

Lower middle class mobility in England, 1839-1914

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— INTRODUCTION

The lower middle class plays a very specific role in the process of social mobility, whether of a career or an intergenerational type. It is available for those seeking to rise out of the working class, whether into white collar occupations by means of a fairly rudimentary education, or by small capital accumulation into the petty bourgeoisie. The changing structure of the lower middle class clearly signifies changing mobility prospects for the working class. The real mobility prospects were offered through salaried non-manual employment. Where did this growing stratum come from? From what we know of lower middle class attitudes, their aspirant but not desperate tone, upward mobility seems more likely. Yet, in reality, we know virtually nothing about occupational recruitment in this period¹.

Unlike their cousins in sociology British historians have lagged behind in the field of mobility research. In contrast to the situation in America, and the expanding volume of work on the continent of Europe throughout the 1980s, there has,

1 - Crossick (G.), « The Emergence of the Lower Middle Class in Britain : A Discussion », G. Crossick (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain* (London : Croom Helm, 1977), p. 35.

2 - For a summary of work carried out in America and Europe, see Hartmut Kaelble : *Social Mobility in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Europe and America in Comparative Perspective*, (Leamington : Berg, 1985).

3 - The origins of the debate is to be found with Engels and Lenin. It was revived by Eric Hobsbawm's article, « The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth Century Britain » in his *Labouring Men* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964). Data on the social mobility of this stratum appear in : Geoffrey Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society* (London, Croom Helm, 1978) ; R.Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976) ; Roger Penn, *Skilled Workers in the Class Structure* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985). Various other studies have produced limited amounts of localised data. See, for example, John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974) ; B. Preston, « Occupations of Father and Son in Mid-Victorian England », *Geographical Papers, Reading University, Department of Geography*, (1977).

until recently, been no attempt at a systematic investigation into the nature and extent of occupational and social mobility over the long period of British industrialisation².

What hard evidence we do have about British mobility patterns comes mainly from patchy and incidental treatments which have appeared as the by-products of research into other subjects and themes. Reflecting the former predominance of 'labour history' within the wider field of British economic and social history, the most productive area of research in this sense has been that associated with the « labour aristocracy » debate³. Those interested in this aspect of the occupational and social relations of the under-researched British lower middle class have largely been left to speculate and hypothesise in the manner of its principal historian, above.

Social mobility figures prominently in accounts of the make-up, characteristics, and outlook of the lower middle class. Most writing on this stratum stresses its relative instability and lack of cohesiveness, and relates this to a poor potential for class formation, organisation and action⁴. On the one hand there is the suggestion that it performed a mediating « safety valve » role in providing a vehicle for aspirant workers and their children⁵. But the obverse of this function was its own social heterogeneity. As Crossick and Haupt observed in the editorial introduction to their collection of essays on the nineteenth-century European *petite bourgeoisie*.

The high rate of social mobility – or at least instability – which research indicates for this group must also have served to hinder the development of anything comparable with common class relationships. It is clear that, in comparison with other classes, a greater proportion of the *petite bourgeoisie* was born in another

class ; a greater proportion spent only a period of their lives as master craftsmen or shopkeepers ; and a greater proportion sent their children, willingly or not, into other trades and, more importantly, other classes⁶.

Links are then made between instability, mentality and behaviour.⁷ In nineteenth-century Britain the characteristic mixture of aspiration and anxiety which attended the stratum's « limbo » status worked, argues Crossick, « to reinforce a faith in rational competitive individualism, and with it a view of the economic order that ascribed symbolic moral importance to the free enterprise system »⁸.

The end of the nineteenth century brought a heightening of anxiety for both *petit bourgeois* and white collar elements in Britain, as their inherent market weaknesses were exposed. The persistent ideology of personal mobility which was structured into salaried white collar work was compromised by competition from below, oversupply from within, and the closing off of opportunities for advancement⁹. Yet the alternatives, given the average clerk's lack of skill and strength, were too dire to contemplate. At the same time *petit bourgeois* parents, with growing doubts about the viability and desirability of passing on businesses, turned increasingly to the white collar sector as a means of solving the perpetual problem of maintaining status between the generations, and apparently with some success¹⁰.

Nevertheless the individualistic values and ideology of the British lower middle class seems not to have shifted with the increasingly unfavourable times. And at this point we are returned, by way of part explanation, to mobility, and the fact that there were always new recruits who looked upon their new found position in terms of hope rather than despair¹¹.

The work from which this paper is drawn represents the first British response to the appeal for more historical research on the relationship between social mobility and class¹². Quite correctly that appeal stresses that the measurement of mobility should not be considered in isolation from its consequences¹³. This, however, is a tall order for a conference paper. Here the starting point will be the assertion that the economic and social situation of the lower middle class has too often been simply deduced from its political behaviour¹⁴. Abstracting the experience of the lower middle class, the rather more modest aim of this article is to report some of the principal findings of the first attempt to plot the terrain of occupational and social mobility in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century England.

DATA

Sociological research generates its evidence for both « dimensions » of social mobility – inter- and intragenerational – through the sample survey conducted by means of a taped interview or a questionnaire. Historians, however, cannot interrogate their witnesses in such a manner, and must turn instead to sets of data often collected for quite different purposes. In the study from which this paper comes two principal data sources have been employed. Evidence of inter-generational mobility, upon which most attention has focussed, has been generated from marriage registers, whilst autobiographical material has been used to gain an insight into the nature and processes of career mobility. Here I shall concentrate on inter-generational mobility. The 1836 Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act required that marriage registers should record the occupations of

the partners and their parents. Each wedding thus provided a snapshot of occupational movement between the generations, as well as associated information on residence, age and literacy¹⁵. A sample of 10 000 entries was taken from ten Registration Districts in England between 1839 and 1914 (see figure 1).

The concept of « mobility » presupposes the existence of categories between which movement can take place, and in this case the raw material consists of occupations of the groom, his father and his father-in-law (the occupation of the bride was rarely recorded). However, the monitoring of transitions between the thousands of job titles thrown up by the registers can only have limited meaning without some grouping of occupational information which takes account of broader characteristics of the economy and society under consideration.

For nineteenth-century English society it seemed desirable to adopt a system of categorisation which reflects the widespread use of the language of class¹⁶. Yet the process of categorisation is far from straightforward as the occupational definitions entered in the Registers are laconic. They rarely identify the precise market positions of the participants, and this has important implications when the focus of attention is the lower middle class. In particular it inhibits the isolation of small producers from the mass of tradesmen¹⁷, whilst « internally » it is usually impossible to differentiate between larger and smaller operators, or, for example, between railway clerks at the bottom of the clerical scale and bank clerks towards the top¹⁸.

In the circumstances the most satisfactory solution was found to be the Registrar General's occupational and social classification scheme for the 1951 census¹⁹. Here tens of thousands of job titles are organised into occupational

The first attempt to approach mobility directly was Michael Sanderson's, « Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England », *Past and Present*, 56 (1972).

4 - On social mobility and demographic class formation see, A. Giddens, *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, London, Hutchinson, 1973.

5 - Crossick (G), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain...*, *op.cit.*, p. 37. This was less the case in Britain, he suggests, at least among the ranks of tradesmen, whose craft pride produced contempt « for the puny and parasitic clerks ».

The idea appears in several of Marx's writings. See his comments on the defusing fluidity of American society. Karl Marx, « The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte », in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol.1, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, p. 255 ; « Wages, Prices and Profit », *Selected Works*, p.444. ; his letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, 5th March, 1852, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1963, pp. 60-66. See also the famous passage ending, « The more a ruling class is

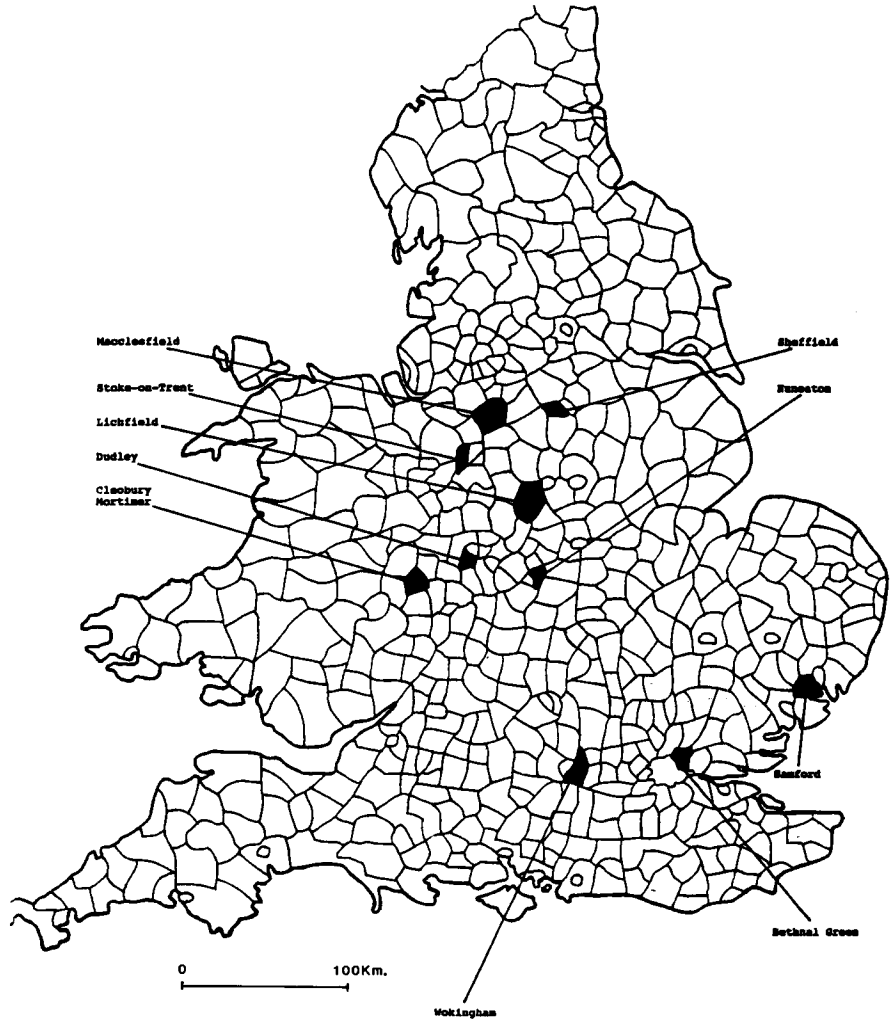
able to assimilate the foremost minds of a ruled class, the more stable and dangerous becomes its rule », Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959, p. 587.

6 - Crossick (G.) & Haupt (H.G.), « Shopkeepers, master artisans and the historian : the petite bourgeoisie in comparative focus », in their (eds.) *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London : Methuen, 1984), p. 7.

7 - « The hope of being able reach the highest levels of the social hierarchy, and the fear of sinking back to a lower level, were the main motives determining the behaviour of members of the middle classes (class moyennes) ». Kurgan-Van Hentenryk (G.), « A forgotten class : the petite bourgeoisie in Belgium, 1850-1914 », in Crossick and Haupt (eds.), p.124.

8 - Crossick (G.), « The petite bourgeoisie in nineteenth century Britain : the urban and liberal case », in Crossick and Haupt (eds.), p. 78.

Figure 1
Registration districts sampled, 1839-1914



groups and orders, and then additionally coded into one of five broad-based classes²⁰. These divide the non-manual middle and upper class between professional/higher and « intermediate » occupations – classes I and II – and the manual working class into skilled, partly skilled or unskilled occupations – classes III, IV and V. The fit between the 1951 and nineteenth century worlds is not perfect, but there are surprisingly few anomalies, and the task of making minor adjustments to the coding pales into insignificance in the face of the advantages of a ready-made, comprehensive, and machine readable system.

ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS, 1839-1914

a. Cross sample perspectives

Table 1 is an « outflow » matrix showing the distribution of grooms by class and occupational category across the sample period. The experience of those across the whole of the spectrum is presented in order to contextualise that of the lower middle class. Following the Registrar General's schema, farming has been included in class II, but attention will focus on its business and white collar components. The former is comprised mainly of shopkeepers, but includes merchants and wholesalers, manufacturers and small masters, publicans and innkeepers. The bulk of the latter are undefined clerks, and these are supplemented by a collection of commercial travellers, insurance agents, managers and lower or quasi professionals.

The figures confirm the comparative instability of these two categories, and the free flow of their offspring into working class. Whilst their rates of father-son

continuity compare favourably with the surprisingly mobile « elite »²¹, the latter's sons rarely suffered the ignominy of a decline into manual company. In either case at least half of those born into lower-middle-class homes were destined to fall across the manual/non-manual divide, although by way of qualification it must be noted that a substantial proportion of the downwardly mobile were able to shore up in the « craft »²² category, and amongst these there must have been some who effectively moved « laterally » into small masterships. Nevertheless, as many as one in five suffered a demotion which took them beyond even what is a very broad skilled working class, and the contrast with the miniscule chances of achieving upward mobility out of the class is stark. The lateral movement that we can see does not suggest especially close relationships with the rest of the class. Rates of inter-generational stability were two to three times as strong by comparison.

The petite bourgeoisie look to have been better placed to protect their sons from a decline in status, but by facilitating continuity within the small business milieu rather than intra-class or upward mobility. One assumes that this reflects the easier transferability of property or finance above cultural capital, and the slow growth of credentialism and bureaucratic recruitment amongst elements of the white collar sector²³.

The outcome of this distribution in terms of the composition of the « new » generation is shown in Table 2, and here there is a rather larger disparity in the comparative degree of self-recruitment achieved by the petit bourgeois and white collar categories. Just one fifth of the latter were internally recruited, whilst twice as many businessmen grooms were themselves the sons of businessmen. The suspicion here must be that this

9 - Crossick (G.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 20-35. In his work on the career structures of Lloyds Bank employees, Mike Savage argues that the crisis in managerial recruitment from clerical grades was solved by the use of female labour in routine grades which freed male staff for early promotion : Savage (M.), « Career Structures and Managerial Hierarchies : The Case of Lloyds Bank 1870-1950 », in P. Friedson (ed.), *Managerial Hierarchies in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

10 - Crossick (G.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 35-36 ; (1978), pp. 115-16 ; « The petite bourgeoisie... », *op.cit.*, pp. 79-80.

11 - Crossick (G.), « The petite bourgeoisie... », *op.cit.*, p.81. See also Bechhofer (F.) & Elliott (B.), « Persistence and Change : the petite bourgeoisie in industrial society », *Archives européennes de sociologie*, 17, 1976, p. 91.

12 - Miles (A.), *Occupational and Social Mobility in England, 1839-1914*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Keele, 1992. Miles (A.) & Vincent (D.), « A Land of « Boundless Opportunity » ? Mobility and Stability in Nineteenth-Century England », in S. Dex (ed.), *Life and Work History Analyses: Qualitative and Quantitative Developments*, Sociological Review Monograph, 37, London, Routledge, 1991.

13 - Crossick (G.) & Haupt (H.G.), *Shopkeepers...*, op.cit., p. 8.

14 - *Ibid.*, p. 6.

15 - For a full description of the procedures involved in collecting the marriage register data see, David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture. England 1750-1914*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989. The autobiographical evidence comes from a collection of over one thousand texts, abstracts of which appear in the first volume of J. Burnett, D. Vincent & D. Mayall's, *The Autobiography of the Working Class*, Brighton, Harvester, 1984. A sub-sample of one hundred texts was taken and subjected to closer reading, but these were chosen for

Table 1 : Class/Occupational Distribution of Grooms by Class/Occupation of Father, 1839-1914 (percentage, rounded, by row)

Father's Class/Occupational Category	Son's Class/Occupational Category													n
	I			II			III			IV	V	%		
	Ind	Pro	Bus	Whc	Fm	Craft	Fac	Min	Serv					
I	28 11	13 34	12 11	22 16	3 2	9 5	5 9	1 0	0 3	5 4	3 5	1.1 1.0	108 100	
II	1 1 1	2 3 .6	36 10 11	9 30 3	3 2 4.1	20 18 10	7 11 3	2 3 3	3 3 2	10 14 13	7 7 12	6.7 2.7 8.0	679 271 815	
III	.2 .2 .1	.1 0 .6	4 3 4	3 4 5	1 .2 .6	54 11 6 18	9 55 8 12	4 6 70 6	2 2 1 27	12 11 5 13	11 7 8 16	23.2 9.4 7.8 1.6	2367 959 794 168	
IV	.4	0	3	3	1	15	10	6	4	46	13	11.6	1188	
V		0	1	.7	.8	9	4	7	2	14	62	27.0	2759	
%	.7	.8	5.8	3.8	4.2	21.1	11.5	9.9	2.4	15.6	24.0			
n	73	83	593	386	428	2154	1178	1015	250	1595	2455		10210	

Key:

- Class I middle / upper class
- Class II lower middle class
- Class III skilled working class
- Class IV semi-skilled working class
- Class V unskilled working class

Table 2: Class/Occupational Composition of Grooms by Class/Occupation of Father, 1839-1914 (percentage, rounded, by column)

Father's Class/Occupational Category	Son's Class/Occupational Category													n	
	I			II				III				IV	V		%
	Ind	Pro	Bus	Whc	Fm	Craft	Fac	Min	Serv						
I	41	17	2	6	.7	.5	.4	.1	0	.3	.1	1.1	108		
	15	41	2	4	.5	.2	.8	0	1	.3	.2	1.0	100		
II	11	19	41	16	4	6	4	2	7	5	2	6.7	680		
	4	10	4	21	1	2	3	.7	3	2	.7	2.7	272		
	11	6	15	7	78	4	2	3	7	7	4	8.0	815		
III	7	4	16	16	6	59	19	10	16	17	10	23.2	2367		
	3	1	5	10	.5	5	45	6	6	7	3	9.4	959		
	1	0	2	3	.2	2	5	54	4	2	3	7.8	794		
	0	1	.7	2	.2	1	2	1	18	1	1	1.6	168		
IV	7	0	6	10	3	8	10	6	17	34	7	11.6	1188		
V	0	1	6	5	5	11	10	18	20	25	70	27.0	2759		
%	.7	.8	5.8	3.8	4.2	21.1	11.5	9.9	2.4	15.6	24.0				
n	73	83	593	386	428	2154	1178	1015	250	1595	2455		10210		

Key: - middle / upper class
 - lower middle class
 - skilled working class
 - semi-skilled working class
 - unskilled working class

their comprehensiveness and occupational spread, and do not illuminate lower-middle class experience specifically. Career mobility is currently the subject of an ESRC-funded project, « Pathways and Prospects : The Emergence of the Modern Bureaucratic Career, 1875-1945 », Directors : Andrew Miles, Michael Savage and David Vincent, Keele Life Histories Centre, University of Keele.

16 - See Asa Briggs, « The Language of Class in Early Nineteenth-Century England », in Asa Briggs & John Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History*, London, Macmillan, 1967.

17 - It may be that, as in nineteenth-century Marseille, the lack of any clear distinction in the registers marking off proprietors from wage earners was itself an indication of how masters and journeymen viewed the difference between them. Sewell (W.H. Jr.), *Structure and Mobility. The Men and Women of Marseille, 1820-1870*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.49. See also Crossick's comments on the transition from wage-earner to small master not necessarily being experienced as upward mobility : Crossick (1978), p.114 ; Crossick (G.), « The petite bourgeoisie... », *op. cit.*, p.86.

18 - See G.L. Anderson, « The Social Economy of Late Victorian Clerks », in Crossick (G.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain...*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

19 - *Census 1951, Classification of Occupations* (H.M.S.O., 1955). See W.A. Armstrong, « The Use of Information about Occupation », in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972, for further discussion of the suitability of this classification.

20 - For a justification of using occupation as an indicator of class see G. Payne, *Mobility and Change in Modern Society*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1987, chapter 2. Citing Gosta Carlsson, *Social Mobility and Class Structure* (Lund, Sweden, 1958), Themstrom writes : « *The historical study of mobility requires the use of an objective criteria of social status. The most convenient of these is occupation. Occupation may be only one variable in a comprehensive theory of class, but it is the variable which includes more, which sets more limits on the other variables than any other criterion of status* ». Themstrom (S.), *The Other Bostonians. Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis 1880-1970*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1973, pp. 258-25.

reflects an age effect, the marriage register evidence being biased towards youth²⁴. The clerical world was, after all, one that could be entered directly, whereas businesses would normally take more time to build up or to inherit. However, analysis of the much smaller sub-sample of marriages involving grooms who were over thirty suggests this has more to do with the changing profiles of these occupational categories within the overall division of labour over time, there being evidence of a degree of counter mobility amongst both business and white collar sectors²⁵.

As they stand the figures show that the degree of broad status reproduction within the petite bourgeoisie was quite high at 64 per cent. In both this regard and in the matter of direct occupational recruitment it compared quite favourably with several other classes and categories. Set against this, however, is the fact that a majority of recruits were outsiders, and almost two-thirds of these were working class in origin.

Yet if the make-up of the nineteenth-century petite bourgeoisie was socially diverse, the white collar world was positively « cosmopolitan » by comparison. One in ten white collar workers had suffered demotion from the ranks of the elite, and almost half were from working class backgrounds. This heterogeneity extended to its relationship with the rest of the lower middle class. Rates of recruitment from the petite bourgeoisie were not that much lower than rates of self-recruitment. Comparing the outflow and inflow analyses as a whole it can be seen that the contingent of upwardly mobile workers' sons reaching lower-middle-class destinations affected the composition of their new « home » far more than their leaving compromised the stability of the wider social formation they had left behind. In total just 6 per cent of working

class sons had become upwardly mobile by the time they came to take a bride²⁶. This manual stability was complemented by formidable cohesion, ninety per cent of working class grooms being second generation men.

As far, then, as its wider role in the process of social mobility is concerned, the lower middle class does not seem to have offered very favourable odds as an escape route for frustrated working class children. More significant for relieving social pressures, perhaps, was the degree of movement permitted inside the class, where a third or more of the sons of semi and unskilled workers could expect to experience a degree of status enhancement, and where those stable amongst the higher eschelons of the class had to balance their own good fortune against the fate of the one in five of their peer group who had not been quite so lucky.

The lower middle class appears to have been of more significance as a resting place for those unable to benefit, at least immediately, from more privileged backgrounds. Roughly one in three class I sons made this journey. The fact that even the independent sector sent more sons into the white collar sector than into business, and this in spite of their being more business than white collar opportunities in the division of labour, suggests the use of such employments as clerking as temporary white collar « apprenticeships », before promotion within family enterprises or the inheritance of property and capital. Amongst those mobile away from the professions further refinement of the data shows a clear pathway existing between higher and lower professions.

b. Context

Isolating « an » let alone « the » urban lower middle class from the marriage data

is not a straightforward task. The ten registration districts were originally chosen for their contrasting economic and social characteristics. But because these administrative units, which were co-existent with poor law unions, were often extensive areas, covering a range of local economies, few can be counted as pristinely « urban » or « rural », « industrial » or « agricultural ». Analysis of the sample as a whole has proceeded on the basis of grouping the ten areas according to their predominant characteristics. But for the purposes of this paper the districts have been re-grouped into just two : a « more » and a « less » urban category. The former includes the thoroughly commercial and industrial area of Bethnal Green in East London, the metal-working districts of Dudley in the West Midlands and Sheffield, and Stoke-on-Trent, famous for its virtual monopoly of the British pottery industry. The latter category combines, in Lichfield and Macclesfield, established commercial and industrial centres surrounded by large rural hinterlands ; in Wokingham and Nuneaton, mixed urban/rural areas with growing centres, themselves increasingly satellites to larger towns ; and in Clebury Mortimer and Samford, two predominantly rural and small village communities.

Table 3 indicates that there was less security for the lower middle class in the urban environment, this despite the fact that towns and cities seem to have facilitated slightly more white collar stability. Sons from all parts of the class were more likely to become downwardly mobile here than in the less urbanised context where there was more scope for both lateral and upward movement.

As clear as the variations are, however, what is perhaps more striking about these profiles is their essential similarity. The difference in the rates of class stability and inter-class mobility between the

two white collar groups was in no case greater than 4 percentage points. And whilst the sons of the urban petite bourgeoisie were clearly exposed to a higher risk of losing their status, their less urbanised cousins could hardly afford to cease looking over their shoulders.

The more specific fates of the downwardly mobile provide a further indication that the term « urban lower middle class » might just be tautological. For whilst the marginal distributions show marked differences in the structure of opportunities in each context, those forced down into the working class exhibited a common pattern of distribution between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled destinations. Particularly striking is the universal affinity for the trades amongst those dropping dropped into class III, this in the face of the clear predominance of factory, mining and services in the more urbanised environment.

The obvious objection to such a conclusion is that by combining individual districts, any marked contextual differences will be averaged out. Yet even between two areas as diverse as the Potteries and the agricultural community of Samford, sandwiched between the Rivers Orwell and Stour in south-east Suffolk, there are signs of a common lower-middle-class experience. In Stoke 28 per cent of petit bourgeois sons followed their fathers, and in Samford 30 per cent. Stability rates amongst white collar families were 26 and 23 per cent respectively.

The pattern of recruitment, shown in Table 4, offers little by way of qualification. Just as it was more occupationally and class stable, the less urbanised petite bourgeoisie was more self-recruiting and class cohesive than its more fully urbanised counterpart. But again the degree of variation was hardly fundamental. Closer intra-class relationships were once more the result of greater

21 - This not an elite in the classic sense. It includes all those in established professions, and those defining themselves as independent, land owning, or gentlemen.

22 - The craft category is made up of workshop artisans and tradesmen ; e.g. masons, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, cutlers.

23 - The continuing significance of patronage, particularly in the commercial sector but also inside the « bureaucratic » organisations like the railway companies should not, of course, be underestimated : Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London, Second Series, 3, Industry*, London, Macmillan, pp. 274-279 ; G. Anderson, *Victorian Clerks*, Manchester, 1976, pp. 9-15 ; P.W. Kingsford, *Victorian Railwaymen*, London, Frank Cass, 1970, pp. 5-9.

24 - The average age of those who gave it was 27.

25 - In neither case do the shapes of the older sample's mobility and recruitment profiles differ fundamentally from those of the younger's.

The over thirties had less chance of becoming downwardly mobile, and recruitment was became marginally less working class in character. The stability rates of the small business category did not rise at all between age groups, increased status stability being reflected in more upward and intra-class mobility. This suggests that business continuity might have been facilitated as much by parental financing of new businesses as by the inheritance of concerns. Marriage, allowing the amalgamation of resources, may have made this the decisive moment. See A. Faure, « The grocery trade in nineteenth-century Paris : a fragmented corporation », in Crossick (G.) & Haupt (H. G.), *Shopkeepers...*, *op. cit.* Distribution of lower middle class grooms by class and occupation, percentage by row : top row, under thirty ; bottom row ; over thirty

I bus whc fm III V V n.
 Business 1 33 10 2 36 127 380
 6 33 14 5 26 9 7 110
 White Collar 3 8 30 1 36 16 6 162
 7 9 37 5 21 12 9 43

Tableau 3 : Class/Occupational Distribution of Grooms with Lower Middle Class Fathers, 1839-1914 (percentage by row)

urban context, upper figures; less urban context, lower figures

Father's Occupational Category	Son's Class/Occupational Category											n
	I	II			III			IV	V	%	n	
		Bus	Whc	Fm	All	Craft	Other					
Business	2 4	33 37	9 10	1 4	38 29	(22 (19)	(16) (10)	13 9	5 7	6.3 6.9	247 433	
White Collar	2 6	9 10	33 28	0 4	36 33	(18 (18)	(18) (15)	14 13	7 6	2.9 2.5	114 158	
Farming	2 1	12 11	5 3	17 48	34 13	(19 (7)	(15) (6)	18 12	12 12	4.5 10.2	178 637	
%	.5 2.2	5.2 6.2	3.7 3.8	1.3 6.0	60.8 35.0	(24.4 (19.0)	(36.5) (16.5)	15.4 15.8	12.9 31.1			
n	21 135	206 387	146 240	50 378	2400 2197	962 1192	1438 1005	609 986	508 1947		3940 6270	

Tableau 4 : Lower Middle Class Composition by Class of Father, 1839-1914 (percentage by column)

Father's Class/Occupational Category	urban context, left hand column; les urban context, right hand column									
	Son's Occupational Category									
	Business		White Collar		Farming		%		n.	
I	3	4	9	11	1	1.2	2.6	49	159	
II	40	42	14	17	6	6.3	6.9	247	433	
	5	4	25	18	2	2.9	2.5	114	158	
	11	18	6	7	60	80	10.2	178	637	
III	31	20	35	29	18	58.5	31.6	2305	1983	
	20	13	14	18	16	28.8	19.6	1135	1232	
	11	7	21	11	2	29.7	12.0	1170	751	
IV	6	6	8	12	6	12.0	11.4	471	714	
V	4	7	3	6	10	14.7	34.9	574	2185	
%	5.2	6.2	3.7	3.8	1.3	6.0				
n	206	387	146	240	50	378		3940	6270	

Origins of lower middle class groom by class and occupation, percentage by row : top row, under thirty ; bottom row ; over thirty.

1 bus whc fm III IV V n.
 Business 2 42 4 12 26 6 7 301
 3 36 4 20 22 8 6 100
 White Collar 8 16 21 4 36 10.4 226
 6 19 20 9 26 138 80

Use of the information on age of grooms in the registers is not straightforward. Quite a part from the problem of small and ever-decreasing sub-samples associated with looking at older age groups, the practice of entering ones age in the register was neither consistent over time nor across social categories.

26 - This figure would obviously be higher if the proportion entering small masterships within the craft category could be isolated, and it were accepted that this did indeed constitute upward social mobility. See note 17. Only 8,5 % of the over thirties were upwardly mobile.

27 - See also Crossick's suggestion that clerical work was considered a poor alternative to intergenerational continuity within the trades, note 5. Hobsbawm also argues this: Hobsbawm (E.J.), « Artisans and Labour Aristocrats ? », in his *Worlds of Labour: Further Studies in the History of Labour*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984, pp. 264-265. The figures certainly show that upwardly mobile factory and service worker's sons were more inclined towards the white collar sector, although most of the trades Hobsbawm's includes in his own « super aristocracy » of labour were equally or more inclined than non-tradesmen.

28 - Blau (P. M.) & Duncan (O. D.), *The American Occupational Structure*, New York, Wiley, 1967, pp. 429-30; Landes (D.), *The Unbound Prometheus*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972, p. 546.

29 - Goldthorpe (J. H.), in collaboration with Catriona Llewellyn and Clive Payne, *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980, chapter 3.

interaction with farming, whilst the profile of the white collar offspring inside the business world remained univesally low. Better defended against incursion from below the small town and rural petite bourgeoisie might have been, but as many as one in three of its membership had known harder times.

By the same token, it is the universal diversity of origin found amongst white collar employees which is impressive, not the fact that away from urban concentrations the sector tended to be marginally more diverse still. Again the broad structures of their respective recruitment patterns correspond closely.

The two features which do stand out are the tendency for more lower status workers to be amongst the white collar recruits in the less urban category, and, in contrast to the pattern of petite bourgeois recruitment, tradesmen to be in the minority amongst the sons of skilled workers recruited to such positions in the urban category. More recruitment from the bottom of society would seem to favoured by the greater « weight » of class V sons in the division of labour in the less urban environment, but does not explain the higher profile of men from class IV or the differing balance of recruitment to white collar occupations from the skilled sector. Whether urban tradesmen had greater reservations about the type of white collar futures available for their children in the towns is not clear, but the implication is that such positions were more accessible or 'open' to the sons of non-tradesmen.²⁷

Alongside the process of class formation and the prospects of that process for social stability, the other principal concern of mobility researchers has been with the question of the « openness » of social structures. From this perspective the emphasis switches to why mobility happens. If absolute, or observable, rates

of mobility differ between contexts, or over time, this might merely reflect changes in the prevailing structure of opportunities, leaving the relationships of advantage and disadvantage which underlie those patterns of movement untouched. 'Open' societies are associated with social justice and economic efficiency. Western industrial capitalism, it is held, is characterised by a fundamental trend towards openness, expressed in part by a commitment to equality of opportunity in matters of occupational and social selection²⁸.

Measuring « social fluidity » – which involves assessing the extent of mobility whilst allowing for structural influences – has become a highly technical and statistically sophisticated sub-discipline amongst sociologists. In the current state of the art it is done by means of multiplicative or « log-linear » modelling techniques, which allow for the testing of hypotheses about patterns of association between origins and destination based on the calculation of relative mobility chances²⁹.

Given the greater degree of impersonality and metabolism of the larger towns and cities we might expect urban society to have been less binding, and when these techniques were applied to the marriage register data they did, indeed, confirm this very clearly³⁰. However, these analyses have been carried out on the basis of the original five classes³¹. Further refinement of the data using this technique is problematic because increased numbers of categories can hinder interpretation and the resulting reduction in « cell » sizes can affect reliability. However, a very simple indication of the degree of restriction operating in the case of recruitment to specific occupational categories can be gained by means of disparity ratios, which compare the relative chances of men from different back-

ground gaining access to specific destinations³².

In Tables 5 and 6 working class access to the lower middle class, and lower-middle-class access to the elite are considered. In the first place these ratios highlight the fundamental inequalities existing in nineteenth-century English society. The sons of a small businessmen and white collar employees were between twelve and seventeen times better placed than those with working class backgrounds in the « competition » to achieve lower-middle-class positions. They in turn were seriously disadvantaged when their chances of gaining access to the elite were compared to the sons of class I men.

Lower-middle-class access to the elite was in either case « easier » in the

urban context, but for workers the basic division suggested by the de facto figure are confirmed. Overall, the small business sector was more accessible in the towns and cites, white collar positions in the less urbanised environment. That said the sizes of the ratios do not differ greatly. The urban skilled and semi-skilled, and the urban crafts above all, certainly found the administrative and representative stratum more « closed » than their less urbanised peers, but in general the magnitude of the inequalities across contexts, and for that matter in the competitions for different destinations, was of the same order. Much more striking is the exaggerated size of the disadvantage, regardless of context or destination, experienced by unskilled workers relative to the rest of their class.

30 - These analyses were carried out with the assistance of John Goldthorpe and Clive Payne of Nuffield College, Oxford.

31 - See Miles, *Occupational and Social Mobility...*, op.cit., chapter 4.

32 - In a simple 2 x 2 matrix the calculation would be as follows : $\frac{f_{11}/f_{21}}{f_{1.}/f_{2.}}$ and $\frac{f_{22}/f_{12}}{f_{2.}/f_{1.}}$

Disparity ratios are not as statistically « rigorous » as odds ratios, upon which log-linear modelling is based. However, they are, for the uninitiated, rather more straightforward to interpret.

Table 5 : Disparity ratios showing the relative chances of the sons of working class men being found in the lower middle class positions relative to those of lower middle class sons (chances of worker's sons set at 1).

Destination	Business		Destination:	White Collar	
	Urban	Less Urban		Urban	Less Urban
Father's Position			Father's Position		
Business v Working class	13.3 1	14.3 1	White collar v Working class	16.3 1	12.1 1
Business v Craft	9.0 1	9.3 1	White collar v Craft	17.1 1	8.2 1
Business v non-craft	17.5 1	11.3 1	White collar v non-craft	12.5 1	7.7 1
Business v Class IV	13.3 1	10.9 1	White collar v Class IV	14.1 1	7.1 1
Business v Class V	20.8 1	31.0 1	White collar v Class V	46.4 1	46.3 1

Table 6 : Disparity ratios showing the relative chances of the sons of lower middle class men being found in Class I relative to the sons of classe I men (chances of lower-middle-class sons set at 1).

Destination	Business		Destination:	White Collar	
	Urban	Less Urban		Urban	Less Urban
Class I v Business	7.2 1	11.7 1		7.9 1	9.1 1

33 - In each district samples were taken at five year intervals between 1839 and 1914, hence the division of the time series in to four groups of four sampling years.

34 - More (C.), *The Industrial Age. Economy and Society in Britain, 1750-1980*, London, Longman, 1989.

35 - Crossick's working out of the census figures between 1851 to 1914 shows the total number of male white collar employees rose from 144,035 to 918,186, their proportion of the male occupied population increasing from 2,5% to 7,1%.

36 - Crossick's marriage register figures for Kentish London indicate a rise retail to clerical recruitment of a similar magnitude over the same period. Crossick (1978), pp. 115-116.

c. Time

Tables 7 and 8 trace the changing mobility fortunes of the English lower middle class between the middle of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the First World War, a period in which the British industrial economy, in reaching its 'maturity', began to feel the pressure of external competition³³.

The figures indicate a clear rhythm of rise and fall in the fortunes of both the petit bourgeois and white collar sectors. The heyday of the English petite bourgeoisie, in terms of what was always a limited ability to transmit status and security to the next generation, was the mid-Victorian period. This period of relative security never quite extended to a majority of sons being able to follow in their father's footsteps, but a decade analysis does confirm that the 1860s and 70s was a period in which a rising majority could expect not to suffer any loss of status. This trend was abruptly halted from the later 1880s onwards, and by the early decades of this century their chances of falling into the working class had risen from two in five to one in two.

There is very clear support here for Crossick's claim that the petite bourgeoisie turned increasingly to the white collar sector in an attempt to maintain status, although it seems they were beginning to do so even before the period of crisis in their fortunes. Nevertheless, as important as this alternative avenue had become by 1914 it could only check, not staunch, the flow across the manual/non-manual divide. At the same time those who fell did so in increasingly unpropitious circumstances, as the more comfortable and familiar option of a trade was increasingly supplanted by the growth of lower status destinations in industry and the service sector.

The white collar sector followed a different rhythm, offering rising chances of inter-generational stability up until into the 1890s, at which point it was as occupationally and class « stable » as the petite bourgeoisie, before the proportion of sons following fathers began to tail off around the turn of the century. However, the third quarter of the nineteenth century seems to have something of a turning point for this sector too. Having also taken advantage of the mid-Victorian commercial expansion³⁴ which helped increase the security of petit bourgeois sons, interaction with the rest of the class, and with the class above, then went into decline, and the prospects of the sector's sons steadily worsened as it turned back increasingly towards the working class.

Compositionally the period saw both sectors becoming more working class in origin. Amongst the petite bourgeoisie this process was occurring throughout the period, despite the rise in occupational cohesion of the 1860s and 70s. Class cohesion was largely sustained thereafter by fluctuating combination of recruitment from the white collar and farming sectors, and remained quite formidable throughout, but there was a consistent contraction of recruitment from above.

In spite of its growing stability up until the late 1890s, the rapid expansion of the white collar sector in the last quarter of the century meant that the profile of those recruited internally fell throughout³⁵. The undermining of the white collar sector's class integrity, however, began only after the mid-Victorian years. Having apparently been a convenient staging post for the sons of the elite it seems to have acquired much more of « lower middle class » identity after mid-century, recruitment from the business sector almost trebling in the 1860s and 70s³⁶. Thereafter the sector remained heteroge-

Table 7 : Class and Category Distribution by Marriage Cohort (percentage by row)
 Y1 = 1839-54 ; Y2 = 1859-74 ; Y3 = 1879-94 ; Y4 = 1899-1914

		Son's Class / Category										
Father's Class / Category		I	Bus	Mhc	Fm	Craft	Non-Craft	IV	V	%		
I	Y1	37	15	25	3	12	3	5	0	2.1		
	Y2	54	16	14	0	2	5	5	5	1.7		
	Y3	47	9	14	3	9	12	5	2	2.5		
	Y4	36	6	23	2	4	15	2	11	1.9		
Business	Y1	3	34	3	4	29	11	8	7	5.5		
	Y2	5	43	8	1	20	9	9	6	7.0		
	Y3	3	35	11	3	17	10	15	6	7.5		
	Y4	3	31	13	2	15	17	10	8	6.9		
White Collar	Y1	5	7	27	3	27	17	5	9	2.1		
	Y2	6	17	29	0	16	6	14	12	2.1		
	Y3	0	8	35	5	18	15	17	3	2.8		
	Y4	5	8	28	1	14	21	17	5	3.8		
Farming	Y1	2	12	1	36	15	6	14	15	9.4		
	Y2	2	8	3	46	9	9	11	13	7.4		
	Y3	2	14	4	38	10	11	12	10	8.0		
	Y4	.6	11	5	47	3	8	15	10	6.9		
Craft	Y1	.1	3	1	1	67	12	6	10	26.9		
	Y2	.5	4	2	2	56	16	10	11	24.7		
	Y3	.2	5	3	.4	49	19	183	12	20.8		
	Y4	.6	4	6	.8	37	18	21	13	19.8		
Non-Craft	Y1	0	2	2	0	11	73	4	8	13.0		
	Y2	.2	2	2	.5	9	73	5	9	17.0		
	Y3	.2	3	3	.4	9	68	9	7	20.6		
	Y4	.5	3	4	0	9	62	13	10	25.5		
IV	Y1	.4	3	2	2	20	10	48	15	8.7		
	Y2	.4	3	1	.7	15	17	47	15	10.9		
	Y3	.7	3	5	.7	12	22	45	12	11.9		
	Y4	.5	3	4	1	12	22	44	13	15.3		
V	Y1	0	1	.4	1	10	8	8	71	32.2		
	Y2	0	2	.3	.8	7	13	12	65	39.2		
	Y3	0	1	1	1	8	13	17	58	25.9		
	Y4	.2	2	1	.2	9	20	23	44	20.0		
%	Y1	1.3	4.9	2.3	4.7	28.3	17.8	10.9	29.8	100.0		
	Y2	1.7	6.4	2.6	4.2	21.4	23.3	13.8	26.5	100.0		
	Y3	1.7	6.3	4.7	4.0	18.3	26.3	17.2	21.6	100.0		
	Y4	1.4	5.7	5.7	3.8	15.3	29.3	21.2	17.5	100.0		

Table 8 : Class and Category Composition by Marriage Cohort (percentage by column)
 Y1 = 1839-54 ; Y2 = 1859-74 ; Y3 : 1879-94 ; Y4 = 1899-1914

Father's Class / Category	Son's Class / Category										%
	I	Bus	Whc	Fm	Craft	Non-Craft	IV	V			
I	Y1	58	6	23	2	.9	.4	1	0	2.1	
	Y2	54	4	9	0	.2	.3	.6	.3	1.7	
	Y3	69	3	7	2	.1	.2	.7	.2	2.5	
	Y4	47	2	8	1	.5	.9	.2	1	1.9	
Business	Y1	13	38	8	5	6	3	4	1	5.5	
	Y2	21	47	22	2	6	3	4	2	7.0	
	Y3	13	41	18	5	7	3	6	2	7.5	
	Y4	14	37	16	4	7	4	3	3	6.9	
White Collar	Y1	8	3	25	2	2	2	1	.6	2.1	
	Y2	7	6	23	0	2	.7	2	.9	2.1	
	Y3	0	3	21	3	3	2	3	.4	2.8	
	Y4	14	6	19	1	3	3	3	1	3.8	
Farming	Y1	16	22	5	73	5	3	12	5	9.4	
	Y2	7	9	8	80	3	3	6	4	7.4	
	Y3	8	18	7	76	4	3	6	4	8.0	
	Y4	3	13	6	85	2	2	5	4	6.9	
Craft	Y1	3	16	14	8	64	18	14	9	26.9	
	Y2	7	16	15	9	64	16	19	10	24.7	
	Y3	3	15	14	2	55	15	15	11	20.8	
	Y4	8	15	19	4	48	12	20	15	19.8	
Non-Craft	Y1	0	4	12	0	5	53	5	3	12.9	
	Y2	2	6	15	2	7	53	6	6	17.0	
	Y3	3	11	14	2	10	53	11	7	20.6	
	Y4	8	11	17	0	16	53	16	16	25.5	
IV	Y1	3	5	8	3	6	5	38	4	8.7	
	Y2	2	6	5	2	8	8	37	6	10.9	
	Y3	5	5	14	2	8	10	31	6	11.9	
	Y4	3	9	11	4	12	12	32	11	15.3	
V	Y1	0	6	6	8	12	14	25	77	32.2	
	Y2	0	7	3	6	10	16	26	72	29.2	
	Y3	0	4	6	7	11	13	27	70	25.9	
	Y4	3	8	4	1	12	14	22	51	20.0	
Σ	Y1	1.3	4.9	2.3	4.7	28.3	17.8	10.9	29.8	100.0	
	Y2	1.7	6.4	2.6	4.2	21.4	23.3	13.8	25.5	100.0	
	Y3	1.7	6.3	4.7	4.0	18.3	26.3	17.2	21.6	100.0	
	Y4	1.4	5.7	5.8	3.8	15.3	29.3	21.2	17.5	100.0	

nous in terms of its relationship with the rest of the class, but recruitment within increasingly gave way to the rising influx from below.

These figures provide clear evidence of the growing external pressures underlying lower middle class, and particularly white collar, anxieties in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the early years of this century. But did the rising tide of working class recruitment reflect « easier » access from below, as has been suggested³⁷, or merely the redistributive effects of a shifting economy? Casual inspection of Table 6 would certainly seem to indicate an opening up of the petite bourgeoisie to adventurers from the manual ranks. On the other hand it was not only the working class which took advantage of the expansion of white collar opportunities. So did the petite bourgeoisie, and, up until the turn of the century, the sons of white collar families themselves.

The disparity ratios in Table 9 show that both the petite bourgeoisie and white collar employment were becoming more accessible to the sons of workers in this

period. The advantages held by small businessmen declined throughout, but it was not until 1880s that the working class began to gain on the sons of white collar employees. They even cut back the advantage the petite bourgeoisie had managed to build up in the first half of the period as they began to use white collar employment as an alternative to their own increasingly pressurised sector, or to downward mobility. Yet whilst the equalising pressure was strong enough to halve the advantage held by the petite bourgeoisie in both respects, and to reduce that of white collar men by over two thirds, those rising were still, even as the status of the opportunities for which they were competing was declining, fighting against substantial odds.

CONCLUSION

In volume IX of *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Charles Booth wrote : « *When we endeavour to trace the road by which each individual has travelled or is travelling the dynamic forces*

37 - Crossick (G.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain*, op. cit., p. 36.

Table 9 : Disparity ratios showing how the relative chances of the sons of working class men being found in lower middle class positions relative to those of lower middle class sons changed over time (chances of workers sons set at 1).

	Year	Destination
Father's Position		Business
Business v Working Class	1839-54	18.0:1
	1859-74	15.7:1
	1879-94	12.9:1
	1899-1914	10.4:1
		White Collar
Business v Working Class	1839-54	2.9:1
	1859-74	6.7:1
	1879-94	4.1:1
	1899-1914	3.6:1
White Collar v Working Class	1839-54	24.6:1
	1859-74	24.0:1
	1879-94	12.4:1
	1899-1914	7.7:1

38 - Booth (C.) (ed), *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Vol. IX, London, Macmillan, 1897, p. 393.

39 - Crossick (G.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain*, op. cit., p. 12.

40 - In this regard another obvious avenue of mobility which does not show up in these figures was emigration.

41 - Crossick (G.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain*, op. cit., p. 36

42 - See note 27.

*at work are impressed upon us. Together with the permanence of the industrial type, we become conscious of the incessant change that is taking place in the conditions of a large proportion of the individual lives. Restlessness, ambition, ability, folly, hesitancy, indifference or dullness, carry men along, up and down, and down and up again, in the industrial as in other roads of life*³⁸.

In the dimension of inter-generational mobility, at least, the results of this study offer a corrective to Booth's assertion. In general, or for the majority of the population, the terrain of social mobility in nineteenth and early twentieth-century England was rather more structured and restricted than he suggests. Nevertheless, the lower middle class was, undoubtedly, one of this society's most dynamic elements.

Most of the findings here confirm the judgements of those forced to rely on little more than speculation about the social relations of this class. The one possible qualification concerns the challenge they offer, particularly in the case of the petite bourgeoisie, to the implicit assumption that the mobility experience of the urban lower middle class was distinct from that of its small town or non-urban counterpart.

The comparative instability and lack of cohesion of the class, even on the basis of the compound categories employed here, is clear to see. These measurements cast light on only one aspect of a complex phenomenon,³⁹ but the demographic foundations for the formation of « class » were plainly poor. The petite bourgeoisie were, by means of greater occupational reproduction, rather better insulated from the working class, but the white collar sector actually had more of a class « identity ». Yet in both cases those moving, or arriving from, elsewhere within were heavily outnumbered by those on their way

down to, or rising up from, the working class. Over time there are indications of increasing intra-class interaction ; in the quite dramatic tendency for business to white collar mobility to rise throughout the period, and, up until the 1880s, for white collar families to send more sons into, and to recruit more refugees from, the petite bourgeoisie. But from the high point of the mid-Victorian years, the rest of the period was one in which both sectors renewed what was always a very close relationship with the working class.

Ultimately, just how much mobility constitutes a safety valve must be a matter for individual judgement. Other factors making for the defusing of social tensions must also be brought into the equation⁴⁰. However, the limited chances of a working class son becoming upwardly mobile into the lower middle class must cast doubt upon the proposed role of the latter in the wider process of social mobility.

In terms of his relative chances of becoming a clerk or a shopkeeper, the lower-middle-class world was – notwithstanding the differentiation which facilitated whilst devaluing mobility, and the fact that his disadvantage still remained great – certainly more open to a worker's son in 1914 than it had ever been in the previous seventy-five years⁴¹. Interestingly, in view of their apparent antagonism towards it, it was the sons of the shrinking craft category who took most advantage of the opening up of the white collar sector⁴². Changes in relative mobility chances, however, are usually of low « social visibility », and in absolute terms the average worker's son never had even as much as a ten per cent chance of escaping his class. One can imagine how the exceptional nature of their experience might have encouraged, amongst the escapees, common feelings of superiority and resentment towards those they had

left behind. It is less easy to see how such a restricted flow encouraged hopes of emulation.

In fact for all that there was a clear rise in working class upward mobility in this period the evidence suggests that the major impetus towards demographic class formation in Victorian and Edwardian society was occurring beneath the manual/non-manual divide. Movement out of the class little affected its manual stability. Nor did the effects of increasing downward mobility seriously disturb its manual cohesion. Meanwhile the internal polarities of the class were breaking down in the face of consistently rising rates of intra-class mobility and recruitment. As to when and whether the degree of interaction in these circumstances ceases to act as a pressure valve and begins to establish the foundations for a social wider identity, this is a matter for further research and debate. But the indication is that, in these basic structural terms, it was the later nineteenth century which witnessed the making of the English working class⁴³.

43 - Hobsbawm (E. J.),
« The Making of the
Working Class 1870-
1914 » in his *Worlds
of Labour...*, *op. cit.*,
pp. 194-214.