

The ‘dual tension’ created by negotiating upward social mobility and habitus: A generational study of skilled working-class men, their sons, and grandsons following deindustrialization.

Abstract

This article presents an intergenerational study of 28 skilled working-class men’s life stories of negotiating social mobility in the wake of deindustrialization. This contributes to emerging qualitative research that aims to build a framework that understands the personal tensions social mobility creates for individuals. In this study, the tensions that men experienced were not exclusively the consequence of ‘habitus clivé’ (Friedman, 2016), i.e. men feeling a dislocation from their working-class backgrounds as they climbed the occupational ladder. Men’s tensions also arose from internalising the generational pressure to improve their occupational position. Pressed by these competing tensions, men developed a ‘*getting-on* outlook’ over their careers, which meant that each generation pursued upward social mobility while also seeking to have the integrity of their working lives authenticated by their parents. To build on habitus, Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame’s (1997) description of the ‘dual tension’ is advanced as a means to frame the conflict between belonging and individuality that social mobility provoked. This article suggests this ‘dual tension’ could be reduced by families in a process named ‘authentication’. ‘Authentication’ reflects intergenerational dialogues and practices developed by the younger generations to have their achieved status recognised as in keeping with their family background.

Keywords

Deindustrialization, Working Class, Occupational and Class Values, Intergenerational Transmission, Social mobility, Habitus clivé

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Introduction

This article arose from an intergenerational study of familial working-class men's negotiation of deindustrialization. This research found a pattern of slow upward social mobility within three generations, as men moved from unskilled to skilled trade employment and finally white collar, mostly managerial, employment (Ackers, 2014). In these men's accounts, each generation communicated 'double messages' to their sons that suggested they should move into employment a step up the occupational ladder from their fathers but without forgetting the values of their working-class backgrounds. These conflictual messages created for the sons what Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) term an internal 'dual tension'. To manage this dual tension, these men developed a 'getting-on outlook', based on pursuing upward social mobility while also seeking to have the integrity of their more white-collar occupations and working lives authenticated by their parents.

This article wishes to advance the emerging field of qualitative research on social mobility. The predominant research in this field suggests that Bourdieu's (1993, 2000) concept of habitus can be used as a framework for understanding the subjective tensions that social mobility engenders in people (Friedman, 2014, 2016). However useful, habitus seems to provide a limited account of families and individuals agentic negotiation of social mobility. Therefore, to build on habitus and develop an understanding of social mobility that includes these agentic and generational aspects, this article suggests reengaging with Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) characterisation of the 'dual tension', as this provides a means for framing the plurality of pressures that people negotiate as a consequence of social mobility. However, the men's accounts in this article suggest that this 'dual tension' was not fixed but could be actively reduced by families in a process this paper terms 'authentication'. 'Authentication' reflects the intergenerational dialogues and practices developed by the younger generations with their fathers and/or grandfathers. These practices and dialogues would then create a context where men could have their achieved status recognised by their fathers and grandfathers as in keeping with their family backgrounds, so reducing these men's feelings of class dislocation.

This article starts with a discussion of literature on the subjective experience of social mobility and suggests developing this area by re-engaging with Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997). Secondly, the study's methodology sets out how it used an intergenerational approach based on life story accounts to understand the generational negotiation of social mobility. Thirdly, this paper presents the theme 'getting-on' to illustrate how men generationally negotiated social mobility across their life course. Finally, the concepts of 'dual tensions' and 'authentication' are advanced as tools for refining research on the subjective experience of social mobility.

Literature review

A new field of inquiry has developed that aims to understand social mobility as a process and explore the long-term impact this has on individuals' sense of self (Friedman, 2014; Bertaux & Thompson 2017). This questions the consensus established by social survey research (see for example Goldthorpe, 1980) that social mobility is an inherently unproblematic and positive force in people's lives. This agenda is crystallised in Sam Friedman's (2014:354) call for a:

'new research agenda in mobility studies. In particular, it proposes a large-scale re-examination of the mobility experience – one which addresses the possibility that people make sense of social trajectories not just through 'objective' markers of economic or occupational success, but also through symbols and artefacts of class-inflected cultural identity'.

Skeggs (1997) and Sennett and Cobb (1977) suggest that people's ascribed class positions developed while growing up make upward social mobility an inherently problematic transition. This transition, they argue, creates conflict due to the difference between the values assigned by people's ascribed class and the values of their achieved class. This means that in becoming economically middle class, individuals view themselves as in a position of conflict with the values of their working class backgrounds. This relational class conflict is often manifest in the suggestion that they no longer subscribe to working class values, such as performing collective or manual labour, but have embraced bourgeois individualism. Therefore, social mobility leaves working-class individuals feeling like a 'fraud' (Skeggs, 1997)

or 'impostor' (Sennett and Cobb, 1977), when surrounded by their middle-class counterparts, but also as if they had 'got above' (Skeggs, 1997) or 'betrayed' (Sennett and Cobb, 1977) their working-class roots. Friedman (2014: 354) suggests that a 'Bourdieuian-inflected theoretical lens' can be used as a framework to understand the subjective experience of social mobility. This framework suggests that feelings of discomfort are the consequence of the disruption that social mobility causes to people's habitus. Bourdieu (2000) defines habitus as:

'a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour people acquire through acting in society. It reflects the different positions people have in society, for example, whether they are brought up in a middle class environment or in a working-class suburb. It is part of how society reproduces itself.' (2000: 9).

Bourdieu (2000) argues that people seldom challenge their habitus because this structures their actions on an unconscious level. Bourdieu (2000) suggests this is the case because habitus is not just transmitted through language but reinforced by the everyday 'practices' that involve and surround individuals. As a result, habitus has been criticised for being a deterministic concept that cannot account for social change or people's desire for mobility (King 2000). Stewart (2014: 97) suggests these criticisms overlook that Bourdieu (1993: 87) proposed habitus as a generative, not just reproductive, concept, one that reflects 'what is likely, not what is inevitable'. Friedman (2014, 2016) develops habitus in this generative manner, as he found that people challenging their habitus in pursuing social mobility was a more common occurrence than Bourdieu (1993) believed. However, he also found social mobility caused disruption in people's sense of 'ontological coherence' and tensions in their intimate and generational relationships. Friedman (2016: 132) develops the concept of 'habitus clivé' to characterise the socially mobile individual as in 'a "painful" position of social limbo, of "double isolation" from both their origin and destination class'. Friedman (2014: 354) concludes that habitus can be used to frame people's subjective experience of social mobility.

However, as Swartz (1997:109) suggests, if the limits of habitus are not clearly defined it can become 'ambiguous just what the concept actually designates empirically'. Thus, to develop a framework that clearly defines the social mobility process, habitus needs to be integrated with concepts that characterize other forces that play a role in people's negotiation of social

mobility. For example, as Harden et al. (2012:3) found, many working-class parents actively push their children to 'do better' and achieve social mobility based on the rationale that they did not wish for their children to have to encounter the same hardships or insecurity that they had dealt with. Therefore, to build on habitus we need concepts that reflect the agentic and conscious negotiation of social mobility by individuals and their families.

Interestingly, over twenty years ago, Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) made this observation and suggested that a Bourdieuan analysis did not account for the role of individual agency in the social mobility process. Their research presented the slow upward social mobility achieved by four generations of French male kin to evaluate the part that agency and structure played in the creation of this family trajectory. They found that fathers communicated 'double messages' to their children about social mobility. These 'double messages' reflected contrary beliefs; for example, on one level, their children were told that becoming a civil servant would be a good career, while, on another, they were aware of their fathers' dislike for this occupational group 'who live off our back' (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame 1997:81). Their analysis frames the mobility experience as creating what they term a 'dual tension', where numerous competing agendas push and pull the individual. Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame's (1997) 'dual tension' suggests, like Bourdieu (1993), that reconciling acquired class with the values of their backgrounds causes people feelings of personal dislocation. However, the 'dual tension' also suggests something different from Bourdieu (1993), i.e. that personal wellbeing cannot be found in simply reproducing the class positions of their parents, as reproduction will not allow this generation to feel that they have 'made something of what has passed on' to them (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame 1997:93). They argue that this 'dual tension' exists in the majority of intergenerational relations because most generations wish to feel they belong to their family lineage but also that they have meaningfully taken possession of their own lives.

Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) claim this 'dual tension' does not mean that each new generation will be unable to find personal validation, whether they achieve social mobility or not. They suggest that the 'dual tension' is not static but, through the active agencies of family members, these tensions can be reduced. The reduction of tension can happen through intergenerational dialogues and practices that allow both generations to find 'equivalents'. The concept of 'equivalents' refers to similarities that provide both generations with the

ability to understand, empathise and connect their individual journey with the wider history of their families' background. The process of establishing 'equivalents' across socially mobile generations is not considered in detail by Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997:93). Instead, they only give a few simple examples such as 'the nurse's daughter who becomes a doctor', where the thematic similarities between the generations are obvious. Thus, we are left to question how and if establishing 'equivalents' would work if the two generations' lives and occupations were very different from one and other. Although the process of establishing 'equivalents' has not been directly developed, Reay (2009) and Holdworth (2007) provide insight on the topic of maintaining belonging across socially mobile generations.

Reay's (2009) research explores working class students attending elite universities and suggests that maintaining belonging with their working class identity was sustainable across very different cultural fields. This research reveals how important maintaining belonging across the divides created by social mobility was to students and their families, and, as a result, how each put a large amount of effort into bridging such divides. Through arranging 'visits from family and home friends' (Reay 2009: 1111), students managed to maintain a relationship with their backgrounds while living in this middle class social environment. However, Reay's (2009) research only views negotiating social mobility at a relatively young age. Holdworth's (2007:67) study of mothers and daughters, on the other hand, views this experience across the life course and suggests that families' sense of identity is not fixed, as concepts such as belonging and integrity are constantly renegotiated in mother-daughter relationships. Thus, feelings of dislocation from the family are not permanent but can be reduced through maintaining intergenerational dialogues across their changing relationships. Like Holdworth (2007), my study is also based on an intergenerational sample; thus, it is well placed to understand if intergenerational dialogues also allowed fathers and sons to reduce the tensions caused by social mobility, as is discussed in the next section.

The research project and method

This study did not set out with the preconception that it would uncover a pattern of slow generational upward social mobility. In fact, the assumption was the opposite, i.e. that I would find a pattern of downward social mobility. Based on the logic that, with the closure of industry, young men would find their employment opportunities largely restricted to low level

service jobs. To explore how deindustrialization was affecting intergenerational male identities, this study only interviewed men. As a result, this research cannot comment on how social mobility is experienced in relationships between female or mixed familial kin such as father-daughter relationships (for a more in depth discussion of this topic, see Ackers 2014, 2018). Rather, this study is restricted to discussing fathers', sons' and grandsons' generational negotiation of social mobility. The social mobility this research found should also be contextualised by the setting and sampling used for this study.

This study was set in Chatham in South-East England, where a naval shipbuilding and repair dockyard had been the major employer for generations of men and their families over its 400-year history. The dockyard closed in 1984 having directly employed 7000 skilled workers from more than 26 trades. Employment in the dockyard ranged from unskilled manual jobs right up to senior positions in the Admiralty. However, this study sample was constructed using the criteria that all men in the first generation had been skilled craft workers in the dockyard. The terms craft and trade as occupational standings are largely synonymous and used interchangeably in this article. This means that, according to the National Readership Survey grade classification systems, all these men were grade C2 'skilled working-class'. As a result, the qualifications and skills of these men will have allowed them better opportunities for social mobility than unskilled working-class men will have enjoyed. Additionally, the status of being a craft worker in the dockyard came with institutional meanings that informed attitudes and opportunities for social mobility.

Craft apprenticeships were organised by the dockyard school with most lasting between 3–5 years by the 1970s. Casey (1999) suggests that dockyard apprenticeships intentionally taught an ideology of meritocracy to lead craft workers away from collective industrial action. However, Water's (1999) contests for craft workers in Chatham dockyard meritocracy was in fact a real possibility. He states an apprenticeship was: 'a way for the able and industrious lads to rise from the labouring level to middle class status, have better lives and feel the superiority of their own style of knowledge. This was a genuine ladder of advancement' (Water, 1999:88). Waters (1999) concludes that 'self-improvement' was an integral ethos of dockyard craftwork. Once craft workers had completed their apprenticeships, they had numerous routes for advancement, but three routes were most common. First, craft workers could gain promotion to chargehand, in this role they would be in charge of a group of

craftsmen and training apprentices. Secondly, craft workers could study for qualifications for more technically advanced roles like moving up from draughtsmen to ship surveyor. Thirdly, craft workers could move outside their craft groups into managerial roles such as Recorder or Measurer, both white-collar, bureaucratic position centred on recording and calculating bonus pay. These were not the exclusive routes for promotion, as opportunities like working in the health and safety department were also regularly advertised (Lunn and Day 1999).

Overall, my study showed a pattern where as men grew older their careers in the dockyard developed from physically demanding work to more technical, managerial, white-collar roles. The pattern of moving into white-collar roles continued when the men had to find new employment after redundancy, but their ability to manage this transition also reflected the role of this research's geographical setting. Chatham's location in the affluent Southeast of England affected the men in this study as 5 out of 14 in the first and 7 out of 14 in the second sample lived or worked in London at the time of the interview. Consequently, Chatham was in a more favourable employment context than deindustrialised areas of the North of England, Wales and Scotland. This paper does not suggest patterns found in this small sample are numerically significant; instead, the contextual factors above are used to situate this study's intergenerational sample with the aim of exploring these men's subjective experience of social mobility.

This study uses generation to mean 'a kinship term referring to a discrete stage in the natural line of descent from a common ancestor' (Alwin and McCammon 2007: 221). As reflected in Table 1 below, the first generation are the former dockyard craft workers themselves, the second generation are these men's sons and the third generation these men's grandsons. The 'pre-generation' are the former dockyard workers' fathers; due to most being deceased, this generation could not be interviewed, so they are exclusively included to give the occupational male backgrounds of the sample. This sample was also constructed using the criteria that the first generation had all worked in the dockyard at the point of closure 1984 and were between the ages of 86-60, whilst the second and third generations all entered employment after the dockyard closed and were between 55-35. Therefore, the first generation had a direct experience of deindustrialization, while the second and third samples were more indirectly affected. Moreover, these samples crossed over in terms of age and generational experiences, so they have been grouped together in the data section. All the names in the

table below and throughout this study are culturally appropriate pseudonyms, not the participants' real names.

In this study, career history interviews were used to explore the lived experiences of men across their life course and how these were influenced by social structures. Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) suggest that the capacity of biographical accounts to capture the relationship between social process and social agency make them the ideal method for intergenerational studies. Wengraf's (2004) biographic-narrative approach informed how these interviews were conducted. This approach suggests that interviews should start with a single question 'designed to elicit the life story of the informant' (Wengraf, 2004: 4). Therefore, I started with, 'I am interested in your life story: we could start with you telling me about the work of your parents?'. After this opening question, most participants needed few subsequent questions, then proceeding on their own to discuss their childhood, education, careers and families. Wengraf's (2004: 8) 'active listening' framed my presentation during interviews, as I avoided consoling or interrupting participants. In total, the study collected twenty-eight career history interviews, most recorded in the participants' family home. A consequence of this domestic setting was that after recording one-to-one interviews with fathers, sons and grandsons separately, active cross-generational family dialogues would often develop. These dialogues involved numerous family members discussing shared memories and practices with each other and myself and became part of the study's data set.

The analysis of this data followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis. Initially the two samples were analysed separately, with the idea of comparing the differences between work identities in the different generations. However, in the first three steps of performing my thematic analysis, instead of finding contrasting themes in the generations, I found men were discussing their lives in a very comparable manner. Therefore, I began to evaluate the samples together and found most men were continuing cross-generational themes to understand their working lives in relation to each other. The focus of this paper is the cross-generational theme 'getting-on outlook', that maps men's subjective feelings toward social mobility across their life courses and generational relationships with each other, as unpacked in the study's research data.

Table 1 the research samples

Pre-generation	First generation, former dockyard workers	Second generation, sons of former dockyard workers		Third generation, grandsons of former dockyard workers
James Wood, Engine fitter	Peter Wood, former Patternmaker and Woodwork teacher	Philip Wood, Shipping agent		Andrew Wood, PhDs student in music Technology
Frank Hermiston, Bus Conductor	Ben Hermiston, former Shipwright Recorder and retired Co-op worker	James Hermiston, Senior manager	Paul Hermiston, Senior management	Patrick Hermiston, Self-employed, valeting business
Bill Copper, unskilled Labourer, 1st generation (b)	Francis Copper, former Shipwright, Inspector of Shipwrights and Health and safety Adviser	Chris Copper, London police officer	Harry Copper, Electrical fitter	
Derek Plummer, Plummer	Henry Plummer, former Shipwright, Chief draughtsman and Ship surveyor			Anthony Cartwright, Tug skipper Robert Cartwright, Self-employed Gardening business
Graham Bekker, Delivery driver	Joe Bekker, former Engine fitter and Senior engineer	Ted Bekker Electrical supplier		
Bill Hooper, Lorry driver	Ryan Hooper, Engineer			
Adam Steele, Boiler marker 7th Generation (b)	Ben Steele, Former Engine fitter, Recorder and foreman and shop manager	Jack Steele Credit control	Gary Steele Hospital manager	
Les Cleaver, Milkman	Cameron Cleaver, Former Electrical Navel and Electrical engineer			
Jeff Draper Van Driver in the Dockyard	Dominic Draper Former Patternmaker, Duty Inspector			
Arnold Sexton, Tug skipper	Benedict Sexton, Shipwright, Chargehand and Social worker	Miles Sexton, Social worker		
Alan Naylor, Electrical tester	Jerry Naylor Shipwright, Chargehand and BT engineer and regional manager			
Colin Carrin, Accounts clerk	Darrel Carrin, Shipwright, draughtsman Ship surveyor	Noel Carrin, Carpenter		
Doug Wright, Army chef	William Wright, former Shipwright, Draughtsmen and HRM executive manager	Mark Wright, former army Mechanical engineer and current MD of his own IT subcontracting firm		

Research data

The men in this study showed a pattern of each generation developing a ‘getting-on outlook’, i.e. a consistent focus on upward mobility when making their career decisions. The term ‘getting-on’ arose directly from the men’s biographical interviews. For many, the expression ‘I did it to get-on’ became a reoccurring motif and ‘go to’ explanation in their interviews. In total, 24 out of 28 men used this expression with 22 directly using this to define their rationale for a particular career decision. This ‘getting-on outlook’ became a focus of the majority of

men and was communicated to each new generation. However, a 'getting-on outlook' was not passively assimilated; instead, this developed over time and through the negotiation of five stages. These stages will now be presented in generational order, first considering the former dockyard workers and then their sons and grandsons. Although the term 'getting-on' came from the expression men used, as a theme this was constructed by the researcher during analysis of the entire data set.

First generation: the former dockyard workers

Misgiving

This generation initially referred to 'getting-on' when they talked about taking the dockyard craft exam. Until the 1970s, passing the annual dockyard examination was the only means of starting an apprenticeship at a Royal Dockyard (Lunn and Day, 1999). These men did not decide to take this examination freely; instead, this resulted from the guidance or pressure of their fathers. Similar to Harden et al's (2012:3) notion of 'doing better', the men's fathers advised that a dockyard apprenticeship would act as a secure foundation for their sons' future working lives, since getting their trade indentures would lead to a job within the dockyard or be a '*desired qualification in other industries*' (Joe Bekker). Many of these men acknowledged feeling apathy and/or actively trying to react against their fathers' advice as discussed in the quotes below:

My father was a tug-skipper on the Thames, which was a damn good job. Personally, I would love to have served sometime on the river as a lighter man, but he wouldn't let me because I went to grammar school, so it wasn't a job for me. However, my younger brother went to a secondary modern school, so he went on the river and earned a bloody fortune (Benedict Sexton).

I remember saying to my father, 'Right I'm off in the navy'. 'Oh' he said, 'I shouldn't do that; go in the dockyard and do your apprenticeship and when you've got your indentures you can do what you like'. So I was persuaded and I don't begrudge him that. (Francis Copper).

The quotes above reflect the type of 'double messages' this generation heard from their fathers (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame 1997: 97). The push from their fathers was often qualified by other relational class dynamics as in Benedict's quote, where a dockyard trade was viewed as a suitable career for a grammar school boy. While fathers pushed their sons to achieve upward social mobility, they were circumspect on what trade they should aim for, as the dockyard exam was not pass/fail. As Henry Plummer described it: '*If you came first on the examination, you got to choose first from all the best trades, and if you were last then you would be asked last and have to take an apprenticeship with the more low status trades*'. Most men acknowledged deferring to the advice from dockyard tutors when choosing their trade apprenticeship, as echoed in the quote below:

*In the exam, I came half way down and the top trade were the electrical and the engineering department, so although I originally wanted to be an engine fitter, I had not passed the exam high enough, so the next best for **getting-on** was shipwright, which I took (Jerry Naylor).*

Like Jerry, most suggested it was at the point of choosing a trade that 'getting-on' became an overt consideration. In fact, only one of the men in this sample said that he rejected the instrumental advice from his dockyard tutors and did not choose the highest trade on offer. In their initial career decision to start an apprenticeship at the dockyard, most men portrayed 'getting-on' as an external value imposed on them by their fathers and dockyard tutors. However, in the process of becoming craft workers men began to interpret 'getting-on' as part of their own occupational status.

Interpretation

In the last subtheme, most men discussed feeling little personal control and identification with the process of choosing a trade. This lack of identification changed as they talked about becoming a craft worker. In these discussions, almost all talked of the quality and high status of their trade in comparison to the other trades in the dockyard. Although collective, men's trade identities seemed mediated by a 'getting-on outlook' as they linked the status of their trade to the promotions they could achieve:

As a shipwright, unlike other trades, you could work up and become constructor and then chief constructor in the big design offices (Henry Plummer).

Some thought the most academic lads took patternmaking, but if they wanted to leave the dockyard there was very little work. Whereas in the electrical trades I've known people and they've become managers of power stations (Cameron Cleaver).

The quotes above suggest that men's collective trade identities were a means to demarcate their status against the other trades and unskilled workers in the dockyard. The competition between trades for status in the dockyard also seemed to legitimise self-improvement as a collective value and part of their own career, instead of this being a value projected onto them by others. However, 'getting-on' did not seem to become an appropriated individual outlook until men moved away from their collective trade work.

Appropriation

The full appropriation of 'getting-on' as an outlook seemed to coincide with gaining promotion into non-trade positions, as managed by 10 out of 14. As Table 1 shows, the most common promotion was to become a Recorder or Measurer. The transition caused by this promotion marked a change in most men's sense of work identity. The men suggested that in these new roles they could no longer subscribe to collective trade identities but had to become individually autonomous workers:

You've got to become a Recorder, an all-seeing eye if you like, that can take whatever they chuck at you and bounce back, because you deal with everybody. You don't feel like an Engine Fitter anymore. No, you've got to be prepared for all the people even if you've been friendly with them before. If you're measuring their piece work they won't look upon you with the same eyes [laughs] (Joe Bekker).

Going up and down those dock steps keeps you very fit. But I thought to myself I won't be able to do this when I'm sixty, it'd kill me [laughs]. And to become a Measurer, you needed the knowledge from your trade to do that job, but you were

no longer a shipwright, you couldn't be, it wouldn't be fair to anyone (Ben Herminston).

As in the quotes above, economic mobility combined with factors such as physical ageing to inform men's search for promotion. Men also commonly described these new positions as the first step into self-motivated managerial roles in '*largely office-based work*' (Darrel Carrin). Thus, the desire to 'get-on' in the dockyard meant that men had to embrace adapting their work identities to new roles and work settings. Like Darrel, most became accustomed to working in white-collar middle class settings before leaving the dockyard. These men further emphasised that their ability to adapt to new roles within the dockyard was essential to how they managed redundancy when the dockyard closed:

I don't think my career outside the yard was that unusual. Perhaps the high level I got to was, but I think most had the same focus, on improving themselves and pushing for promotion... It's only the unskilled men that really struggled. But most of the tradesmen I meet, at the reunion, for example, seemed to do well work wise after the yard closed. It was an expectation of your background; it's a self-reliance thing actually (William Wright).

You were taught to be that way to push yourself, to act on your own...initiative so when it came to finding work after I used that and it seemed to help..., also my second daughter being born, pushed me to move up and get more money. I got promoted into management at National Telecom, it was an interesting job I enjoyed it as much as working in the dockyard ... I got four promotions and the money was good (Jerry Naylor).

Akin to Waters' (1999) research, most of the men felt that 'self-improvement' was part of their ethos as dockyard craft workers. This ethos of 'self-improvement' then enabled and motivated the men in this study to 'get-on' in their careers beyond the dockyard. These men did not just use 'getting-on' to inform their own career decisions; 'getting-on' also became the central value they promoted to their children, as discussed in the next theme transmission.

Transmission

In the same manner as their own fathers a generation before, most men impressed on their own sons the virtues of job security and upward mobility. This generation's parental advice again illustrated the active expectation placed on sons to 'make something of what was passed on to him' (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame 1997:93). The quotes below reflect how this generation discouraged their sons from going into physical trade work and instead encouraged them to 'get-on' by staying in education and going into white-collar jobs.

Well me and my wife always used to push, sorry, impress, the importance of education on James and Paul, you know, go along to parents evening, make sure they did homework, things like reading, to instil a sense of discipline and development... I don't know if we had a particular career in mind but one with a more predictable wage and which would give them room, space to develop, move up so to speak. I think I suggested a manager at one of the local shipping companies, because Ron four doors down did that, but that didn't go down very well. Paul just wanted to get out at sea, but James seemed to take some of what I said on board [laughs] (Ben Hermiston).

We really wanted him to stay on, do his O, sorry A levels, because he was smart... I thought that would be best for him, to work in an office,...he wasn't having it though, no, he was full of big ideas, restless really, 'wanted to start living' as he said to me...Jane thought I was partly to blame, because we spent so much time fixing stuff, like engines together (Joe Bekker).

Ben and Joe's quotes illustrate how 'getting-on' evolved for this generation as instead of suggesting their son's replicate the type of trade work they did they pushed education as the path to 'getting-on' for their sons as they believed this would enable them to get a white-collar job. The men's accounts seem consistent with Harden et al (2012:3) but suggest 'doing better' extended beyond childhood and became a consistent outlook used throughout men's working lives. However, as Joe's wife suggested to him, this again reflected a 'double message', as, while he told this son to move into white-collar work, the 'practices' (Bourdieu 2000) they performed '*fixing stuff, like engines together*' validated manual work. The men also suggested that their advice to 'get-on' was not passively taken on by their sons, a misgiving confirmed in the interviews with the next generation.

Second and third generations: sons and grandsons

Misgiving

The last subtheme illustrated that the former dockyard workers commonly push their sons to 'get-on' by advocating they stay in education and aim for white-collar occupations. Although the former dockyard workers had felt some misgiving for the career advice their parents gave, this generation had a more pronounced reaction. The most common reason the men's sons gave for reacting against their fathers' advice was that they had plans to shape their working lives around a non-school interest.

Always knew I wanted to be in the Merchant Navy, so although I was doing well at school, I wanted out... No mum and dad weren't happy, they wanted me to stay on and get a stable, reliable job... dad tried to appease me by suggesting an office job, at, Marcus and son shipping company, but I wasn't having it, it was being at sea, that adventure I wanted (Paul Hermiston).

Like Paul, many in this sample talked of reacting against their fathers' 'getting-on outlook' of staying in education and going into low risk white-collar employment. This was not the case for all, but in total 10 of 14 men's working lives began between the ages of 16 to 18 without completing qualifications above GCSEs. This reaction was epitomised in the intergenerational dialogue of Francis Copper and son, Chris Copper, below:

Francis: He was a bit short-tempered, you had to be careful what you said, 'cause he'd flare up, he's settled down now. But I advised get your 'O' levels, and thought working at a Bank might be good for him because he went to the mathematical school at Rochester. However, when he got to his fifth year he said, 'I'm not stopping on any longer'. I said 'well you're not packing up until you get a job'. But that backfired a bit at the time because he did get a job didn't you?

Chris: That's right, I didn't want to follow dad's advice, to get my 'O' levels, go in a Bank and be a manager, it didn't appeal to me. I also didn't really want to work in the same place as dad, so I ended up starting an apprenticeship in Rochester for four years.

This common early exit from education could suggest a pattern of class reproduction. However, most saw this choice as an active reaction against their fathers' advice as shown in the reasons men gave for leaving education. Paul cited 'adventure', Anthony being 'trapped', Chris feeling 'caged'. Thus, in their first career decisions, these men's major focus seemed to be a desire for their own independence. The desire for independence reflects the 'dual tension' that Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) discuss in contrast to passive reproduction, as these men wanted to establish their own agency and individuality. While neither fathers nor sons desired occupational reproduction, the outcome of young men's reaction in terms of gendered employment norms at this stage hardly rejected their working class habitus (Bourdieu 2000). However, in these men's longer biographical accounts, we see that this reaction at the transition from school to employment was not the end of these men's 'agentic negotiation' with employment or a 'getting-on outlook', as the next stage explores.

Internalisation

The men who participated in this study seemed to come around to a 'getting-on outlook' as their careers and wider lives matured. Most discussed that, between 25 and 35, their outlook to work changed from seeking gratification in the short term to taking a long-term perspective on their career. The reasons men cited for this change in perspective was a combination of starting a family, being in a long-term relationship and/or becoming a house owner. Most felt these factors made it their responsibility to stay in secure employment:

When I got married, in my thirties, I wanted career stability, I had a mortgage at the time and, and a dog and kid and everything else that costs money... and it was steady money (Paul Hermiston).

Having kids was an experience...changed the way I thought. Almost overnight, think it does for a lot; I've spoken about it with Gary he agrees, [his brother] it's the way you make decisions. You think: 'right my choices have to be careful now, make a bad one and the kids will suffer', couldn't have that! It used to play on my mind 'a lot' (Jack Steele).

Like Paul, many stopped calling their work 'a job' and started using 'career' during this period. The term career seemed to symbolise that they no longer viewed their work as short-term

jobs but instead as a long-term commitment. Whilst 'getting-on' had initially seemed confining, it now seemed a necessity for managing their long-term commitments. In this way, these men's attitudes to 'getting-on' seemed to be mediated by their life and career stage. Chris Copper, who in the last subtheme had called office work a 'cage' and had in his early career worked across the world as an engine fitter, expressed this change in clear terms:

Why did I stop, well I had a young family. I came home from Mexico had brown skin and white hair from the sun, my little boy only 3 at the time ran away from me, he didn't recognise me. That was the point I knew, that I needed to come home and work over here again. At that stage, I wanted job security, so I thought police, it's a pretty steady career so for job security, for my family, I decided to retrain as a policeman. My friends said, I don't know how you deal with all those sights but it is part of your job, 'and you get-on'... I didn't go out socially much, as I wanted to be at home with the family or doing practical stuff in the garage on the car with my dad.

Like Chris, after having children most men talked of spending their social time with their families. In this period, the family seemed to become the men's primary focus and source of emotional reinforcement. The stress men placed on the responsibilities they had to their own young families, seemed to justify their upward career trajectories in two ways. First, this validated their upward mobility as in keeping with the gendered 'norm' that, as men, they should be the economic protectors of their families (Skeggs, 1997). Second, this allowed them to frame their career decisions as taken to meet their own life responsibilities, instead of succumbing to their fathers' life views. Therefore, taking ownership of a 'getting-on outlook', as Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) suggest, allowed these men to understand their career mobility as both a personal achievement and in keeping with their family backgrounds. However, this did not seem to be the end of this process, as the links that these men made between their careers and their working class family values did not appear to reduce all feelings of class dislocation (Friedman, 2014 Skeggs, 1997 Sennett and Cobbs, 1977). Instead, most also felt the need to have these links recognised by their fathers or grandfathers. This paper terms this generation's effort to have their achieved status validated as in harmony with their family background 'authentication', as is unpacked next.

Authentication

The outcome of embracing their families' values of self-improvement was that men's lives became more distant from their working-class backgrounds. A 'getting-on outlook' could therefore appear exclusively as a means to justify an individualistic pursuit of social mobility (Skeggs, 1997; Sennett and Cobbs, 1977). But 'authentication' illustrates the other value most talked about, the desire to retain belonging to their family lineage. The term 'authentication' was chosen to indicate 'a process' of seeking to have one's sense of self authenticated by one's fathers and grandfathers. This is not used as a normative suggestion that working-class experiences are innately more authentic. The most common practice these men used to retain a link to their working-class background was the development of intergenerational DIY projects. For example, Darrel and son Noel Carrin showed me the architectural drawings and the two-storey extension they had designed and built together. Similarly, Dominic Draper proudly showed me his hand-carved bespoke wooden kitchen. These non-paid DIY projects seemed useful as a practice (Bourdieu 2000) as this embodied the men's continued commitment to working class values of 'collective labour' and the integrity of performing and producing 'manual' craftwork. This practice seemed to allow sons and grandsons to reduce relational class conflict as DIY acted as a demonstration that their economic mobility had not resulted in them becoming 'pretentious' or 'individualistic' members of the middle class, (unlike in Skeggs, 1997; Sennett and Cobbs, 1977). As Chris Copper reflected, '*We've always been a hands-on, practical people; if I didn't know how to do it, I'd ask dad*'. This quote reflects how the practice of DIY provided a bridge to the families collective working class values and as a result reduced a 'habitus clivè' (Friedman, 2016) from developing between the generations (for more detail on men's DIY project see Ackers 2018). The most sophisticated instances of 'authentication' were made by the two men who went to university. Actively encouraged by their parents to take an academic route, both talked of this educational route seeming '*alien*' or '*strange*' to their parents:

Grammar school was strange. I mean my dad was dead positive. He went to grammar himself, but yes at first I just felt a little cut off. People would put you on a pedestal, I think they were trying to be nice, but it made me feel like they didn't consider me one of them. I think my dad saw it, which helped. (Mike Sextons).

It was an alien thing to them, they didn't know anything about it, when they came up to see me they tried their utmost to be encouraging, but I could just feel the underlying awkwardness they felt, and each time we walked past someone in posh clothing or with funny hair, I felt like saying that's not what I'm like'. (Andrew Wood)

These men's recollection had affinity with the 'social limbo' that Friedman (2016: 132) describes moving into middle class fields causes working class people. However, both men discussed the conscious effort they made, as their careers developed, to bridge this divide through having their family recognise their work as meaningful and no longer 'alien'. For Mike, 'authentication' was discussed in the process of advising his father to retrain as a social worker. His father Benedict, like five other men, suffered a period of having four different jobs in eight years after the dockyard closed, a period he recalled as being '*the most difficult time in his working life*'. However, on the advice of his son specifically, he changed the direction of his career and began retraining as a social worker. Mike discussed how this experience removed his feelings of dislocation as it allowed him to feel his career was considered significant to his family: '*It was really good as it gave us common ground so we would talk on the phone most days*'. In comparison, Andrew still felt that having his career in soundscape and music technology authenticated was a work in progress. This divide was partly confirmed by his grandfather who said: '*Well the idea of going to a rave, I think it's horrendous. Well my grandson doesn't, he works with all the electronic music*'. This quote shows how the process of 'authentication' still seemed mediated by habitus (Bourdieu 2000), as the practices used to establish 'equivalents' seem classed. While manual practices like DIY were engaged with by both generations, new and potentially middle class practices, like listening to electronic soundscapes, were misunderstood and rejected. However, Andrew had a plan to deal with this:

The link between music and carpentry that still seems alien to him. But I have a plan to make a piece of music by going to his workshop and recording sounds of tools being used and create a soundscape that draws this association (Andrew Wood).

University seemed to create tensions like those characterised by a 'habitus clivé' (Friedman, 2016). However, after this difficult juncture, we see that both men's feelings of class dislocation were reduced by having their careers recognised as part of their families' working histories. Whilst not completely resolved, these men's careers seemed to no longer be a growing site of generational dislocation. Similar to Holdworth's (2007:67) research on women men's sense of class dislocation did not seem fixed as men also continued to negotiate belonging to their backgrounds across their life course and changing relationships together. Overall, men's accounts illustrate how a 'getting-on outlook' developed across the life course and took a number of stages to become a personal value for both samples of men. This value showed continuity across the generations, and illustrated that men felt as individuals they had made, as Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997: 93) suggested, 'something of what has been passed on to' them. However, 'authentication' also illustrated the desire of these men to have 'what they had made of themselves' recognised by their fathers and grandfathers as this enabled them to overcome feelings of dislocation and embed their achieved status as in keeping with their families' background.

Conclusion

This study's data illustrates how men's experience of social mobility was shaped by their generational relationships and working class backgrounds. But, as Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) suggest, to feel they had done justice to their backgrounds, these men had to use their own active agency to 'get-on' and move up the occupational ladder. While the historical context, social class and familial expectations were different, the development of a 'getting-on outlook' showed a degree of symmetry across the life course of the different generations. As young men making their initial career decisions, most recalled dissatisfaction with their parents' 'getting-on outlook'. However, in their mid-careers, the generations similarly claimed 'getting-on' as a rationale for their own careers and lives. Furthermore, each generation wished to establish their own individual ownership of this outlook. Finally, these men took steps to embed their working values as in keeping with their working-class backgrounds through having their fathers or grandfathers 'authenticate' their careers.

The 'getting-on outlook' developed by the men in this study demonstrates an in-depth and nuanced relationship with social mobility. On the surface, all considered social mobility

desirable and none wished for their sons to reproduce them in occupational terms. If filling out a mobility social survey like those used by Goldthorpe (1980), this would perhaps be the only insight these men gave. However, this would not represent the negotiation that social mobility occupied in these men's lives, as each generation had to navigate their changing relational class position (Skeggs, 1997; Sennett and Cobbs, 1977) and reconcile often-conflictual generational messages (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, 1997). Nor was social mobility an exclusively positive experience, as reflected by the men who went to university and were viewed as 'alien' by their parents and wider social background (Bourdieu 2000). This study, therefore, supports Friedman's (2014: 354) argument that people's experience of social mobility cannot be reduced to 'objective' markers, such as the occupational status they achieve. Instead, to understand the nature of mobility in society, we need more qualitative accounts of how people negotiate this as a process across their lives and in interaction with their family backgrounds (Friedman, 2014; Bertaux & Thompson 2017). Therefore, this paper advances two contributions to developing a framework and concepts that account for the subjective experience of social mobility.

First, reengaging with Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997) 'dual tension' is advanced, as this gives a means to frame the internal tension people experience in the process of upward social mobility. While Friedman (2016) 'habitus clivé' captures the unconscious impact that people's ascribed class has on their experience of social mobility, this study suggests the anxiety men felt about social mobility was also drawn from internalising the generational pressure to improve their family's occupational position. Therefore, the conscious, generational negotiation of individual's sense of belonging also needs to be accounted for in a social mobility framework. This 'dual tension' complements habitus (Bourdieu, 2000) by framing the mobility experience as a negotiation between habitus and individuals agentic and generational deliberations on social mobility. However, while Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame (1997: 93) research suggests men had to 'make something of what has passed on' to them to reconcile this 'dual tension', this study suggests this process did not end here. Instead, men also wanted their fathers and grandfathers to recognise the value of their careers to fully reconcile this 'dual tension'.

Therefore, the second contribution this paper makes is to advance the concept of 'authentication'. 'Authentication' labels the process of the younger generation striving to embed their lived experience of social mobility as a meaningful extension of their family values. To do this, sons invested in familial practices and discourses with the aim that their fathers and grandfathers would recognise and validate the integrity and continuity of their working values with those of their own. 'Authentication' illustrates the significance of Bourdieu (2000), as this process was constructed through the continued performance of intergenerational 'practices'. Habitus was also apparent in the practices in which the older generation engaged: while DIY was approved, newer and potentially middle class practices were rejected. 'Authentication' suggests that feelings of dislocation can be actively reduced through generational interaction (Holdworth 2007:67), since collective intergenerational practices allowed younger men to feel that their achieved status was authenticated by their fathers and grandfathers and enabled men to reconcile their own 'dual tension'.

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