clerk on a weekly contract who thought it would be the best way to guarantee his disabled son economic independence in adult life.[118]

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[110] E. g. LHI (see note 5), 136, 165 and 121; LWI (see note 41), 065; also LWI, 002/LHI, 091.

[111] LWI (see note 41), 036 and 037.

[112] LWI (see note 41), 222; LHI (see note 5), 131 and 227; LWI, 010; see also LWI, 018, 227 and 018.

[113] Todd, The People (see note 13), p. 261.

[114] Matthew McCormack, The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England, Manchester 2005; James Vernon, Politics and the People: a Study in English Political Culture, c. 1815–1867, Cambridge 1993.

[115] LHI (see note 5), 102, 165, 191; also LHI, 150 and 180.

[116] LHI (see note 5), 123 and 137; LWI (see note 41), 067.

[117] LHI (see note 5), 159, 160 and 211 (all three were from Ireland).

[118] LHI (see note 5), 195 and LNMHI (see note 11), 510.

That said, a few did tell stories of great riches, though almost invariably of fortunes they had missed out on, rather than fortunes yet to be made. These were "if only" narratives which served to highlight the capriciousness of fate in working-class life. One man complained that his wife had stopped him investing £ 500 in a plumbing venture with a friend who has since "made a pile," and another couple lamented that they would have "made a fortune" had they decided to go ahead with a pre-packed potato venture in the late 1950s.[119] However, there were far more cases where couples simply rehearsed the harsh lessons of past business failures. Some had gone bankrupt; all had lost money in ventures as diverse as hat making, heating, fruit-growing, painting and decorating and running a mobile shop.[120] Only a few, having failed once, claimed they might try again, including one couple who had previously run a café, and another who had been newsagents.[121]

Some respondents openly acknowledged that their talk of running a business was "just a dream;" one couple even claimed that they talked about such things "for more or less a giggle," but it does not follow that we should dismiss their dreaming.[122] A Vauxhall production worker explicitly stated that such fantasies were what got him through the working day,[123] while others rehearsed them at home as well as at work. The most common version of the business fantasy involved a large pools win which would allow the respondents to escape the necessity of paid labor. Although in 1961 Viv Nicholson had famously declared she would "Spend, Spend, Spend" after winning over £ 150,000 on the football pools, most affluent workers had more sober dreams, imagining they would finally have the chance to buy the guest house, shop or small-hold

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[119] LWI (see note 41), 201; LHI (see note 5), 203.
[120] LWI (see note 41), 049/LHI (see note 5), 012; LHI, 105/LWI, 216; LHI, 086, 129 and 119.
[121] LHI (see note 5), 078 and 188.
[122] E. g. LHI (see note 5), 146, 155, 158, 223 and also LHI, 104.
[123] LWI (see note 41), 065.

ing they longed for.[124] Asked about setting up in business, a Vaux-hall worker's wife nicely captured the role of these windfall fantasies in working-class life, describing how "every Saturday night he builds me up and then we go flat till next week. […] Oh the big ideas, the houses we're going to build."[125] But whilst none of the white-collar workers mentioned playing the pools, plenty acknowledged that they too cherished dreams of escape—as a Skefko accounts clerks put it, running a business is "perhaps a secret of every man's heart."[126]

But of course a significant minority did not share the dream: 27 per cent of shop-floor and 44 per cent of white-collar workers claimed never to have considered setting up in business. Most offered no explanation of their attitude, but enough did so for us to build some picture of those for whom the world of business was not even the stuff of fantasy. Once again, in this group, manual and non-manual workers seem to have offered broadly similar responses. Many stressed that they would not want either to abandon the security of a good, regular income, or to take the risk of self-employment.[127] In making such arguments many men specifically referred to their responsibility to provide for young families. As a Vauxhall worker previously tempted to set up in the building trade put it, "a married man with 2 children can't afford to gamble," or as a senior clerical worker put it: "being married with a son I have to play it a bit safe. Can't afford to come a cropper."[128] Both office and shop-floor workers can also be found arguing, paradoxically,

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[124] E. g. See LHI (see note 5), 141, 204, 157. On Viv Nicolson see Todd, The People (see note 13), pp. 247–251, 268–271 (Interludes VI and VII); also Vivian Nicholson / Stephen Smith, Spend, Spend, Spend, London 1977; Jonathon Green, "She had it All and Spent it All", The Guardian, 9 October 1999.

[125] LHI (see note 5), 086. On the psychological place of gambling in English working-class life see Ross McKibbin, "Working-class gambling in Britain, 1880–1939," Past & Present, 82 (1979), pp. 147–178.

[126] LNMHI (see note 11), 508.

[127] LHI (see note 5), 148, 152 and 183; LNMHI (see note 11), 500.

[128] LWI (see note 41), 029; LNMHI (see note 11), 530, also LHI (see note 5), 206 and LNMHI, 503.

that they preferred the freedom of a set working day—as a Laporte worker put it "I like to clock out at 2pm and no more cares, that's it."[129] Similarly, a junior clerk complained that if you ran a business "you'd have to work 24 hours a day," while the wives of both manual and non-manual workers said working in shops had convinced them never to try running one themselves.[130]

However, it is striking that only shop-floor workers (and their wives) reported feeling inadequate for business life. Here, as with some of the more negative self-assessments in relation to promotion, one again sees traces of Sennett's hidden injuries of class.[131] Some workers simply declared themselves not ambitious or adventurous enough to go it alone, or, more positively, too "easygoing."[132] But others focused on personal failings, and in particular on their lack of education. Educational inequality was an unspoken presence in these interviews, given that all the interviewers were university graduates employed by the Cambridge Economics Faculty, and this may explain why some respondents raised the issue in this way.[133] For instance, the wife of a Skefko worker responded: "I'd like to be able to [set up in business]—like to have a bit better brain than I've got, we didn't have the education at school they have today."[134] Another Skefko wife took a similar line, arguing that "you need to know a lot—have a good education," but in this case the husband disagreed, though about the need for education, not their lack of it: "No—you can be uneducated. But you just take a bloody chance."[135]

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[129] LWI (see note 41), 233. This man knew what he was talking about: his parents and all his siblings were in business.

[130] LNMHI (see note 11), 548; LHI (see note 5), 224, LNMHI, 518.

[131] Sennett / Cobb, Hidden Injuries (see note 62).

[132] LHI (see note 5), 091, 178, 100 and 113, also LHI, 225.

[133] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 50.

[134] LHI (see note 5), 152.

[135] LHI (see note 5), 204. Men could also be sensitive about their supposed educational inferiority, see Lawrence, "Social-science Encounters" (see note 62), pp. 232-233.

Researchers assumed that men who were serious about wanting to give up their jobs would raise the issue at home with their wives. Unusually, it was an assumption that appears to have over-estimated the convergence between manual and non-manual families; strict role segregation remained the norm for some shop-floor workers and their wives. In the home interviews, researchers asked: "Have you (and your wife) ever talked about the possibility of you (your husband) going after promotion, or setting up in business on your own?", and they were encouraged to probe respondents' answers. In part this meant trying to distinguish between private fantasies and joint projects. So when a Skefko worker said that he had longed to set up a central heating business for some time, and his wife replied "I'd like that—it'd make him happy," the interviewer added: "It was clear they hadn't gone into it together."[136] Of course, many couples did rehearse their dreams together, and not just to maximize the enjoyment of a gamble on the pools. For some sharing dreams of escape was evidently one of the ways to bind a marriage in tough times. A Skefko worker and his wife talked of their "life-long ambition" to run a "village general store […] preferably in Norfolk." As he explained: "I want to get out of engineering and it's something the wife and I can do together."[137] But in other households, husband and wife upheld a more segregated model of marriage within which it was up to the man to provide for his family, and how he chose to do this was no one's business but his own.[138] Perhaps because they worked with a rather stereotypical model of "traditional" working-class culture, in which workplace solidarity loomed large, the researchers appear to have underestimated the persistence of gender-segregated marriage

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[136] LHI (see note 5), 227.

[137] LHI (see note 5), 127; see also LHI, 218 and LHI, 543.

[138] See Elizabeth Bott, Family and Social Network (see note 103), pp. 65–96; on the historical background, Sara Horrell / Jane Humphries, "The Origins and Expansion of the Male Breadwinner Family: the Case of Nineteenth-century Britain," International Review of Social History [Supplement], 42, Supplement 5 (1997), pp. 25–64.

among some Luton shop-floor workers. Because "privatism," or at least a family-centered culture that stressed the importance of domestic privacy, was not as new as they supposed, it was quite compatible with the persistence of highly gendered conjugal roles.[139]

A Laporte worker who dabbled in book-selling and garage building to boost his income represented an extreme example of segregated roles. Pressed on whether they had discussed going into business at home he declared: "Anything like that I go ahead on my own. It's up to me the way I make my living. Nothing to do with her."[140] Similarly, a Skefko worker declared: "The part time job is my own business (with me and my partner)" (i. e. his business partner, not his life partner—his wife agreed).[141]

Other men were more subtle, but nonetheless still sought to challenge the central premise of the question. Referring to promotion as well as self-employment, a Skefko worker explained, "we don't discuss it together. On the working side of life I'm not intentionally secretive, but when the bell goes that's me finished."[142] Another Skefko man reported that going into business "was seriously thought of at one time but I did not discuss it," while a third admitted that he had often thought he would like to set up his own business if he ever won the pools, but had never discussed it at home. His wife supported this attitude, adding: "It's up to him, I

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[139] On the persistence of 'traditional' gender roles within parts of working-class culture deep into the later twentieth century see Stefan Ramsden, "Remaking Working-class Community: Sociability, Belonging and 'Affluence' in a Small Town, 1930–80", Contemporary British History, 29/1 (2015), pp. 1–26 and Pahl, Divisions of Labour (see note 23), chapter 10. On privacy in working-class culture before the 1960s see Ross McKibbin, Classes and Cultures, 1918–1951, Oxford 1998, pp. 181–183, 191–192; Melanie Tebbutt, Women's Talk? A Social History of "Gossip" in Working-class Neighbourhoods, 1880–1960, Aldershot 1995; Jon Lawrence, "Class, 'Affluence' and the Study of Everyday Life in Britain, c. 1930–64," Cultural and Social History, 10 (2013), pp. 273–299: pp. 285–287.
[140] LHI (see note 5), 088.
[141] LHI (see note 5), 194.
[142] LHI (see note 5), 221.

say."[143] In fact wives quite often pointed out the fallacy at the heart of the question. Pressed on the subject of running a business, one Skefko worker's wife just said: "I leave that side of it to him."[144] In another Skefko interview the wife intervened to puncture her husband's lament that running a business was "a dream only" by saying "You've not thought about it, have you?" before adding: "It's his business anyway."[145] There were other signals that the question was misjudged. One man's wife joked: "We don't talk about things —just do them", and a Skefko worker twice claimed that there were no discussions in his house, only arguments.[146] A few office workers also acknowledged that they had not discussed their hopes of setting up in business with their wives, but in these cases it was clear that they shared the researchers' assumption that this proved their ideas to be frivolous. Like the majority of shop-floor workers, these men embraced a more companionate model of married life where such things were considered rightly to be matters of joint concern.[147]

Apparently unable to accept that two in every five shop-floor workers seriously wanted to try their luck in business, either as self-employed workers or in a wide variety of joint business ventures with their wives, the *Affluent Worker* team sought to find ways to re-assert their central thesis that these men were rational instrumentalists who had sacrificed job satisfaction and autonomy for high wages. Not only were they uninterested in the possibility that for many this bargain could only be struck if it was sustained by fantasies of escape (shared with their spouse or not), but they ignored the fact that many respondents were trying to tell them that their discursive model of marriage was misguided. Perhaps any couple would need to discuss things if they were going to set up a small business *together*—but when it came to men taking the risk of

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[143] LHI, 182 and 108.

[144] LHI, 212.

[145] LHI, 200.

[146] LHI, 194 and 220.

[147] LNMHI (see note 11), 510 and 513.

going self-employed, many working-class couples saw things quite differently. Goldthorpe and Lockwood appear to have discounted the long tradition of working men as small-scale dealers and businessmen; John Benson's so-called Victorian "penny capitalists."[148] For sure, such people were often driven by poverty and insecurity as much as the urge for profits, but as we have seen, the profit-motive was also of limited interest to Luton's post-war affluent workers. What they sought from business was independence and self-fulfillment—the very things denied them in their instrumental bargain with high-wage employment under Fordist methods of mass production.

Conclusions

Looking again at workers' original testimonies from the *Affluent Worker* study underscores the diversity of attitudes among both shop-floor and clerical workers, and also the considerable attitudinal overlap between the two groups despite the fact that their workplace lives were highly segregated. For sure, there are real differences, but these generally spring directly from respondents' different work experiences, rather than from different moral frameworks. If clerical workers tended to have a more unambiguously positive attitude towards promotion this was because it had fewer objective drawbacks, and also because they had more direct contact with those able to confer promotion (although for the minority who felt that their face didn't fit this could generate a sharper critique of the inherent injustice of company policy). If manual workers were more prone to fantasize about escaping the world of paid employment altogether, this surely reflected the objectively more arduous nature of their working lives—the relentless pace of the production process, and the anti-social hours that went with it. The psychological need to feed dreams of escape was greater, even if

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[148] John Benson, The Penny Capitalists: a Study of Nineteenth-century Working-class Entrepreneurs, Dublin 1983.

most knew that they had little chance of realizing their dreams. Perhaps crucially, what ultimately bound both manual and non-manual respondents to the world of work was security—the knowledge that they had a good, reliable income with a well-established company.

There are some indications that office staff were more likely to identify with the company and internalize its ethos, but again, many did not do so, even though, as Savage reminds us, the whole rationale of the staff / works distinction was to underscore white-collar workers' different, more unequivocal, relationship with the firm (this was why foremen became "staff" even though they stayed in the works). Additionally, plenty of shop-floor workers also showed signs of identifying with their firm, especially at Vaux-hall where a long tradition of senior managers rising from the shop-floor appears to have inculcated a rather less adversarial atti-tude towards industrial relations than at most post-war British car plants.[149]

Many of the apparent differences between shop-floor and office workers were subtle and largely explicable in terms of their differ-ent experiences of the workplace. Indeed, one could plausibly argue that some of the sharpest differences ran through the shop-floor, rather than between it and the world of white-collar employment. In particular, there were striking differences in attitudes to mar-riage and family life among manual workers. In some families it re-mained the man's business how he chose to provide for his wife and children, and major decisions about the household economy were not made jointly. In others, though the husband was still rec-ognized as the principal provider, domestic life was less sharply gendered. These men were much more likely to put all their earn-ings into a common household pool, rather than give their wife a fixed housekeeping allowance, and their wives were more likely to

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[149] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 76; also vol. 1, pp. 72–73. See Jack Saunders, "The Untraditional Worker: Class Re-Formation in Britain, 1945–65," Twentieth-Century British History, 26/2 (2015), pp. 225–248.

be in paid employment themselves, in a shared effort to boost the household's overall living standard.[150] As social historians such as Claire Langhamer, Helen McCarthy and Laura King have recently suggested, it was arguably in these intimate spaces that radical attitudinal change was most apparent in mid-twentieth century Britain: in the private practices of family-life, more than in attitudes to the public questions of politics and industrial relations that dominated the *Affluent Worker* Study.[151] These new ways of living straddled the manual / non-manual divide, even if not all shop-floor workers embraced change.

When it comes to the three areas explored in detail in this article —segregated dining, promotion prospects and the desire to go into business—it is not difficult to see why the original researchers chose to retain their model of a strict manual / non-manual division, and to conclude that any blurring of this distinction reflected broader societal influences (normative convergence), rather than the sort of imitative, status-driven behavior associated with the contemporary *embourgeoisement* thesis. Structural differences rooted in workers' employment contracts, and in firms' symbolic attempts to under-score the distinction between "staff" and "works" had substantive consequences. Most workers, clerical and shop-floor, might deny that separate canteens had anything to do with class,

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[150] Goldthorpe *et al*, Affluent Worker, vol. 3 (see note 1), p. 98; see also Dolly Smith Wilson, "A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain," Twentieth-Century British History, 17 (2006), pp. 206–229.

[151] Claire Langhamer, The English in Love: the Intimate Story of an Emotional Revolution, Oxford 2013; Laura King, Family Men: Fatherhood & Masculinity in Britain, 1914–1960, Oxford 2015; Helen McCarthy, "Women, Marriage and Paid Work in Post-war Britain," Women's History Review, 26/1 (2017), pp. 46–61. Other important examples include Selina Todd, Young Women, Work and Family in England, 1918–1950, Oxford 2005; Simon Szreter / Kate Fisher, Sex Before the Sexual Revolution: Intimate Life in England, 1918–1963, Cambridge 2010; Deborah Cohen, Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present, London 2013 and Dolly Smith Wilson, "New Look" (see note 150). The Affluent Worker authors acknowledged that "the development of new normative expectations in regard to marital relationships may well be of major importance in understanding new working-class life-styles in general" (vol. 3, p. 108).

but their answers offer little doubt that they registered the class symbolism of the system, even if both groups sought to deny its power. On promotion the story is more complicated because there were good reasons not to be a foreman that had nothing to do with the disadvantages of joining the staff (notably the likely prospect of a cut in take-home pay). But despite the shop-floor culture of "rugged individualism" which Savage has usefully juxtaposed to the conformist culture expected of "staff," many workers did still harbor hopes of assuming roles such as draughtsman or inspector that would mean joining the staff (indeed quite a few wanted to become foremen). Similarly, many clerical workers, particularly those on the lowest grades, displayed instrumental attitudes strongly reminiscent of the shop-floor and had few hopes of advancement. These men inhabited a different social world to the firmly middle-class technicians, teachers and bank clerks surveyed in the Cambridge pilot for the Luton study—men who, as Mike Savage has shown, projected a confident, technocratic sense of economic and social entitlement.[152] Such feelings were rare among Luton's low-paid office workers, many of whom shared the common shop-floor fantasy of escape and "independence," though better working conditions and greater security probably explains why far fewer acted on such dreams.

We need to recognize that clerical workers were not all stereotypical "organization men." The Laporte cost clerk described by his interviewer as "completely working-class except [he] happens to have a white-collar job," was not unusual among workers at the bottom of the non-manual hierarchy. He liked his working-class neighborhood, which he called "a happy community going along together," and was on good terms with his immediate neighbors who were both Vauxhall production workers. Still paid weekly (and for any overtime), he had also taken a Saturday job to help make

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[152] Mike Savage, "Working-class Identities" (see note 3) and Mike Savage, Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940 (see note 18), chapters 2, 3 and 9.

ends meet.[153] Returning to the Luton field-notes demonstrates that the lines of class were more blurred than the simple dichotomy between manual and non-manual labor would suggest. This matters because social-scientists' reification of the manual / non-manual distinction helped to fix an increasingly anachronistic understanding of what it meant to be "working class" in late twentieth-century Britain. Worse, it did so just as deindustrialization began to bite and service sector jobs with few, if any, prospects began to proliferate for both men and women. By 2011 manufacturing accounted for just nine per cent of employment in Britain, and only a quarter of jobs were classified as manual.[154] And yet, a majority of Britons still readily self-identified as "working class." One wonders if the proportion would have been even higher if sociologists had not tried so hard to police the class borderlands between manual / non-manual across the 1960s and 1970s.[155] Perhaps, more importantly, one must also wonder if it would have been easier to defend a *politics* of the working-class in 1980s Britain if those same borderlands had been less fiercely policed.

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[153] LHI (see note 5), 543, pp. 1–2: 31, 53–54.

[154] Office for National Statistics (2011), Census: Key Statistics and Quick Statistics for Local Authorities in the United Kingdom, London 2013, pp. 16–19.

[155] See Ipsos-MORI, "Perceptions of Social Class (trends), 19 March 2008 at [https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2404/Perceptions-of-Social-Class-trends] last visited 6 Dec. 2016); Todd, The People (see note 13), pp. 356–359.