# The Historical Association Between Class Origins and Male Career Trajectories in UK Film Production

**Thesis submitted to the University of Hertfordshire in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)**

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**Abstract**

The characterisation of the contemporary creative and cultural industries (CCIs) as 'cool, creative and egalitarian' (Gill, 2002) has been unpicked in recent literature (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013, Randle et al, 2015). A growing consensus suggests this is a meritocratic ideal rather than a reality, indicating CCIs are the domain of the white, male and middle-class (Randle, et al, 2015; O'Brien et al, 2016). The thesis is intended to inform a deeper historical understanding of some of the inequalities that persist in the contemporary CCIs. While some CCIs (radio, film and television) originated at the end of the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century, there is very little academic work which investigates the extent of egalitarianism or meritocracy in the film industry during much of the 20th century. The most robust historical study of class and employment in CCIs suggests that is likely that they have always been unequal, but points to a lack of historical data from which to evaluate the past (Banks, 2017).

In order to contribute greater historical background to the sociological issue, this thesis therefore draws on an historical qualitative analysis of the film production careers of 37 men, from a mixture of working class origins (WCOs) and middle-class origins (MCOs) most of whose work began in the 1930s and ended in the 1970s. The primary source of data comprises oral history interviews from the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) archive housed at the BFI Library. The research explores, specifically, work between 1927 and

1947 as the British Studio System emerged and many film occupations developed around the introduction of sound technology. The evidence suggests that certain structural arrangements, unique to the vertically integrated studios, provided some opportunities for working-class men in the past. However, these are shown to be exceptions that need to be qualified by a deeper understanding of the 'fields' (Bourdieu, 1984) that emerged around different film occupations within the studio system. To provide a deeper understanding of the ways in which career trajectories were mediated in different occupational settings, a Bourdieusian inspired, historical model of the association between class origins and male career destinations has been designed.

Analysis of these careers highlights a long history of class-based inequalities that subsequently became embedded in employment practices and within many film production occupations and departments. Although careers during this period were enacted around different structural arrangements to those today, certain trends and associations between class background and opportunities were being shaped during the 1930s.

**Declaration**

This is to verify that the work presented in this doctoral thesis and submitted for examination is mine alone

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## Chapter 1 The hidden history of class origins and careers in the British film industry

In 1931, Sidney Cole, a 21-year-old graduate from the London School of Economics (LSE) assessed his future career options, of which he had several. His mother wanted him to work in a 'respectable' occupation, which paid well and offered secure employment, but he had other ideas. As a student at the LSE, he would escape from his lectures and slip out to the large cinemas in central London and watch one of the new American sound pictures. These American films, which were made by one of the Hollywood Studio Conglomerates, had by the 1920s begun to dominate the international film market. Cole loved the movies and he knew he wanted to make films for a living, however, he was unsure how to get in.

Cole went to visit his school master as an 'old boy' at Westminster Boys School and told him he wanted to work in the film industry, his school master told him 'I can help, I'm a neighbour of Sir Oswald Stoll, I'll give you a letter of introduction'. Two days later he got a letter from the studio suggesting he call at Stoll Studios, Cricklewood at 9.00 on Monday morning. Cole made his way to Cricklewood and the guard at the studio gate sent him to the office of Sinclair Hill, the director of productions. Hill offered him a cup of coffee and a cigarette and then told him, 'you can start right away, £1.00 a week for six weeks and we'll see how it goes'

Cole passed his six-week probation and worked as what he called an 'auxiliary trainee', watching, learning and doing menial tasks across film departments, until he managed to get work in the editing department. From there he progressed to assistant editor, then senior editor, working on a temporary basis at several studios, finally he landed a job on the production of Midshipman Easy (1933) at Ealing studios, where he continued to work for several years.

In 1926 the British film industry had been in decline for several years; by that year it had hit rock bottom, with one of the few films in production being the silent picture, Boadicea (1926). In what were austere times for the industry, the production had an unusually large budget, much of which was being spent on the historical studio sets and props. The film was being made at Cricklewood studios, in North London which were kept in operation by Stoll Pictures, an in-house company owned by Sir Oswald Stoll. In order to keep studio workers in employment there needed to be a regular supply of films in production, which was nearly impossible in what was a notoriously uncertain market. However, in 1926 the biggest British production of the year was being made at Cricklewood and the master carpenter was desperate for temporary workers.

At the time of the General Strike in 1926, Ernie Diamond, an out of work cabinet maker, was helping his brother deliver timber to the Cricklewood studio, where Diamond's brother told him they were making 'a big historical picture'. Diamond was thought to be a decent footballer at school and he'd been scouted by several London clubs, but his father had told him there was no money in professional football anymore, so after leaving his elementary school at the age of 14, Diamond decided to do what his father did for a living and train as a carpenter. Before the General Strike, he'd been working with his uncle at a furniture factory,

but now with a period out of work, he wanted to earn some money. As he sat outside Stoll studios in Cricklewood waiting for his brother, the master carpenter came out and said 'do you want a job? I need carpenters', Diamond thought about it and replied, 'no, I don't want a job there, too rough for me, I'm a cabinet maker'. The master carpenter was desperate for skilled carpenters and urged him to reconsider, so Diamond finally asked, 'what you going to pay me?' Once Diamond worked out the overtime pay, he was shocked, it worked out at over £4 a week, which was more than he had ever earned making cabinets.

The late 1920s and early 1930s, when Diamond and Cole were beginning to develop their careers in film production, was a period in which the film industry was going through significant structural, technological and occupational changes (Low, 1984; Street, 1997) – which are discussed later in this chapter and in more detail in Chapter 3. The two men had similar backgrounds in some ways: they were born in London in the 1900s, children of the First World War, and educated in London schools. They had both benefited from the employment opportunities that were emerging in the film industry. They also started their careers in the same studio and later they worked at Ealing studios for a long period together (such sustained employment was unusual in film, but more common at Ealing). The two men had worked at Ealing studios from the 1930s until its closure in the 1950s, when the Rank Organisation, then the only remaining vertically integrated film company in Britain, stopped financing film productions and invested in the more profitable and reliable production of photocopy machines. Diamond and Cole both then worked as freelance workers in the newly emerging television studios, which were replacing film studios as commercial television was introduced in the 1950s and cinema audiences began to decline.

Nonetheless the career trajectories and occupational destinations of the two men were very different. Sidney Cole, with middle-class origins, went on to become a prominent editor and producer, while Ernie Diamond, with working-class origins, was laid off after the production of Boadicea, but eventually returned to the film industry and managed to sustain a career as a studio carpenter until the 1960s. An explanation for these contrasting career trajectories is sought in this study in the class backgrounds of the two men, which largely determined the options and possibilities open to them upon entering the labour market in the 1920s and 1930s. Cole and Diamond, men of similar age, working in the same city, the same industry and the same film studios, had their lives shaped in very different ways, I will argue here, by the classes into which they were born and within which they were raised.

Despite working at the same studio for so many years, it was not until the 1980s, when both men were retired, that they got to know each other. Their paths crossed in a small room in the British Film Institute in the late 1980s, when Sidney Cole placed a tape recorder in front of Ernie Diamond and asked him to tell him about his life and career as a studio carpenter in the film industry.

In the 1980s, Sidney Cole and several other former film workers who had also been prominent members of the Association of Cine-Technicians (ACT) had decided they wanted to record and preserve the working lives of ‘ordinary’ film workers in order to ensure that there was some historical counter balance to what they perceived as the rather over-blown and somewhat mythical account of the film industry which had been popularised in the media (Dawson and Holmes, 2014). The Association of Cine and Television Technicians (ACTT) History Project was formed and is now called The British Entertainment History Project (BEHP).

The history project archive now has a collection of over 700 working-lives interviews (BEHP, website, 2019). The main historical data as research for this study is the BEHP archive. From this larger collection, I selected an initial sample of 76 interviews with men and women. This sample was later narrowed down to a sub-sample of 37 interviews with male former film production workers (including Sidney Cole and Ernie Diamond), which form the basis of this research. All 37 men worked in behind-camera roles, started their careers before 1947. Seventeen men were from working-class origins (WCOs), who like Diamond were educated in state schools, and 20 men were from middle-class origins (MCOs) the majority of whom (including Cole) were educated in private schools. The selection criteria are explained further later in this chapter and in more detail in Chapter 4.

**1.1 The research questions**

This thesis is based on the premise that:

*The association between class origins and career trajectories develop over time and in order to understand them, it is important to trace the way class and career opportunities are mediated through different occupational settings historically.*

Adopting a 'Bourdiausian inspired' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019) analysis of career trajectories to analyse 37 oral history interviews, my research explores the association between class origins and occupational destinations, in order to better understand some of the historical and sociological explanations for why men like Ernie Diamond and Sidney Cole had such contrasting trajectories in the British film industry during a period when many

occupations were newly emerging and evolving around sound production and vertical integration.

The main research question used to explore this is as follows:

**How did men from working-class origins (WCOs) and middle-class origins (MCOs) enter and make careers in film production during the period of the British Studio System?**

In order to answer this question, I explored several subsidiary questions, which are investigated in detail through the data presented in chapters 6,7 and 8.

1. **In what ways did class origins shape career decisions to work in film production?**
2. **How did men from WCOs and MCOs enter film production careers?**
3. **How did men from WCOs and MCOs develop their careers in film production?**

After exploring the questions above through the research sample, class trends began to emerge regarding the different occupational settings that men were entering into and travelling through. As a result of these class trends another research question emerged regarding class origins and film occupations:

4. **In what ways did the association between class origins and careers differ across emerging occupational spaces in UK film production during the period of the Studio System?**

## 1.2 Contemporary issues in their historical context

The characterisation of the contemporary creative and cultural industries (CCIs) as 'cool, creative and egalitarian' (Gill, 2002) has been unpicked in an emerging body of literature (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013, Randle et al, 2015). It is argued that there is a normative, internalised assumption that CCIs are meritocratic industries 'where ordinary people can carve out careers based solely on their talent and application' (Banks, 2017: 8). In the context of the UK Film and Television (UKFTV) industry, these meritocratic assumptions have become intensified as many workers are self-employed and regularly need to re-enter the labour market in what has been described as a 'project based model of employment' (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). In this environment workers are required to continually promote their own reputation and human capital in a highly competitive labour market (Lee, 2011).

A growing consensus suggests that this is a meritocratic ideal rather than a reality, suggesting that CCIs are the domain of the white, male and middle-class (Holgate and McKay, 2007; Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Siebert and Wilson, 2013; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Allen et al, 2013; Randle et al, 2015; Randle, 2016: Friedman et al, 2016, Freidman and Laurison, 2019). A quantitative study estimates that approximately as few as 9% of the Film and TV workforce are from working-class origins (O'Brien et al, 2018) compared with a labour market average of 34.7%.

Recent accounts of the experiences of those employed in the CCIs have challenged the notion of an egalitarian and meritocratic industry, providing us with accounts of the barriers associated with 'getting in and getting on' (Blair et al, 2001) across a range of industries and occupations for some minority groups. The narrative that emerges from these critical accounts is of CCIs with a visible veneer of glamour and an over-supply of willing and educated

labour. An increasingly freelance labour market supplies often precarious, project-based employment, adopting informal recruitment practices, with a reliance on unpaid internships that some have argued border on illegality (Churchill, 2019). In understanding career success in these industries accounts that privilege individual endeavour and creativity (Jones, 1996; Florida 2002) are challenged by those that focus on the sociality of networks and dependence on social relations (Blair, 2001; Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Randle et al, 2015). These accounts provide a deeper understanding of some of the inequalities in the contemporary CCIs, however the historical context of these inequalities has remained unexplored.

While some CCIs (radio, film and television) originated at the end of the 19th or the beginning of the 20th century, there is no robust academic work which investigates the extent of egalitarianism or meritocracy in the film industry during much of the 20th century. As Randle et al (2001) point out, 'in order to more fully understand the present state of employment in the film industry, it is necessary to place current forms and trends of employment in their historical and developmental context.'

The difficulty with doing this is the lack of historical literature and data relating to employment practices in the film industry (Randle et al, 2001). In the context of the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) more generally, Banks (2017) has researched class and employment in the past, focusing on the period from the 1950s and 1960s, which he argues was a period when 'a meritocratic discourse based on access and opportunity began to achieve social currency' (Banks, 2017: 8). He concludes that in reality it is more likely that 'inequity and inequality have always been present in cultural work'. Despite reaching this

conclusion, Banks (2017: 97) also points to the lack of historical data regarding the subject, saying of the 1950s and 1960s:

> 'We might be sure, in absolute terms, of some increased working-class entry into cultural work – though in the main this was most likely to have been at the bottom end, in the routine, low-paid and unglamorous jobs of the organisation. This seems a reasonable assumption.'

The history of class-based inequality in CCIs is therefore something we can 'reasonably assume' was taking place, but the extent to which this was true of different occupations, industries and periods in time remains unclear. Added to this, the processes of class closure and openness across creative occupations as they emerged and evolved remains hidden from our understanding of the past.

### 1.3 Oral History and working lives

When I started researching for this dissertation in September 2011, my broad aim was to understand the history of working lives in the film industry. From the outset, I wanted to research what work and employment was like from the perspective of the workers who experienced it and I was aware that one of the best ways of doing so was through oral history interviews. I searched online and found what was then called the BECTU History Project (BHP) archive and is currently (2019) called the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP). The archive holds a collection of over 700 oral history interviews with people who worked in film, TV and radio in the UK. The BEHP archive was therefore an important discovery. I had conducted oral history interviews prior to the PhD, and I felt they provided a subjective

authenticity to our understanding of the past. I was influenced by a quote by a social historian (Bertaux in Thompson, 1982: 95), that oral testimony was a medium through which historians can explore the 'historicity of contemporary social life'.

My interest in oral history was initially stimulated when I spoke to my grandfather and grandmother about their early lives in Nottingham in the 1930s and during and after WW2. In 2008-2009 I completed a Masters in Life History Research at London Metropolitan University. During this time I began working on a Lottery funded oral history project called 'Working Lives of the Thames Gateway', in which I carried out approximately 30 interviews with former industrial workers in east and south east London, many of whom had begun their working lives between the 1930s and the 1950s. At this time, I also became interested in ways of using and disseminating oral history interviews so that they would be put to better use by academics and the wider public.

As the oral historian Thompson (1982: 11) explains, the strength of oral history lies in 'the vividness of human detail, and in the new originality possible when historians can cease to be captives of the pre-existing sources'. The social historian, McIvor (2013: 1), who focuses on 'contemporary issues in their historical context' has used oral history archives including the Britain at Work and Glasgow Working Lives oral history projects and he argues that oral history 'deserves to be more utilised in the study of work' (McIvor, 2013: 6). Much like McIvor (2013: 1) the research for this dissertation places an emphasis on oral history and 'the personal narratives of workers themselves…perceived and signified by those who experienced it directly.' But understanding the past through human experience and memory comes with its own set of limitations and requires its own set of qualitative analysis methods. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

### 1.4 Selecting a sub-sample of male career trajectories

The sub-sample of 37 careers that I selected from the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) archive are all male; these men started their careers in film production from 1920 to 1947, with the majority doing so after the film industry became vertically integrated following the Quota Act in 1927 and after sound technology was implemented in the early 1930s. Twenty men were from MCOs and 17 were from WCOs. The 37 careers culminated in 13 different positions, which are explained further in Chapter 5.The study of class and careers was not an initial objective of this study: the focus on class origins emerged as a consequence of the semi-autobiographical approach taken in the BEHP interviews.

One of the aims of the sampling which emerged after a period of analysis was to select a range of occupations which could be grouped together and from which I could better understand the association between class and careers.

The question of how and what should be analysed from a collection of over 700 oral history interviews collected by a third party is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. For now, I will say that the most important thing I learned from the process is that it requires a long period of time and a more inductive and flexible approach than I initially took. In the end, any study of the past is limited by what sources are available in the present and oral history is no different. Prior to starting the PhD in 2011, my background knowledge of the film industry either in the contemporary or historical context was limited. I also had little knowledge of work or employment studies generally. The oral history projects I had been involved in had often focused on working lives, but I had little knowledge or background in the sociology of work.

The process of writing an initial literature review and working out what to focus on historically was therefore difficult and time consuming. I began by researching the nature of employment with an emphasis on the extent to which employment was secure or precarious in the past. This is discussed further in Chapter 3 and through the data in Chapter 8. Initially I had been trying to understand careers and employment at the point of production, which did not encapsulate the way careers were being shaped before encountering the film industry. Eighteen months into the research, I began to shift towards the subject of class and careers. I had initially been hesitant to do this as I perceived class to be something of a theoretical *hot potato* with a variety of interpretations and arguments about what class means. Having said this, I was influenced by a theoretical paper on the subject by Crompton (2010) most notably her statement below about class origins and careers:

> '…the association between class and employment is firmly established' [and that] 'for most people, 'class' outcomes are in large part a consequence of the kinds of employment available to them, which is itself closely linked to the kinds of employment available to the adults in their families of origin' (Crompton, 2010: 10)

The way we understand class and what it means is a debate that goes beyond the scope of this thesis, but the research that interests me is exploring the way class origins affect class outcomes. In doing so, it is possible to identify the different ways that class-based inequality is reproduced and, conversely, the ways inequality can be challenged and contested. To study this, I chose to use a Bourdieusian (1984) approach to the career analysis. By this I mean I incorporated Pierre Bourdieu's theory using the concepts of habitus, capitals (economic, social and cultural capitals) and field into the analysis. Borrowing from Bourdieu's analysis of

social trajectories (1984), I viewed the careers as being shaped within the longer trajectories that the men in the sample travelled through. I focused on their social surroundings in their early lives, education and early career experiences and related these to the way they encountered and negotiated a career in different film occupations. This emphasis on careers as trajectories, was influenced by a number of researchers who have used a similar approach in studies of class and careers across the UK labour market (such as Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Reay, 2005; Greenbank, 2009; Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011) and more specifically in the contemporary CCIs (McLeod et al, 2009, Freidman et al, 2017; Friedman and Laurison, 2019).

Bourdieu's class theory is by no means the only way to understand the topic, nor is it the only way to analyse careers in an oral history collection, but the focus on social trajectory provided a synergy between the themes that were emerging through the life-history approach of the BEHP interviews and the association between class origins and outcomes.

After using Bourdieu's approach, I was able to differentiate three occupational sub-fields in film production, which are illustrated in Figure 1 (Appendix 1). These sub-fields incorporate a mixture of occupations and higher and lower positions, but each field has comparable career trajectories into and through it. The occupational sub-fields provide different historical and sociological insights regarding class origins and careers in film production.

At the outset I had intended to include women in the sample, and I initially analysed the interviews of 18 women in the BEHP archive. After deciding to compare working-class and middle-class workers, I made the decision to omit these 18 women from the analysis. They all came from middle-class backgrounds, some were educated outside of the UK, and others

started after 1947. Added to this, they often worked in gender-segregated occupations such as costume or continuity, meaning their trajectories were difficult to compare with those of men. There may have been scope for just using women in the sample who had attempted to enter into male dominated occupations, but this would have meant only using the careers of five women, who attempted to enter four different occupations in field A (a director, a producer, an editor and two art directors). The other difficulty was that as women from MCOs they faced a different type of discrimination from men from WCOs.

### 1.5 The historical period of study: 1920s to 1950s

The period of study encompasses film production careers that started as early as the 1920s and ended as late as the early 1990s. Having said this, it is the period from the 1920s to the 1950s that is the main focus. This period is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. It was chosen because it was a time when film occupations were either newly emerging or evolving in what became a vertically integrated industry following the 1927 Quota Act. During the period from 1927-1938 particularly, many occupational identities, employment practices and working conditions were being contested between film employers and the emerging film trade unions – most significantly the Association of Cine-Technicians (ACT). The series of collective agreements between film unions and employers in 1947 and 1948 effectively established certain ground rules regarding employment access, occupational status, pay, hours and minimum staffing levels (Gater Report, 1949; ACTT, 1983; Ryall, 1997; Reid, 2008). These agreements continued, with only minor changes, into the 1980s (Sparks, 1994; Reid 2008). Because it focuses on careers that began before 1947, this is not a study that traces the development of the association between class and careers up until the contemporary

period. Instead it is a study of the association between class and careers as many occupations were emerging and evolving at a key stage in the history of British film.

### 1.6 The structure of the dissertation

Chapter 2 presents the contemporary debates surrounding the association between class origins and occupational outcomes in the contemporary UK labour market and more specifically the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) and the UK film and television industry (UKFTV). The focus is on debates surrounding class discriminatory employment practices. The chapter also explains the way I have used Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capitals and field (1984) and career trajectories In Chapter 3 the historical background to these debates is explored, focusing on the period from the 1920s to the 1950s, during which time a vertically integrated industry emerged as a result of the 1927 Quota Act. A number of historical gaps regarding class and careers are highlighted, including the lack of data on the class composition of the workforce, employment practices surrounding access and training, and how workers sustained careers and progressed. With the exception of statistics regarding the class composition of the film industry, these issues are explored through the data in chapters 5-8.

Chapter 4 is a review of the methods used to research the topic. It focuses mainly on the way I mapped a sample of male careers and used oral history methods and secondary qualitative analysis to analyse a sub-sample of oral history interviews in the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) archive. The strengths and limitations of using the archive are also assessed.

The data from the career research is presented in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. Chapter 5 is a detailed summary of the occupational sub-fields and how they have been classified through

the mapping of the career trajectories of working-class and middle-class men that travelled through them. Chapter 6 explores the different aspirations, habitus and career intentions of men from WC and MC backgrounds. Chapter 7 is an analysis of the early opportunities in terms of access and training for men from WCOs and MCOs. Chapter 8 is an analysis of the different ways careers were established and how careers progressed and/or stagnated. Chapter 9 presents the conclusions and reflects on the contributions to knowledge, the limitations and how they can be built on in future research.

## Chapter 2 Class origins and careers in the Creative and Cultural Industries

This chapter focuses on the contemporary debates surrounding class origins and careers in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and more specifically in UK Film and TV (UKFTV) production.

Very little is known about the association between class and careers in the CCIs historically, despite some recent attempts to do so (Banks, 2017). However, there has been increasing research into the contemporary context since the 2010s, both in the wider CCIs (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; O'Brien et al, 2016), and in UKFTV specifically (Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoynova, 2012; Allen, et al, 2013; Randle et al, 2015; Friedman et al, 2016). The evidence from the studies above all points to the social composition of the UKFTV workforce as being disproportionately white, male and from middle-class origins (MCOs).

There are several employment practices which are presented as contributing to class-based inequality, with three consistently referenced in this literature. Firstly, unpaid or low paid internships as a popular entry route, which often excludes people from poorer backgrounds. Secondly, the freelance nature of employment, which makes sustaining a living uncertain and precarious. And thirdly, the need to access further employment and internships through social networks and contacts. These employment practices are discussed further in this chapter. In chapter three of this dissertation, these contemporary issues are then explored in their historical context, specifically in the period from 1927 to 1947, when those in the research sample were beginning their careers in the film industry.

There are five sections in this chapter. Section 2.1 clarifies how class is understood in terms of measuring origins against class outcomes. Section 2.2 provides an overview of the way this relates to intergenerational social mobility and questions the extent to which this has changed over time. Section 2.3 then looks at the social composition of the UKFTV workforce. Section 2.4 explores class origins and occupational outcomes using a Bourdieusian perspective, which is the theoretical underpinning for the thesis. Section 2.5 is a critical literature review on the structural arrangements in CCIs and UKFTV, with sub-sections which relate to the way individuals from different class backgrounds enter and make careers in CCIs and Film and TV.

**2.1 Social class and occupations in the UK**

Attempting to understand class and careers in two different periods of history is problematic, not least because the meaning of class is understood in different ways. In media and cultural studies social class has been a theme in research in UKFTV, but it has been concerned with representations of class on the screen (Stead, 1982; Hill, 1986; Richards, 1997; Stead, 2013) rather than with the question of class among those who produce media products, while recent turns in media studies towards the production process (Caldwell, 2008; Caldwell et al, 2009; Mayer, 2011) have seen a move towards labour as a necessary object of study, the focus remains the system of production ('cultures of production') and studies are confined to the relationship between the producers and the cultural product.

Where questions of class are addressed in labour process analyses of creative workers, they are focused on positioning them within the relations of production, i.e. determining their occupational class location (see for example Mckinlay and Smith, 2009). This approach, which is perfectly consistent with the traditional concerns of Labour Process Theory (Thompson,

1992), does not differentiate between members of the group, or examine their class of origin, but examines them as a whole, in relation to other occupations or management layers.

From a Marxist perspective, classes have been 'identified as actual or potential social forces, or social actors, which have the capacity to transform society' (Crompton, 2008:10). Marxists such as Radice (2014) have attempted to locate a third 'middle-class' within the two class model, either as occupying a 'distinctive location' (Radice, 2014: 276) which 'reproduces capitalist social relations' or as having no distinct location; instead they 'occupy a collectively ambiguous position' and 'align with either the capitalist class or the working class', (Radice, 2014: 276) depending on the situation, usually siding with the working-class only during times of economic downturns and crisis. This has been replicated in Marxist studies of workers in the CCIs (Wayne, 2003)

While I would not dismiss any of these meanings of class, they do not focus on employment opportunities and how they correspond with class origins. For this to be done some approximate measure of class origin and outcome is required. In studies of class and employment opportunities, class origins from childhood are often measured by parental occupation, which is then compared to occupations in adulthood, to assess the level of mobility within individual trajectories (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). The occupational aggregate is categorised in the UK through the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) codes. This is used as a proxy for class origins and class outcomes. These are based on the Goldthorpe class schema, which itself is heavily influenced by a Weberian 'life chances' approaches to social class. Like any one measure of class it is problematic, but it provides a standard way to measure origins against outcomes (Crompton, 2010). Occupational status is divided into eight positions, as the table from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) shows below.

Table 1: ONS, 2019

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations |
| | 1.1 Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations |
| | 1.2 Higher professional occupations |
| 2 | Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations |
| 3 | Intermediate occupations |
| 4 | Small employers and own account workers |
| 5 | Lower supervisory and technical occupations |
| 6 | Semi-routine occupations |
| 7 | Routine occupations |
| 8 | Never worked and long-term unemployed |

Classifying the class positions of film production workers is complicated by the fact that they encompass so many different occupations. ScreenSkills, the UKFTV industry led charity for skills, lists 38 jobs in pre-production and production (ScreenSkills, 2019) dividing them into four departments; development, production management, crafts and technical. The eight classifications above are divided into sub-categories, in which it is possible to see differing levels of technical and professional occupations, where many film occupations are positioned. The majority of film production occupations analysed in the research sample for this dissertation are in the top three NS-SEC categories: higher professionals (code 1), lower professionals and higher technicians (code 2) or intermediate occupations (code 3). Electricians and other skilled craft workers in studio construction are in the lower classifications – depending on their position they would be in classifications 5 or 6. Freidman

and Laurison (2019) have argued that although many of the higher occupations in UKFTV do not pay as much as some of the more traditional professions, they are still 'elite' destinations because of high levels of autonomy in the work and because of their cultural influence. Excluding the craft and administrative occupations, many film occupation destinations would therefore be considered middle-class.

**2.2 Intergenerational social mobility in the UK**

Studies of class origins and outcomes have concluded that while there are differences in some occupations and sectors, class related inequalities are evident across the UK labour market, in particular in some of the traditional professions, such as law, architecture and medicine (see Friedman and Laurison, 2016). A government report by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty commission (Milburn, 2012), suggests class based inequality is a systematic problem in the professions, showing that the majority of senior positions are taken up by people who were educated in private schools, Millburn's summary of the situation is damning:

> 'This is social engineering on a grand scale. The senior ranks of the professions are a closed shop. If social mobility is to become anything other than a pipedream they will have to open up. Unfortunately, the evidence collected for this report suggests that there is only, at best, limited progress being made in prising open the professions.' (Milburn, 2012: 4)

There is a perception that intergenerational social mobility has declined in Britain since the 1970s, however O'Brien et al (2017), make the point that distinguishing between 'absolute and relative' mobility is important when assessing trends over time. Absolute mobility has declined because in the 1960s and 1970s there was more 'room at the top' than

there is today, but relative mobility has neither decreased nor increased, as Themelis (2008: 435) says:

> '…it is not that the middle class have 'slid' into working-class positions but rather that, while the middle class preserved their position, some working-class individuals filled certain middle-class 'spaces' that emerged due to the labour market restructuring.'

This is confirmed by Goldthorpe and Mills (2008: 98) who argue that relative mobility rates have remained 'remarkably stable' since the 1970s. Absolute mobility has decreased since the 1970s. The extent to which relative mobility has changed or remained the same is a debate that is worth having elsewhere. However, in the context of this dissertation, studies into comparable trends in intergenerational social mobility point to the odds, or relative chances of upward social mobility, being consistently low.

**2.3 The social composition of the workforce in UK film and television production**

In studies of class origins and outcomes in the CCIs, O'Brien et al (2016) and Oakley et al (2017) have divided the eight occupational classifications (highlighted in Table 1) into four groups in order to assess the origins of creative workers. These consist of: NC-SEC 1; NC-SEC 2; NC-SEC 3-5 and NC-SEC 6-8, meaning that working-class origins are classified by parents' occupations in classifications 6-8. As was mentioned above, these classifications of class origins are problematic, but nonetheless provide an overview.

Using statistics from the National Workforce Survey (2014), O'Brien et al (2016) show that across most of the CCIs there is a 'general under-representation of those from working-class origins' (116), and that there is a 'class origin pay gap' for those that do manage to sustain a career in them. These class-based inequalities are more acute in UKFTV production,

where the workforce is overly represented by people from NS-SEC 2 origins – 35.2% compared to a national average of 15%. And underrepresented by people from NS-SEC 4 origins – 9.1% compared to a national average of 34.7%. In another study, Oakley et al (2017) working-class representation is slightly higher at 12.4%, but this might be because the sample includes employment in radio. When compared to other CCIs, both O'Brien et al (2016) and Oakley et al (2017) show that the composition of the UKFTV workforce is among the most under-representative in terms of working-class origins, Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and female workers.

A report on employment in the CCIs by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2016) divides the NC-SEC classifications into two social groups, categorising workers from NS-SEC 1-4 as the 'more advantaged' group; and those from NS-SEC 5-8 as the 'less advantaged' group. Using these measures, the report estimates that 88.1% are from 'more advantaged' backgrounds and 11.9% from less advantaged backgrounds (DCMS, 2016: 24).[1]

Using education as a proxy for class origins, a survey of the UK film and TV workforce by Creative Skillset (2014), which included education in its analysis, also suggests that there is a high proportion of workers who attended private rather than state schools – 19% in both Film and TV, compared to 7% nationally.

There are slight differences in estimates, and in how class origins are measured, in the data above. Nonetheless, what it all points to is that UKFTV is an industry which is more open to white men from MCOs, and more closed to women, BAME groups and people from WCOs. What is less clear from the data is how this translates across occupational groups.

[1] This way of dividing the origins of people into just two groups, corresponds more closely with the way I have divided the sample for this dissertation, although that was done through type of school rather than parents occupation. In the research sample, the fathers of the men from working-class backgrounds tended to work in occupations that are termed NS-SEC 5 or 6 occupations in contemporary classifications.

### 2.3.1 The composition of occupational groups in UKFTV

A complication of understanding the class composition of different occupational groups in UKFTV is that much of the popular and academic attention is – and has historically been – focused on a small number people in elite occupations, sometimes referred to in the industry as 'creative talent' (Mayer, 2011). These workers have careers that culminate in what are sometimes referred to in the film industry as 'above-the-line' or higher status positions in the hierarchy as compared with those that are 'below-the-line'. The costs of film production are divided between above-the-line (ATL) and below-the-line (BTL). This accounting device emerged in the Hollywood studio system in the 1940s and has been broadly replicated across international film production ever since (Dawson and Holmes, 2012). The main creative 'talent': principal actors, directors, screen-writers and producers are ATL, and are generally considered creators of the content and meaning of films (Powdermaker 1950), while technical employees, such as sound mixers, camera operators, hair and make-up artists, focus pullers, carpenters and boom operators are BTL and considered to have less creative input to film content (Banks, 2010). The general consensus is that the composition of the workforce in high status positions is white, male and middle-class. However, less is understood about the composition further 'down-the-line'.

In many cases, film and TV occupations require very little formal accreditation, especially the specialised industry occupations such as camera operator or production manager (Creative Skillset, Job profiles, 2019). This means that some of the institutional barriers to disadvantaged groups in the traditional professions are not so prominent in film production. There is also a large variety of occupational groups in film production, which means there is a diversity of trajectories into film and TV occupations, suggesting it is

potentially open to a diverse range of recruits. Unfortunately, data concerning class origins and careers in UKFTV tends to omit clear class trends across occupations below-the-line, where there is potentially greater scope for diversity. There are occupations which are traditionally more open to women, such as: hairdressing, make-up, wardrobe and costume, continuity and some production office roles (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012). There are also occupations in studio construction and lighting, which are traditionally more open to men from WCOs.

Nonetheless, the limited data available on the social composition of the workforce in different film and TV occupations (O'Brien et al, 2016), suggests that, even below-the-line, many occupations are predominantly filled by people from middle-class origins, as research by O'Brien et al (2016) shows just 14% of film workers in what are considered below-the-line positions come from WCOs (NS-SEC 6-8). This is much lower than the UK labour market average of 34.7%. People from WCOs are also likely to be paid less than those from MCOs, indicating a class origin pay gap (O'Brien, et al, 2016). What is clear from the data is that the UKFTV workforce is disproportionately filled with people from MCOs, while individuals from WCOs who do gain access tend to earn less than their middle-class colleagues. What is not clear from the data is how, and to what extent, this class pay gap is replicated in specific film occupations.

The conclusion drawn from this is that while ethnic minorities, women and people from WCOs may have more opportunities to enter some occupations over others, on the whole, they are under-represented (Davies and Sigthorsson, 2013; O'Brien et al, 2016; Randle, 2016; Oakley et al, 2017). This under-representation becomes more acute in higher positions, where decisions are made about the content and meaning of films and television programmes.

### 2.3.2 Intergenerational social mobility trends in UKFTV

It is not clear from the literature whether class-based inequality has increased, decreased or remained the same in UKFTV. O'Brien et al (2018) compared the class origins of those entering the CCIs in 2011 with workers who entered in 1981. Their assessment is that although statistics show more people from WCOs were entering the CCIs in 1981 than 2011, this is partly as a result of absolute social mobility rather than relative social mobility, meaning that there were more individuals from WCOs entering the CCIs because they were born in a period when more people were considered 'working-class'. The actual opportunities for those from WCOs when compared to those from MCOs have remained stable. In other words, when compared to someone from MCOs, the relative chances or odds for someone from WCOs of entering and making a career in the CCIs, was low in both 1981 and 2011. Relative intergenerational social mobility in the CCIs has therefore remained consistently low since 1981.

The lack of data on the class composition of the CCIs historically means that it is hard to trace these trends further back in the past. Banks (2017) makes the assertion that it is a 'reasonable assumption' that there was a similar pattern of intergenerational social mobility for those entering in the 1950s and 1960s. Namely that occupations in the CCIs were more open to individuals from WCOs because there were more jobs and more people classified as having 'working-class' parents. Banks (2017) argues that the relative chances for people from WCOs entering the CCIs, especially of progressing into higher positions, have always been low.

**2.4 Class origins and career trajectories: A Bourdieusian perspective**

The following sections explore some of the explanations for class-based inequality in the contemporary CCIs and UKFTV more specifically. However, this section explains the Bourdieusian perspective I have adopted to understand class origins and career outcomes. This does not mean I am arguing this is the only way to understand the association between class and career trajectories. Research into how employment practices in the CCIs can become exclusionary for different social groups, has often looked at them through a Bourdieusian lens, often making use of Bourdieu's concepts of 'capitals', 'habitus' and 'field', discussed below. Grugulis and Stoyanova, (2012) and Lee (2011) focused mainly on the forms of capitals; economic, cultural and social, required to understand access and entry into UKFTV, and the way social capital, in particular, plays an important part in career progression. Other research has focused on the interplay between habitus and field to understand the way inherited capitals and a middle-class habitus create advantages in the field of UKFTV (Randle et al, 2015). Further research has traced longer life trajectories into, and through, occupations in CCIs: McLeod, et al (2015) in advertising, Freidman et al (2016) in film acting, and Freidman and Laurison (2019) in TV production. To reiterate, this does not mean to say this is the only way to understand class-based inequality in the CCIs, or other sectors. It is simply that it is the way I have chosen to understand it historically and many other researchers have chosen to understand it in the contemporary context.

The central pillars in Bourdieu's (1984) theory is the way class privilege is reproduced from origin to destination through the interplay between habitus, capitals and field (HCF). The social trajectories of individuals and groups through HCF, which he sets out in 'Distinction' (1984) frame the theory of class that I have used to understand the trajectories of the 37 men in the research sample. Bourdieu (1984: 97) makes the point that the 'the secondary

characteristics which are often the basis of their social value (prestige or discredit)' are usually masked in occupational classifications and debates surrounding class outcomes, which are often driven by Weberian concepts of 'life chances'. Bourdieu argues that life chances stem from the hidden (secondary) characteristics – namely class habitus and a stock of inherited capitals; economic, social and cultural – which individuals bring with them into the labour market.

### 2.4.1 Class habitus and social trajectories

Bourdieu's focus is on trajectories towards and through occupational groups, which he argues begin with habitus: the dispositions towards taste, which act as codes that people use to identify themselves and distinguish themselves from another social class. Bourdieu calls this 'class habitus' (1984: 95). Habitus is formed in early life through family, school and social surroundings. Bourdieu argues that throughout a life course, 'individuals do not move about in social space in a random way, partly because they are subject to the forces which structure this space' (1984: 104). Career destinations often correlate with the hereditary capitals and habitus that people inherit, from which he argues 'there corresponds a band of more or less equally probable trajectories leading to more or less equivalent positions' (104).

A career trajectory suggests that if we know the starting point then we can predict, to some extent, the end point (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). This could be perceived as deterministic, however Bourdieu did not view all trajectories as inevitable or determined at birth, but argued that they could shift due to individual agency and/or as a consequence of extreme circumstances such as war or newly emerging occupations through technology (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu refers to this type of social shift across fields as transverse trajectories, arguing they are more significant than upward mobility that takes place within

the same field (this is discussed further in Chapter 5). Adopting a Bourdieusian lens does not necessarily mean that class origin determines class outcome. Instead it is a tool for 'properly registering the resources that individuals bring with them into occupations' (Friedman and Laurison 2019: 198). To explain an advantaged trajectory, Friedman and Laurison (2019) use the metaphor of a 'following wind' or a 'gust of privilege' that often helps those from middle-class origins on a path towards elite occupations. Conversely, people who are on an upwardly mobile social trajectory from WCOs, are very often having to go against the wind, and therefore find it harder to stay on an upward trajectory. This metaphor from Freidman and Laurison (2019), encapsulates the central argument to Bourdieu's class theory.

### 2.4.2 Inherited capitals

Capitals include economic, social and cultural capital, all of which can become a potential advantage in certain fields (social spaces) if they have 'symbolic capital' or are 'field-specific capitals' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). What is important in terms of the way capitals relate to class origins, is that Bourdieu 'insists that our class background is defined by our parents' stocks of economic, social and cultural capital' (Freidman and Laurison, 2019: 14). Economic capital is measured through income inheritance, which translates into 'other resources such as time' (Randle et al, 2015), and higher education, for instance money gives someone the time to volunteer and gain experience on an unpaid internship that could enhance career prospects rather than work in a low-paid job which is not related to future career opportunities. Social capital refers to membership of social groups; the type and variety of social circles can often provide different levels of advantage (Freidman et al, 2017; Lee, 2011).

Identifying the interplay between inherited economic and social capital and field is fairly straightforward. The inheritance of cultural capital, and how this is deployed in fields, is harder to identify. Embodied cultural capital relates to culture individuals are repeatedly exposed to in their early years and the way they are taught to 'embody and deploy' it in social settings (Friedman and Laurison, 2019: 197). This relates to the interplay between class habitus and fields, as it is the types of cultural capital people have, and the way they are deployed, that act as class codes. This interplay between habitus, cultural capital and field is a key element to understanding class reproduction through Bourdieu's theory. I found this interplay between habitus, field and embodied cultural capitals difficult to identify in the research sample. However, it was possible to identify what Savage et al (2015) refer to as 'cultural legitimacy' in the sample of oral history interviews that I selected.

Following their Bourdieu-inspired class survey, Savage et al (2015) argue that a way to identify someone from MCOs is not necessarily to make a distinction between high-brow and low-brow cultural capital, but based on the 'conviction' and 'ease' (Savage et al, 2015:108) with which they talk about culture in social settings, or as Savage et al (2015: 108) put it; 'the degree of conviction in the *legitimacy* of their own cultural activities'. Because of this greater 'conviction' and 'ease', people from MCOs are more likely to disseminate their tastes, dispositions and cultural capitals in social spaces, which are then identified by other social actors in fields with a shared habitus. This then has symbolic importance, becoming a 'field-specific capital' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019) meaning it has currency in the 'right' social space. This can of course work the other way, as capitals have different currency depending what field they are used in. Having 'legitimate' cultural capital would not be of much use in certain occupational spaces, where working-class habitus is more dominant.

### 2.4.3 Field and occupations

Fields are social spaces with their own implicit rules where different agents operate through relations relevant to that particular social space (Browit and Nelson, 2004). Possessing 'field-specific capital' (Freidman and Laurison, 2019: 199) which are the dominant capitals, assets and resources (CARs) required in a field, enables people to manoeuvre for power in it (Savage, 2015). Field can refer to different social spaces, sometimes applied to a sector or industry, and/or occupational group, in which different field boundaries are identified (Ozbilgin et al, 2005). Identifying field boundaries in research is not a straightforward process as they are interchangeable social spaces. At a micro level, fields are shaped by the routines and customs that become normative for the social actors who enter into them. At a macro level, fields are shaped around the wider structures of employment and the social contexts they are in, which also change and shift over time. Fields are therefore dynamic rather than static.

### 2.4.4 Technical capital

The term 'technical capital' was introduced by Bourdieu (2005), as a form of cultural capital but, as Friedman and Laurison (2019) point out, when compared to the rest of his theoretical framework, it has been comparatively under-theorised by Bourdieu and other researchers using his framework. Technical capital is defined by Freidman and Laurison (2019: 203) as: '…forms of practical expertise, knowledge, know-how – or what Bourdieu called 'hands-on skill' – that is amassed in occupational settings and can be leveraged to progress one's career, or more generally converted into other capitals (economic and social).'

Savage (2010) argues that technical capital is an important part of Bourdieu's theory when analysing social mobility and class in the UK historically. Savage's argument is that a

new technical middle-class was emerging in the 1930s and expanding during the early post-war period in Britain through growing opportunities in engineering and the sciences. This group of what Savage (2010: 57) calls 'technical experts', were, on the whole, male; they came from both MCOs and WCOs and incorporated an identity shaped around 'practical skills and its own form of craft intellectualism' (Savage, 2010: 84). Freidman and Laurison (2019: 205), suggest that this tradition has persisted in contemporary occupational settings, such as engineering and IT, which they say are 'more socially open' (while still often excluding women), than many other elite occupational spaces:

> '…what is championed in these areas is a distinct 'ethic of expertise', one that is proclaimed as more transparent, more 'meritocratic', and that self-consciously repudiates the shadowy aesthetic principles associated with Bourdieusian embodied cultural capital'

On the surface it is difficult to see how technical capital differs from human capital, which incorporates individual technical skills with educational attainment to understand how individuals equip themselves for the labour market. However, when understanding the interplay between habitus, field and cultural capital, it is possible to see the way in which technical capital might compete as a field-specific capital in certain occupational spaces and how this might be utilised by men from different social backgrounds.

## 2.5 Structural arrangements and employment patterns in the Creative and Cultural Industries

UKFTV is located within the broader field of the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs) which have some common employment practices, often based on 'project-based models of production' (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). While there are differences across industries within

CCIs, there are common characteristics in terms of work organisation. It is a sector that is perceived to be unpredictable both in terms of production and consumption (Caves, 2003), where work often takes place 'beyond the boundary of formal organisations, and certainly beyond traditional workplaces...' (Baker and Hesmondhalgh, 2011: 54).

Practices and customs within many CCIs have also been shaped by histories that have, 'legitimised the perception of artistic products and producers as unique and special' (Randle et al (2015), meaning that people who are perceived to have so-called 'artistic' and 'creative' talent are given considerable autonomy and power. This means that there is often a rather ambiguous understanding of what constitutes talent in the higher status positions in UKFTV. Freidman and Laurison (2019: 202), pointing to their research in a UK Television production company, suggest that elite occupations, such as commissioning, tended to be 'areas of work characterised by a heightened sense of ambiguity of knowledge', where, they suggest, 'what is often deployed to plug this uncertainty, is the self-presentational baggage of a privileged class origin', which Bourdieu refers to as 'aesthetic disposition' and 'embodied cultural capital' (Freidman and Laurison, 2019: 202). This means that 'field-specific capital' (199) in many elite occupational groups, is very often based on a 'rather arbitrary' (198) set of assets and resources. Or what Bourdieu (1986) refers to as; 'symbolic mystery'.

Across the CCIs employment is often structured around project work, which has led to labels such as 'boundaryless careers' (Jones, 1996), with suggestions this has resulted in a new 'creative class' (Florida, 2002), who have opportunities to move across organisations in the pursuit of creative freedom and autonomy. These assertions have tended to ignore issues of inequality in the sector, which reveal a darker side to employment. Eikhof and Warhurst (2013) argue that the project-based models of production which are typical in the CCIs have led to 'systemic social inequalities' in employment for women, BAME groups and people from

WCOs. In this model of production there is a high level of job insecurity, un-waged entry-level jobs and self-funded training, which requires 'financial capital for buffering low or no wages at entry level' (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). While they exist across the CCIs, these employment practices have been shown to be prevalent in UKFTV (Blair et al, 2001; Randle, 2015).

### 2.5.1 Structural arrangements and employment patterns in Film and Television

McKinlay and Smith (2009:29) argue that the structural arrangements in the creative industries have gone through a 'profound shift from internal and regulated labour markets to labour as atomised independent contractors'. While this is mainly true of the way structures in UKFTV have changed, there are differences between film and TV historically, which suggest these shifts have been less profound in film than television production. These are discussed in chapter three of this dissertation.

There are also slightly different contemporary employment structures in film and television production. The film industry has been described as a 'cottage industry', in which films are often produced by small companies or through individual producers who raise capital to fund one film (Blair et al, 2001). Employment contracts are generally 'all in deals', (Blair et al, 2001: 182) for the duration of one film, often with no overtime pay or compensation for unsociable hours. In the TV industry there are still large UK employers such as the BBC, ITV and Sky, which can offer more secure employment. However, these companies increasingly sub-contract production to small independent companies who employ workers on a freelance basis (Antcliff et al, 2007; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012).

Whatever the differences between television and film production and how they have developed, employment in both has a high proportion of freelance workers, when compared

to the national average, with estimates suggesting the figure is 49% in film (BFI, 2017) and approximately 45% in TV production (Randle, 2015). UKFTV is therefore an extreme exemplar of freelance employment (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013). Within this environment workers need to re-enter the labour market on a regular basis (Randle, 2015), often accessing employment through 'semi-permanent work groups', which are assembled by Heads of Department (HODs), to overcome employment uncertainty (Blair, 2001). In this environment, informal networks and contacts are the main ways to enter and make careers (Lee 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova 2012).

The field of UKFTV has been identified as dominated by middle-class habitus (Randle, et al, 2015), where, 'an obligation to be free' (Lee, 2011) and arbitrary notions of creative and artistic talent have shaped many occupational identities and provide workers with heightened status (Friedman and Laurison, 2019). Research into the way people enter and make careers in UKFTV point to certain customs and practices in the industry which exclude people from WCOs.

**2.6 Class origins and class discriminatory entry practices**

Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997), who have used a Bourdieusian approach to understand early career decision making, use the term 'horizons for action' to explain the way young people make decisions based on their social location and the rational options they perceive to be obtainable from their own social origins. This is supported by other research related to early careers across the labour market (Reay, 2005; Greenbank, 2009; Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011). Research into the entry-level practices across CCIs generally (Siebert and Wilson, 2013) and UKFTV specifically (Allen et al, 2013; Ashton, 2015; Randle et al, 2015) suggest entrants from WCOs face a number of processes of closure in early

careers, which act as a class barrier, effectively meaning that a career in the CCIs is very often restricted to exclusively middle-class entrants.

Training and development in film and TV production is often done on-the-job, by watching more experienced workers through 'communities of practice' (Grugrulis and Stoyanova 2011). A common access route into training and development is through entry-level internships, which can provide valuable industry-specific training and knowledge, while introducing entrants into social networks. However, as Grugrulis and Stoyanova (2011) point out, in the project-based model of production, where work is only available on a short-term basis, there are limited opportunities for new entrants to watch and learn and build relationships with more experienced workers. As will be explored further through the primary data in chapter seven, this was different during the period of the British Studio System from the late 1920s to the 1950s, where the learning environment was more conducive for entrants to develop their careers and learn from more experienced workers. However, as will be explored further through the research data, much like the contemporary industry, during the Studio System era, being seen to be able to 'fit in' was a key factor in entering and making careers in film production.

Accessing internships is seen as the main entry-level route across the CCIs (Siebert and Wilson, 2013; Ashton, 2015). The main criticism of internships is that are very often unpaid. It is estimated that up to 50% of entrants spend some part of their early careers in unpaid work (Randle, 2015). Entrants can expect to work for free from anywhere up to 18 months (Siebert and Wilson, 2013). This entry-level system therefore acts as an economic barrier to those from poorer backgrounds, who find it difficult to sustain a living and often have to work long hours in another industry. Having a secondary paid job has the added disadvantage of reducing flexibility, as entrants are very often expected to be available at short notice to work

on projects, making it harder to impress potential employers who view employee flexibility around hours as an industry standard (Allen et al, 2013). In this way economic capital can be used as a time resource, with entrants from MCOs more able to work for free for longer periods (Randle et al, 2015), while also having more freedom to commit to flexible hours.

Accessing unpaid internships through a social networks is a common practice in UKFTV production. Siebert and Wilson (2013: 716) argue that this practice, which they say has become the 'social mechanism' for accessing employment, is exclusionary, and potentially hinders upward social mobility in the CCIs. Informal access practices mean that entrants often enter film and TV occupations on the 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1995). These networks tend to be accessed through middle-class family or private school networks and are extended to the 'right' people, with high status and influence in the CCIs (Allen, et al, 2013, Friedman et al, 2017). This is an advantage for entrants from MCOs as they tend to have a higher stock of inherited social capital (Friedman et al, 2017).

It is therefore harder for young people from WCOs to get started in UKFTV due to a lack of economic and social capital (Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Siebert and Wilson, 2013; Ashton, 2015; Randle 2015; Randle et al, 2015; Friedman et al, 2017). This is then intensified by ideologies within the creative industries, where being seen as a person who is flexible and able to work for free is regarded as a signifier of an 'ideal' and committed worker. Referring to these entry-level trends Ashton (2015) has labelled entering the CCIs as an unpaid 'rite of passage' culture, arguing that entrants who are unable to access internships are perceived to be lacking commitment and initiative, which leads to them being excluded from future paid work as they do not show the 'right' attitude.

**2.7 Class origin and social capital aided recruitment**

While networking and social capital are used to understand careers elsewhere in the labour market, research points to their heightened importance in film and TV (Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Randle et al, 2015; Freidman et al, 2017). To counter employment uncertainty, film production workers often join 'semi-permanent work groups' (Blair, 2001) to access jobs across different productions, and are often dependent on 'social capital aided recruitment' (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012: 1311) to enter and sustain careers as it has become 'the key part of the way the labour market operate(s)' (ibid). This has become embedded in the UKFTV industry to the extent that 'the network-provider is presented as the ideal within the contemporary management discourse' (Lee, 2011: 549). In this networking recruitment system, there is a 'responsibility for recommendations', (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012: 1315) which is seen as a way of policing quality control and skills. This means that workers themselves take on the role of sourcing candidates for jobs.

Social capital is sometimes used in combination with the concept of the 'strength of weak ties' (Grannoveter, 1994), which refers to the high status and loose associations that people have which are used strategically to improve network intelligence and gain employment. Drawing on this idea, Putman (2000) developed the concept of 'bridging capital' to understand how people from disadvantaged backgrounds were able to broaden their weak ties across different socio-economic groups, arguing that it was a potential tool to increase upward social mobility. However, in research in labour markets across Europe, Pichler and Wallace (2009), found that Putnam's (2000) concept of 'bonding capital' – social capital within groups that from similar class backgrounds – rather than bridging capital across classes were more common ways that people used networks to access employment, 'the principle of homophily' (Pichler and Wallace, 2009: 320) is much more common in networks therefore

reducing opportunities for social mobility. This tendency towards bonding rather than bridging capital has been replicated in research on social mobility in the UK (littler, 2008). This has been replicated in research into UKFTV, where the dependency on social capital aided recruitment in UKFTV has been identified as exclusionary for disadvantaged groups and specifically entrants from WCOs (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Randle et al, 2015, Randle 2016). Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) argue that networks in UKFTV are formed around the principle of homophily, in which middle-class entrants are often able to build high-quality contacts, as they are more likely to belong to a network with influence and can therefore form stronger bonds to secure future employment. Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012) call this process of recruitment 'opportunity hoarding'.

It remains unclear what capitals and dispositions derived from working-class origins can benefit people in the field of UKFTV. As was discussed above, 'technical capital' (Bourdieu, 2005; Savage, 2010; Friedman and Laurison, 2019) might well provide more opportunities in some occupational groups in film production, but this has not yet been researched in a contemporary context. One of the aims of this dissertation is to do so in an historical context.

McLeod et al (2009) point out that the working-class habitus can be beneficial in the context of advertising. In the 'creative' roles in advertising working relationships are very often partnerships where a 'creative tension' between working-class and middle-class partners was seen as benefiting both parties. Also, a general awareness and understanding of working-class experience and cultures helped workers from WCOs 'communicate more emphatically with target audiences who shared their background' (Mcleod et al, 2009: 1034). However, despite working class habitus providing potential advantages in advertising, McLeod et al (2009) point out that the project model of employment means that, despite the

success stories and examples of upward social mobility, there were 'likely to be many more who struggled to no avail' (Mcleod et al 2009: 1034).

Studies of the ways WCOs might provide an advantage in the field of UKFTV and the extent to which this may differ across occupational groups are lacking in the research on class origins and careers in the industry. However, while there may or may not be some differences in certain occupations, the research that has been done points to the field of UKFTV being one in which being white, male and middle-class is generally an advantage.

**Conclusion**

Bourdieu (1984: 97) makes the point that the 'the secondary characteristics which are often the basis of their social value (prestige or discredit)' are often masked in socio-occupational classifications and debates surrounding class outcomes. Understanding the trajectory of individuals before they enter the labour market, with a focus on hereditary capitals, habitus and educational background, provides a better picture *how* and *why* they got to that position. Once these secondary characteristics are revealed it becomes possible to see how people from different backgrounds strategise and adapt to a particular field.

The argument in the field of UKFTV is that inherited capitals provide career advantages for people from MCOs. Economic capital, deriving from familial financial support, can be used to work for long periods without pay, creating an advantage in terms of entry, while also allowing individuals to go for periods without wages later on in their careers (Holton and McKay, 2007; Siebert and Wilson, 2013; Eikhof and Warhurst, 2013; Allen et al, 2013; Ashton, 2015; Randle et al, 2015; Randle, 2016: Friedman, 2016). Middle-class familial and school contacts have been shown to provide greater opportunities to access more highly regarded

internships, which are perceived within the CCIs generally as important entry-level routes (Allen et al, 2013). Social capital, especially to higher status networks, has been identified as bonding capital rather than bridging capital in UKFTV. This provides more opportunities for people from MCOs to make careers within employment structures that are dominated by social capital aided recruitment (Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Randle et al, 2015; Friedman et al, 2017), which has led to 'opportunity hoarding' (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012). Moreover, the field of UKFTV has been identified as being dominated by middle-class habitus (Randle et al, 2015). This affects working-class entrants who find it harder to adapt to this middle-class field when they embark on an internship (Allen et al, 2013).

In summary, the research into the association between class and careers in UKFTV points to working-class exclusion and class discriminatory practices in the contemporary context. The following chapter provides an historical literature review of employment in the film industry, focusing on similar themes to those above. In doing so, chapter three reveals how underexplored the issue of class and employment is in the context of the film industry and the CCIs generally.

## Chapter 3: A history of employment in UK film production

The aim of this chapter is to provide a historical review of employment in the UK film industry, with an emphasis on trends and practices which impacted on the way people from different social classes could enter and make careers. While evidence points to social inequalities in the contemporary context, there is very little record of the association between class and careers in the past, which is not just true of UK film and TV, but of the creative industries more generally (Banks, 2017), this leaves a gap in our understanding of the past, which makes it difficult to trace continuities and trends as well as shifts regarding class and employment. As Randle et al (2001) point out:

> "…in order to more fully understand the present state of employment in the film industry, it is necessary to place current forms and trends of employment in their historical and developmental context. However, the inherent difficulties of contextualising employment practice in the film industry should not be understated due to the scarcity of empirical data concerning its history."

As will become apparent from this chapter, there is a scarcity of data regarding the sort of employment trends and practices which could be used to better understand the historical context of class origins and careers. So, for instance very little is known about: the composition of the workforce, employment stability and instability, practices regarding access and training and issues relating to low pay and early careers.

The majority of careers in the research sample started between 1927 and 1938, when the film industry went through a period of growth in terms of an increase in production

companies and employment rates (Jones, 1987). Careers in the sample generally continued until the 1970s. However, a potted history of the film industry from 1927 until 1970 would require more than a chapter and would not provide the relevant background and context from which to understand the key issues surrounding employment and the association between class and careers. While various periods of history are referred to, the focus is on that from 1927 until the early 1950s, which has been referred to by some film historians as the period of the 'British Studio System' (Higson, 1997; Street, 1997).

Film production began before 1927; there had been a number of production companies and distribution companies that emerged before and directly after WW1. However, as Hill (1986:37) points out, the 1930s and 1940s were a period 'when the film industry had evolved from small-scale entrepreneurial activity towards large-scale oligopoly through a process of horizontal and vertical integration.' In the late 1920s and 1930s the duopoly of the Associated British Picture Corporation (ABPC) and the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation (GBPC) 'formed a substantial infrastructure for the industry' (Ryall, 1997: 34), this duopoly was then realigned around the Rank organisation in the 1940s and early 1950s. The exact period during which the 'Studio System' existed and what this really means in the UK context are both debatable, however what it represents is a system of film making that was historically distinctive in that the integration of production, distribution and exhibition meant UK film companies had the capacity to reinvest profits from cinema receipts back into new production projects on a consistent basis.

Section 3.1 provides a brief historical background to class origins, education and career trajectories between the world wars. This is by no means comprehensive but does provide relevant context to these issues nationally and regionally. Section 3.2 draws together the

limited literature regarding the composition (especially the social composition) of the film production workforce historically. Section 3.3 discusses the impact of the 1927 Quota Act and the political economy surrounding the emerging industry in the 1930s, which has been documented historically (Higson, 1997; Street 1997; Ryall, 1997; Blair and Rainnie, 2000). The last three sections (3.4, 3.5, 3.6) review the limited literature surrounding employment during the Studio System era. In doing so, several gaps are highlighted, especially surrounding employment stability across studios and access routes to film production and training in the studios. This chapter therefore signposts the key gaps in our historical understanding of employment, which are then explored through the research sample in chapters 5 to 8.

### 3.1 Class origins, education and career opportunities between the two World Wars

The generational cohort under investigation were all educated before WW2, with the majority educated in the 1920s and early 1930s. In this period a key approximation of class background was education. Before the Education Act 1944, which started the 11-plus grammar school system, the majority of children (approximately 80%) attended state schools and entered the labour market aged 14 and, on the whole, came from working-class backgrounds (Branson and Heinnemann, 1973). Approximately 20% of children attended private schools or fee-paying county grammar schools, most of whom came from middle-class backgrounds (McKibbin, 1998). In some cases the level of education in fee paying private schools was not much better than in state schools (Seaman, 1970), however McKibbin (1998) points out that private schools, and to a lesser extent county grammar schools, were still desirable to parents in lower paid middle-class occupations who wanted to maintain middle-

class status, which they viewed as important for their reputation and the future career prospects of their children (particularly their sons).

The career trajectories of men from WCOs and MCOs were not clearly defined, however the Ashton and Field hierarchy (1976) – a traditional approach to class and career trajectories – provides an insight into the career choices of men entering the labour market. Although it is a study from the 1970s, it resonates with the accounts of the film workers in the research sample who were entering the labour market in the 1920s and 1930s. Ashton and Field focus on the association between family background, education and occupational choice, highlighting three typical career trajectories for men from different class origins. Men from MCOs were more likely to have what they call 'extended careers', often in professional or managerial occupations and men from working-class backgrounds were split between two careers; a 'short-term career' which entails technical training and entry into skilled manual work; and a 'careerless' career, which refers to school-leavers with very little direction who often embark on low-skilled jobs after which they sometimes drift into a more focused occupational trajectory. Ashton and Field (1976) follow the socialisation thesis, arguing that family, social surroundings and educational experiences shape what they call class 'perspectives' (Ashton and Field, 1976: 13) regarding career options and decisions. Borrowing from Ashton and Field (1976), Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) refer to these perspectives as 'horizons for action'.

Middle-class parents in the 1920s and 1930s generally had better access to a wider scope of social contacts than working-class parents due to voluntary endeavours and membership in associations like the Rotary Club (Mckibbbin, 1998; Hall, 2002). The networks could be used to help middle-class school leavers to gain access to a range of occupations,

which offered extended career opportunities. A popular middle-class pastime between the wars was to organise cocktail parties, inviting various guests who were 'socially useful' (McKibbin, 1998) contacts. What middle-class families often wanted for their children, and mostly their sons, were secure, professional careers within the 'salariat' (McKibbin, 1998), however they also encouraged children to pursue careers they were interested in. Within working-class communities there were comparatively fewer opportunities through social networks. Jobs were obtained through smaller networks of friends or family members, most of whom worked in traditional working-class occupations which offered short rather than extended careers (Hall, 2002).

Working-class short careers and middle-class extended careers were therefore typical classed trajectories in the 1920s and 1930s. But people do not always travel on typical career trajectories. There were some important occupational shifts taking place between the wars, which impacted on working-class men in London and the outer London regions (Weightman and Humphries, 2007). In electrical engineering there were a number of new occupations, with the potential for more short-term and extended careers, which included newly emerging jobs in the creative and cultural industries at the time, such as radio, music and film (Low, 1984).

### 3.2 The historical composition of the film production workforce

There is a paucity of employment records in the UK film industry historically. Some estimates suggest that employment in UK film studios rose from 4,418 to 6,638 from 1921-1931 (Jones, 1987). Low (1984) estimates the figure at around 10,000 in 1937, based on figures provided by the Film Industry Employees' Council (FIEC) in the 1930s. There were then

high levels of unemployment following a downturn in production in 1936. In 1947 there was another industry-wide slump, which led to widespread unemployment (ACTT, 1983). In the early 1950s there was shift away from film production towards television. By the 1960s the number of ACTT members working in film was roughly 6,000 (Reid, 2008), with numbers employed in TV considerably higher.

The emergence of the Studio System and the implementation of sound offered a number of new employment opportunities in the early 1930s with an increase in existing jobs in camera and the emergence of new jobs in sound, continuity and production management and head of department roles (Low, 1984; UK Census, 1931 and 1951). These provided new employment opportunities, but who actually took advantage of them is unclear as the class, gender and racial composition of the workforce is not well documented.

Most employment was concentrated in studios around London and the south east (some of which were built during the 1930s[2]) and many of the distribution companies located in Wardour Street, Soho (Wood, 1986), resulting in a regional concentration of employment in London and the south east. The growth in employment contrasted with the rest of the UK and Europe where the Great Depression had led to increasing unemployment in the early 1930s. However, the situation in London and the south east was quite different, where something of an economic boom was taking place, with an increase in jobs in construction and light engineering, attracting economic migrant workers from across the UK in the 1930s (Weightman and Humphries, 2007). Workers in construction and light engineering had skills that could be transferred to studio construction, lighting, sound and camera departments in film. Film studios attracted economic and political migrants from across Europe in the 1930s

[2] Pinewood Studios, Denham Studios and Shepperton Studios were all built in the 1930s. For a full list of studios built in this period see Wood, L. British Films 1927-1939 (BFI website)

(Low, 1984). These were mainly white Europeans. There was some ethnic diversity during the studio system era, but on the whole, it was rare and there were no examples of non-white workers in the BEHP archive that started their careers before 1947. There were, however, some Jewish migrants from Europe and also some British born Jewish workers in the UK film industry in the 1930s, in a range of behind-camera jobs (Low, 1984). Migrant workers from the USA also came to work in UK film studios in the 1930s. There are some (rare) examples of employment opportunities for non-white US migrant workers, such as the Chinese-born American cinematographer, James Wong-Howe (Low, 1984), and the African American dance choreographer, Buddy Bradley (Bourne, 2001). The African American actor Paul Robeson starred in several UK productions and was one of the most popular actors in the UK in the 1930s. There were black and Asian people who worked on a casual basis as film extras (crowd workers) and who attempted to organise independent unions (Jones, 1987; Bourne, 2001) and a few prominent black actors emerged in the 1930s, such as the British Guyana-born actor Robert Adams who became active in improving conditions and opportunities for black actors in theatre and film in the 1940s (Bourne, 2001). However, despite increased immigration in the 1940s and 1950s, I could not find evidence of many black and Asian workers from the UK or British colonies in film production (certainly in behind-the-camera roles), with the exception of rare UK productions overseas. According to a history of the main technician union (ACTT), it was not until the 1970s and 1980s that non-white filmmakers and technicians from the UK began to access employment and even then it was a tiny minority (ACTT, 1984; Bourne, 2001).

The gender composition of workers in film production is also based on estimates that are difficult to confirm. It is estimated that there were over 2,000 women working in film production in the 1930s (Jones, 1987). There were gendered roles in hair and make-up,

continuity and costume, but also in clerical roles in film studio offices (Harper, 2000). A very small number of women were able to progress into higher positions such as art director and editor roles (Harper, 2000). WW2 provided a few more opportunities for women to break into male-dominated roles (Harper, 2000, Fox, 2014), but on the whole opportunities remained mainly in female occupations, such as costume, hairdresser and continuity, some of which resulted in well paid and fulfilling careers, but which left women fairly isolated on production floors, as a continuity supervisor said in 1944; 'apart from the hairdresser, the continuity girl is the only feminine member of the floor unit' (former continuity supervisor quoted in Williams, 2013: 604)

The class composition of workers in film production is underexplored. The literature on women working in film tends to omit their social class origins, but nonetheless implies they came from middle-class origins (see women referred to in Harper, 2000 and Williams, 2013). The BEHP interview data I examine in more detail in Chapter 5 suggests that the limited opportunities offered to women tended to exclude those from working-class backgrounds. The film producer Tony Garnett (interviewed by Rowbotham and Beynon, 2001) suggested that despite the perception that more people from working-class backgrounds were entering TV, very few were working-class women.

The class background of male workers in the film industry also remains underexplored. However, there are a few notable assumptions and observations, for instance the historian and former film producer Peter Threadgall (1994: 9) states:

> "The British class system was much in evidence during the 1930s development of the film industry. The creativity was mostly provided by the educated middle class, whose celluloid dreams and fantasies were given three-dimensional life by

> craftsmen (carpenters, plasterers, painters) traditionally drawn from the working class".

Michael Balcon, head of production at Ealing studios, makes a similar reference to the social composition of elite positions in the studio:

> 'By and large we were a group of liberal-minded, like-minded people . . . we were middle-class people brought up with middle-class backgrounds and rather conventional educations…' (Quoted in Barr, 1977: 9)

Due to the lack of quantitative data to verify them, the accounts are, at best, impressionistic observations. This is a problem that extends across CCIs historically, where it is very difficult to draw any real conclusions about class origins and career trajectories. The most comprehensive attempt to understand class and careers in CCIs historically is that of Banks (2017), who points out that while there might have been an overall increase 'of working-class entry into cultural work' in the 1950s and 1960s, this 'was most likely to have been at the bottom end' adding, 'this seems a reasonable assumption' (Banks, 2017: 97). However, Banks is dependent on media coverage and biographies from the period as evidence, so our understanding of the past is hindered by a lack of data regarding class origins and career trajectories in the CCIs.

The limited historical references to the composition of the production workforce during the Studio System era suggest that it was white, male and middle-class, with a few exceptions in some parts of the division of labour. Banks (2017) suggests that the composition might have become more working-class in the late 1950s and 1960s, but this was more a consequence of general trends and that the relative chances between men from WCOs and MCOs were historically unequal.

### 3.3 structures of employment during the British Studio System era

The film historian Ryall (1997: 27) says, 'the British film industry was effectively constructed in the 1930s out of the ruins of the 1920s'. Before 1927 the UK film industry initially had been a tripartite industry with production, distribution and exhibition divided up into separate entities (Street, 1997). In the 1910s and 1920s independent producers co-existed alongside larger production companies, which owned studios, such as Stolls Productions (Cricklewood studios), Ideal Films and Gaumont (Shepherds Bush studios). In 1914, 25 per cent of the films exhibited in UK cinemas were produced in the UK. However, by 1925 UK productions had reached a low of just 5 per cent of the exhibition market (Street, 1997).

The term 'Studio System' stems from the USA. Spanning a period from approximately 1920 to 1950, it refers to the vertical integration of the eight large Hollywood film companies known as the Hollywood 'Majors'[3]. The USA majors controlled the production, distribution and exhibition of film (Christopherson and Storper, 1989). The Studio System is often referred to in relation to the Hollywood formula picture, with studio locations and sets, in which the US majors employed a large permanent staff in production. The extent to which this was true has been debated, however, there is a general consensus that the US Studio System provided a greater degree of employment stability in production than the contemporary industry. In relation to the British Studio System, the term is perhaps rather misleading when compared to the US context; a better name for the industry in the UK might be the 'Quota System', in that it was a period in film production defined by the protectionist quota.

[3] Fox, RKO, MGM, Warner Brothers, Paramount, Universal, United Artists, Columbia Pictures

From the 1920s governments worldwide introduced state regulations to defend their national industries from penetration by the US companies (Guback, 1969). In 1927 the Cinematograph Act (referred to as the 'Quota Act') was passed in the UK. The Quota Act stipulated that 25% of films exhibited in UK cinemas must be produced by UK studios, with a quota of 75% of UK nationals working on each production (Street, 1997). A protectionist quota of some kind continued in the UK until 1983, when the Conservative government began to deregulate the film and TV industry (Ryall, 1997).

In response to the Quota Act and the transition to sound production, a British Studio System emerged in the late 1920s and early 1930s, characterised by the vertical integration of two British majors; the Associated British Picture Corporation (ABPC), and the Gaumont British Picture Corporation (GBPC), bought by the Rank Organisation in 1941. Like the Hollywood majors ABPC and GBPC integrated a number of production studios, distribution companies and large cinema circuits, with interests in every stage of film from pre-production to exhibition[4].

The 1927 Quota Act provided UK film production companies with some guarantee of a return on their investment. The political motivation for the Quota Act was not simply economic, but ideological. The UK government saw that films were a new form of 'soft control' and that Hollywood dominance over the UK and global markets had implications not just for the treasury but for the interests of British capitalism more generally (Low, 1985; Street, 1997; Wood, 1997). Film, as the main form of cultural entertainment before the rise of television and other forms of media, disseminated the power of the United States as a new global

[4] ABPC employed 6,000 workers in production, distribution and exhibition; it owned the ABC cinema circuit. GBPC employed 14,000 and owned the Gaumont cinema circuit. The Rank Organisation bought GBPC in 1941 and became the dominant film combine in Britain with over 600 Odeon and Gaumont cinemas (Jones 1987:61)

power; this had moral, cultural and economic implications for the UK and many other European countries in the 1920s (Mosco, 2009). A protectionist quota of some kind remained in the UK until 1983 when it was finally rescinded by the then Conservative government as part of wider policies to de-regulate the UKFTV industry (Ryall, 1997; Sparks, 1994). However, during the period from 1927 to 1936 a 25% quota of British (and Commonwealth) made productions being screened in British cinemas was stipulated.

There was certainly an increase in UK film production in the 1930s. In 1927, 34 films were produced in the UK (Ryall, 1997), from 1930 to 1938 approximately 140-220 films were made each year, averaging around 3-4 films per week (Wood, 1986). Studio space increased between 1928 and 1938 with established studios expanding and new studios being built from 1927 to 1936, including Denham, Pinewood and Shepperton (Warren, 1994).

However, despite state intervention in the UK, the film industry did not have a domestic market of a size that could provide a return on its investment. This continued to be controlled by the eight Hollywood majors who monopolised distribution deals via the powerful Kinematograph Renters Society (Low, 1984). During the peak of UK production in the mid-1930s, 60% of films exhibited in UK cinemas were produced in Hollywood (Low, 1984). This meant that many film production workers faced an uncertain market, in what has been called a 'feast and famine industry', with periods of high and low employment (Reid, 2008), due to a series of boom and bust periods from 1927 to 1958 (Street, 1997; Higson, 1997).

### 3.4 Employment trends

Following the theorisation of flexible specialisation during the 1980s (Piore and Sabel, 1984) it has been argued that the USA Studio System, which prevailed from approximately 1920 to 1950, resulted in the adoption of 'Fordist' production practices (Christopherson and Storper 1987; 1989; Jones, 1996) by which US film production workers could expect stable employment, with a 'traditional career' in 'traditional hierarchies' (Jones 1996: 58), with training, career progression and employment security provided by the vertically integrated majors in the studios. Both the extent of this 'Fordist past' and the subsequent move to flexible employment, have been challenged (Aksoy and Robins 1992; Blair and Rainnie 2000; Wakso 2003; Dawson 2012). However, the argument that a vertically integrated US Studio System resulted in greater levels of employment security than the contemporary US film industry has had broader acceptance (Scott, 2002). While there is some consensus that the US majors were able to offer a degree of stable employment, the historical picture of employment in the UK is even less clear than in the USA. It has been suggested the British Studio System provided a certain level of employment stability either by renting staff to independent production companies or through in-house production (Ellis, 2002). There is some truth to this, but even Ellis (2002) does not claim that there was stable employment at any stage in the UK film production industry. It remains historically unclear what the nature of employment actually was like during the period of the British Studio System. However, some of the studies reviewed below, do provide a picture of what it might have been like.

Employment in film production during the Studio System has been best described as 'fragmented' (Blair and Rainnie, 2000; Blair, 2001; Blair, Grey and Randle, 2001). This is because, on top of the fluctuating and uncertain market, which made employment

unpredictable even for the larger companies, a significant proportion of employment was offered by small and medium sized production companies, some of which only lasted for a short period. These small sized enterprises co-existed with the vertically integrated companies in film production, sometimes through independent funding, sometimes funded by the US majors or distribution arms of the UK combines (Blair and Rainnie, 2000). This meant that workers experienced different employment relationships and contracts depending on the nature of the production companies they worked for, while also having to cope with the boom and bust cycles in the film industry generally. However, the employment structures meant that at least during boom periods of production – most notably from 1933 to 1938 and in the period from 1948 to approximately 1955 – a significant number of film production workers could expect to work for sustained periods for the same production company. This was by no means a job for life in one or two companies, but the industry nonetheless provided structures with greater employment stability than the contemporary industry.

By the late 1950s there was an upsurge of employment in television,(provided by the BBC and ITV). The TV studios that emerged in the 1950s provided more stable and even employment than the film studios and this was the case up until a series of policies from 1983 to 1990 by the then Conservative government which created a more de-regulated market. As Reid (2008) points out, employment in TV production has therefore gone through a more marked shift from secure to insecure employment than the film industry, where workers have adapted to a more unpredictable employment over a long period of time.

### 3.5 Labour organisation and institutional safety nets

Reid (2008) points out that employment practices were being disputed by employers and workers in the film studios in the 1930s and 1940s and some of these disputes ended favourably for workers with a series of institutional agreements in 1947. Employment practices, working conditions, pay rates and minimum staffing levels were all established through the demarcation agreements between the main trade unions representing film workers, the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees (NATKE), the Association of Cine-Technicians (ACT) and the British Film Producers Association in 1947 (ACTT, 1983). Reid (2008: 119) argues that the demarcation agreements also allowed the ACT to succeed in 'formalising in their agreements with the major studios the de facto closed shop situation which had existed since the early stages of the war (WW2). After 1947, entry into film employment was policed by the film unions, changing the way people accessed the industry. Added to this, many of the occupational identities in film became established through these demarcation agreements, with clear lines drawn regarding pay and status.

During the 1930s access routes were more arbitrary with no formal systems to determine who gained access and training and how. Working conditions were a major source of conflict in the employment relationship in many studios in the 1930s. Technicians in the specialised film occupations such as camera, sound, editing and production office roles did not have union representation in the early 1930s. The ACT was formed in 1934 as a response to exploitative practices. For example, Thorold Dickinson was working at Ealing studios as an editor and production manager in 1934 on two films back to back. Having worked over 100 hours per week for a month, he fell ill, and the studio refused to pay him sick leave, at which point he says 'something snapped and I went off and joined the Union' (quoted in Richards,

1997). Dickinson became an active member of the ACT in its formative years from 1934 onwards (ACTT, 1983). This example of exploitation and the general growth in film workers in the 1930s partly explains why union density increased in the 1930s (Jones, 1987).

The employment relationship during the period of the British Studio System represents a gradual shift in worker/employer power and relations, which became formalised after the demarcation agreements in 1947. As the vertically integrated companies reduced film production in the 1950s, the structural arrangements surrounding employment became less certain and freelance employment increased, with the number of film production workers with self-employed status increasing by 1960 (Reid, 2008). This would have led to more precarious working lives; however, the institutional agreements of 1947 had effectively insulated union members from some of the uncertainty associated with freelance employment for two key reasons.

Firstly, there remained minimum pay rates and industry wide overtime pay, so that individuals could not be paid a low income and new entrants could not undercut general wages in the market. In 1937 the ACT film union contributed to a government report on the film industry claiming that production workers were 'often obliged to work excessive hours', partly because, 'studios are engaged at a weekly rental by production companies and long hours and a seven day week is, therefore, a form of economy to such producers' (Jones, 1987: 62). Ralph Bond, a producer and trade union activist in the 1930s, said in an interview, '…working conditions in the thirties were deplorable. Unlimited hours, no overtime payments, no sick benefits, no holiday pay. Twelve-hour shifts were the rule…' (Bond quoted in Reid, 2008: 102). It has been estimated that the working week in the 1930s averaged between 60 and 70 hours (Reid, 2008; Jones, 1987). However this could increase to over 100 hours

depending on the film productions people were working on, which is generally reflected in the working lives sampled.

Pay rates were uneven in the film studios in the 1930s. By the late 1930s pay rates were becoming more standardised (Gater Report, 1949) and as a result of the demarcation agreements in 1947 a number of minimum pay rates were agreed but, as Reid (2008) points out, even in this structure, production workers were still able to negotiate higher rates.

Secondly, the chances of long periods of unemployment were reduced by the restrictions on labour supply through the closed shop which, combined with new job opportunities in TV production and advertising emerging in the 1950s, meant that film workers who had begun their careers before 1947 were in a strong position as existing trade union members. The closed shop reduced labour supply in a labour market that had increased demand due to the emergence of television production in the 1950s.

This was beneficial to existing union members but made it very difficult for people trying to access film production occupations after 1947. Becoming a union member, especially in the ACT, became increasingly difficult and, for example, Union panel approval of the application of an employer's preferred non-union candidate could take a year or more (Kelly 1966) and even then some would have to wait for existing members to retire before they could gain access.

The role of the trade unions in film production from the late 1940s to the late 1980s therefore insulated workers within the local labour market to a greater extent than the periods before and after. The collective agreements between employers and the film unions in 1947 changed the employment landscape for film workers by providing stability with minimum pay rates and by controlling labour supply through the closed shop system, which

reduced competition for available jobs across film occupations. In what was to become a more precarious labour market by the late 1950s, this protected existing workers who were adapting to freelance careers. These safety nets continued into the 1980s, when the closed shop and demarcation around occupations were removed in a series of employment laws by the then Conservative government (Sparks, 1994; Reid, 2008)

**3.6 Entry-level access and training practices**

Access and early years training in film production in the 1930s has been given very little attention historically. Film historians sometimes refer to the 1930s as the training ground for UK filmmakers (Ryall, 1997: Wood, 1997) due to the rise in production and increased opportunities to gain experience. Similarly, it has been seen as a period when UK technicians developed their reputations as 'consummate professionals' (Langham, 1996). However, what this really means, or how it was achieved, is unclear in the literature. In the 1920s and early 1930s many experienced technicians from the USA and Europe filled higher positions in the emerging UK studios. There is some indication that they provided training for younger UK technicians (Ryall, 1997; Street, 2005), but the significance of this was restricted by the protectionism that emerged in the film unions in the 1930s, limiting the employment for these migrant workers (Low, 1984; Jones, 1987).

Until the 1980s, it is generally accepted that in TV production there were internal labour markets in which production workers were able to gain skills through participation and on-the-job training in the TV studios (Paterson, 2001; Randle, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012). However, the extent to which this was true of the film studios is unclear. In film production, following the demarcation agreements in 1947, the system of recruitment, selection and training became more formalised than it had been in the

past, with certain conditions for entry and a set period of on-the-job training required but, in practice, it appears that entry remained an informal process, dependent on social networks that worked in and around the film unions. Reid (2008) argues that many entrants beginning their careers in the ACT affiliated occupations (production office, editing, camera and sound) started in minor roles in the studios such as runner, location fixer or third assistant director. Reid (2008:134) calls this the 'quasi-apprenticeship route to union membership'. To gain membership of the ACT and access a union recognised position, entrants needed to work in these minor non-union roles for several years to gain 365 days of film production experience and get two union members to recommend acceptance for membership. Reid (2008) suggests that in the 1920s and 1930s these entry routes and training practices were emerging, with many (male) entrants starting as teaboys and progressing to higher level positions in film. As Charles Barr says in his history of Ealing Studios 'isn't it the classic way of rising to the top in the film industry to start as a tea-boy and work up?' (Barr, 1977: 45). This idea of meritocracy is replicated in newspaper obituaries of film workers however, they very rarely discuss the relationship with class origins, take for example the quote below from an obituary of the cinematographer Alex Thomson:

> 'Thomson's progress from a 17-year-old clapper boy at Denham studios in 1946 to camera operator 14 years later – and finally director of photography in 1967 – was a classic one in the British film industry. Born in London, the son of a Bond Street tailor…' (Guardian, 2007)

The evidence from the research sample suggests that the progress from 'clapper boy' to DOP was a common route as a trainee position could often result in a higher status career, albeit over a long period, in Thomson's case it took 21 years. However, the point that

Thomson was the son of tailor make this a potentially more unusual social trajectory and his class background required greater attention in the obituary.

Biographies of film workers tend to be of some of the more prominent figures who worked as directors and producers of the period, such as Alfred Hitchcock, Alexander Korda, Michaal Balcon and David Lean; however, there are some biographies of former technicians and less well known film workers. Two autobiographies (Mitchell, 1997; Cardiff, 1996) which provide insights into issues related to class and careers are of John Mitchell (a privately educated sound recordist, who began working in film in 1933) and Jack Cardiff (a state school educated, DOP and film director who began working in film in 1926). Both began their careers as trainees or 'boys', Cardiff aged 15 and Mitchell aged 16. Their entry routes into film were on first inspection rather similar: both used an informal social contact to get in, however on closer inspection it is possible to see a very different picture. Mitchell gained access through a private school friend. After which his father paid a senior sound recordist to help Mitchell train him at Ealing studios, therefore using fairly typical capitals and resources available to men from middle-class backgrounds. Cardiff's parents worked as music hall entertainers and film extras at Elstree and therefore had made contacts at Elstree. By the age of 14 Cardiff had already worked in theatre and as a film extra; this was a rather atypical trajectory for men from working-class origins.

The question that arises from this is to what extent were these informal access routes typical of the film industry and what impact did they have on the way people from different social origins were able to enter and make careers?

Further details regarding how trainee positions were accessed remain unclear from the literature, and while the assumption is that the gender and class composition of trainees

may well have been largely male and middle-class, it is unclear to what extent this was true, or how or why this evolved. The paucity of information regarding entry routes and training in the film studios therefore leaves more questions than answers, especially in relation to the issue of equality and opportunity. The practices around access to the film industry and training and development are consequently discussed in detail through the sample of working lives in later chapters.

A topic of debate that deserves further research through the BEHP archive is an investigation of careers that began after 1947, to see if the more formalised system of entry that emerged in the closed shop system (from the 1940s to the 1980s) had any effect on employment opportunities for workers from different class backgrounds.

**Conclusion**

Attempting to define specific periods of organisational and industrial history is never an exact science; workplaces and working lives are notable for continuities as well as changes and, as Thompson and McHugh (2009) point out, claiming one period is uniquely different from another is a common error in organisational studies. This has been the case in the context of the US film industry where a Flexible Specialisation (Piore and Sable, 1984) narrative of epochal change has been argued and counter argued. An overview of the British film industry is that it has been structurally weak throughout its history, as the expensive production stage of film making has been heavily dependent on US investment to survive since the 1920s and 'such dependency has proved to be unreliable' (Blair, Grey and Randle, 2001: ). This suggests that uncertainty surrounding employment has been a continual issue for film production workers.

Nonetheless, the British Studio System era represents a period when The Quota Act, and vertical integration helped create more secure structural arrangements around film production. In this respect it is still a distinctive time in the history of UK film production. Vertical integration was ultimately unsustainable but, for a short time, it did provide greater structural stability surrounding employment and industry-sponsored training and it also provided the environment from which workers could resist and collectively organise to improve working conditions by the 1940s.

The question is what, if anything, did this mean in relation to class and careers in the film industry during the Studio System? This question is explored through the data in chapters 5,6,7 and 8. Chapter 5 provides an explanation of the three occupational sub-fields that have been categorised using the research sample of 37 working-lives, which it is argued provide a more nuanced picture of class and careers in film production. Chapter 6 explores class origins and early career decision making and trajectories. Chapter 7 explores entry level access and training and Chapter 8 explores career progression and 'class ceilings' (Freidman and Laurison, 2019) across film occupations historically.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

The gaps in the history of employment practices in the UK film industry and wider cultural and creative industries were discussed in Chapter 3. This chapter discusses my methodology in attempting to fill these gaps through a sample of oral history interviews with former film production workers. The final sample of 37 male film workers was selected after a review of 76 interviews with former male and female workers, all of which are archived in the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP), which in September 2019 had a total of 748 interviews. Except for one interview, none of the 76 interviews I have reviewed were carried out by myself. This chapter is therefore focused on the methods I adopted to (re)use The BEHP collection for the purposes of my own research. The strengths and limitations of using a collection of oral history interviews are discussed later in this chapter. However, the main challenge has been using a collection of interviews which were conducted by other interviewers. This has meant I have not been able to ask my own set of questions to address my own research aims. I have found that the most time-consuming process has been getting to know the archive content and then being flexible around my own research aims and theoretical framework was essential. As will be discussed further, the lack of demographic information about the interviewees in the archive index and interview logs also made this particularly difficult.

In Section 4.1 I first discuss my approach to knowledge, which is influenced by oral history methodology and the synergy between a Bourdieusian approach to social trajectory and semi-biographical oral history interviews. In section 4.2 I will then discuss the methods I adapted from secondary qualitative analysis and oral history in order to select interviewees and themes from the BEHP archive. Section 4.3 focuses on my methods for selecting a sub-

section of interviews from the archive. As will be explained in section 4.3, this was by no means a straightforward process. It involved a lot of initial data analysis, the emergence of a different research topic and the de-selection of many interviews, including all the women workers I had initially selected. In hindsight, it was during this period, from early 2012 to late 2013, that I learned that I needed to be more adaptable to the key themes surrounding class origins and careers that were emerging from the interviews. Section 4.4 then explains how I analysed the interviews, shifting from a thematic analysis of every part of the interview, to a process by which I mapped the different stages of careers and then selected parts of the interviews deemed relevant to themes that had emerged from the first stage of analysis. In section 4.5 I discuss the ethical considerations raised when using the archive interviews.

**4.1 A Bourdieusian approach to oral history analysis**

My approach to knowledge is informed by a number of core oral history texts (Bertaux, 1982; Lummis, 1987; Samuel and Thompson 1990; Plummer, 2001; Thompson, 2000). Oral history methodology takes an interpretivist ontological position, with the emphasis more on a subjective than an objective sense of reality. Oral history is focused on individuals and how they subjectively view themselves in the world, but individual accounts are often part of a collection of interviews reflecting a certain period of time and a shared organisational, occupational or community space, that often reflect shared and collective experience. Therefore, as Musson (in Cassell and Symon 2004: 54): points out, oral history interviews are not:

> "….totally individualistic. Of course, they reflect the experiences of the individual through a given period of time, but because lives move resolutely through history and structure they can also provide an understanding that extends beyond the

individual and into the wider context of organizations, institutions, cultures and societies.'

Musson (in Cassell and Symon 2004: 54) argues that the oral history method, 'locates itself in the nexus between deterministic structures and individual agency, between those factors that might be described as relatively objective, and the subjective interpretation of the individual', Lummis (1987: 107) stresses that, 'there is a dialectical relationship with individuals forming society and society forming individuals', so that individuals are, 'creators and bearers of economic and social relationships'. This is where I have located myself in my analysis and my interpretation of the British History Entertainment Project (BEHP) interviews.

The ontological position of the volunteer interviewers on the BEHP has never been made explicit as this was not an academic project, however the interviews follow an oral history approach, which is biographical, allowing interviewees to reflect on their early and working lives through semi-structured interviews. They provide an overview of a life course but focus on how individuals encountered and experienced the structures, customs and cultures in the film industry.

It was not until two years after my research began that I started to see the synergy between Bourdieu's theory of trajectories and oral history interviews that take a semi-autobiographical approach. Bourdieu, argues in his book *The Logic of Practice* (1977) against an either/or understanding of subjective and objective reality, arguing that subjective experience and interpretation of experience need to be understood within the structures in society which they encounter. A Bourdieusian approach has been used in organisational studies to understand field (social spaces) around different occupations and industries (Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2005). Bourdieu's approach has also been advocated as an important way of understanding the relationship between social origins and career opportunities (Hodkinson

and Sparkes, 1997; Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011, McLeod et al 2009). McLeod et al (2009:1013) point out 'scholars who draw attention to cultural aspects and lived experiences of class are indebted to Bourdieu'. While this is by no means the only way to understand class and careers, I found that, having reviewed a selection of BEHP oral history interviews, Bourdieu's class theory provided a framework to link the individual narratives to wider social forces and structures.

**4.2 Secondary qualitative analysis**

My research began in late 2011 with the early discovery of the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) online, which was then called the BECTU History Project (BHP), due to a close association between the project and the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union (BECTU). In September 2019, the BEHP archive had 748 interviews listed, with film, TV, Theatre and radio workers, covering working lives that began as early as the 1910s. The archive therefore provides a rich resource from which to explore the history of working lives in the Creative and Cultural Industries.

Any historical study is limited by what is available in the present. Having an archive of working lives interviews already collected has been a great advantage to my research. However, understanding, selecting, analysing and interpreting a collection of oral history testimonies that were carried out by a third party has been a major challenge. An ongoing challenge has been how to know what the archive interviews actually cover, who, and what, is (or is not) relevant, and then deciding how it can be used for my own research. In the end, selecting and analysing interviews became much more straightforward after I had decided to focus on class and careers as a trajectory using Bourdieu's class theory.

Before I had selected class and careers, I found it difficult to focus on a topic. The emphasis was initially on how workers, sometimes referred to in the film industry as 'below-the-line' (Mayer, 2011; Dawson, 2012), experienced their work and employment. I had tried to understand this using Labour Process Theory (Braverman, 1976; Littler, 1982; Thompson, 1992; Thompson and McHugh, 2009). And, more specifically, in relation to contemporary issues related to control and autonomy in the creative and cultural industries (McKinley and Smith, 2009; Huws, 2010). I also tried to understand issues related to precarious employment and perceived shifts from Fordist to post-Fordist work organisation (Christopherson and Storper, 1987; 1989; Blair and Rainnie, 2000; Blair et al, 2001; Randle and Culkin 2001; Dawson, 2012). What I slowly realised was the need to be more inductive in my approach to the oral history collection. The interviews provide a history of a number of potential research topic: working conditions, employment practices surrounding access and training, employment flexibility, trade union struggle, specific film studio histories and changing film technology. I co-authored a paper on the topic of employment flexibility historically (Atkinson and Randle, 2014), using a sample of BEHP interviews. The BEHP archive has also been used to understand the history of women's careers in documentary (Fox, 2014) and in continuity (Williams, 2013).

Two years into the research, I decided that the thesis needed to be about class and careers. This was because the most consistent themes running through the collection related to the longer career trajectories of individuals, including their early lives, connection to careers in film, access and training and early career opportunities and barriers.

Eventually I adopted a research approach which connects some aspects of oral history methods with those of secondary qualitative analysis. This link has been explored in the work of the oral historian Joanna Bornat, who has revisited oral history interviews for a different

purpose, namely by reusing a collection of interviews with Asian born doctors to understand ethnicity in the NHS (Bornat, 2003; Bornat et al, 2012). Literature on qualitative secondary analysis tends to focus on the reuse of academic studies and much of the focus is on the original aims and methods of the original researchers (Hammersley, 2004; Long-Sutehall et al, 2011; Irwin et al, 2011). This helped my approach to the BEHP, but I did not always find it applicable to oral history interviews collected by 'insider' interviewers rather than academics. More useful was a reference to an approach in a review of secondary qualitative studies (Heaton, 2004). Heaton (2004) points to a way of 'sorting' data, saying this data sorting can be 'used to segregate sub-samples of the study population, shifting the focus of the secondary analysis to a particular group of informants and to selectively limit the analysis to certain topics or themes' (Heaton 2004: 59). This explanation of how secondary qualitative data is used most closely resembles my own approach. One element I found useful is what is called a 'supra-analysis' (Heaton, 2004) by which new methodological and theoretical questions are asked of the original qualitative data (Heaton, 2004). Another applicable strand was the concept of a supplementary analysis that focuses on a newly emergent issue, not evident when the primary project was conceived (Heaton, 2004). The new topic that emerged from the BEHP interviews was the association between class origins and careers. In order to understand this, I selected a sub-sample of interviewees who came from a mixture of working-class and middle-class origins. The new theoretical questions that I asked of the BEHP sample were related to Boudieu's (1984; 1986) theory of economic, social and cultural capitals evident in the interviews and the way these capitals could bring about advantages and disadvantages in different 'fields' (social spaces) surrounding occupations in film production.

### 4.3 The challenges of using the British Entertainment History Project archive

An early challenge I faced was that the online index of the interviews did not provide useful information for my research project. This meant that some of the key criteria for selecting interviewees were not available. For instance, it was unclear when interviewees started working in the industry. It was also not always clear what their various occupations had been. And in terms of my focus from late 2013, there was never any information about their social origins.

Another challenge with using the British Entertainment History Project (BEHP) was that the information in the interview index was not always consistent or wholly accurate. A search of the archive index (History Project, Index, 2019), did not always provide an accurate picture of the occupations in it, as they were listed with different titles, for instance the art director John Box was listed simply as a 'designer'. Some interviews also had occupational listings that were inaccurate, for instance the studio construction manager Gus Walker (from WCOs), who started as a carpenter, was listed as a construction manager and 'designer'. If this were true it would have been a unique example of someone from WCOs who worked as an art designer. But it is slightly misleading: while Gus Walker did draw some of the art director's original designs to translate them to the construction team, he was not a draughtsman or a 'designer'. The archive index therefore caused confusion at times.

I also went through the hard copy interview summary logs at the British Film Institute (BFI) library, which provided more information, but were often inconsistent as the summaries were written by different interviewers on the project. This meant that the only way to select interviewees from the archive was to listen to the interviews or read the transcripts to first understand some of the basic criteria for selection. One consistent theme, which I was to

become aware of later, was that none of the logs had any information about an interviewee's social origins.

What this means is that without going through all 748 interviews, I cannot say for sure what the exact numbers are for each occupation, or how many workers started in the period before 1960 or the period before 1948. To get a sample who started before 1960, I had to estimate when they might have started from their date of birth. In terms of numbers in each occupation, I did get a rough estimate from the archive index, but soon found many that had worked in those occupations at different stages of their careers. In this sense the selection of interviews has always been rather random. It has been a case of selecting transcribed interviews as much as possible, while selecting audio interviews when they have been deemed most relevant (this was mainly the case for the interviews with men from WCOs in studio construction and electrical lighting).

Another challenge has been an occupational imbalance in the archive. There is a lack of interviews with people who had a career that culminated in lower level positions. I use the word 'approximately' because this is an estimate based on different searches for the same occupations, which I cannot be sure are wholly accurate. For example, there are approximately 13 art directors but only one studio carpenter listed in the index (although I found a total of five men who had worked as carpenters). Of the 748 (as of September 2019) interviews in the archive, there were approximately 150 directors (History Project, directors) and approximately 150 producers (History Project, producers). However, there were only four lighting electricians, seven studio construction workers and four camera and sound technicians in lower positions (culminating at level 2, see Appendix 1). Over time I also discovered that there were a limited number of workers in the archive who came from WCOs,

particularly women from WCOs, however that has been much harder to verify as class is not in the demographic information.

### 4.4 Selecting a sub-sample of interviews

In total I have carried out some form of analysis on 76 interviews with men and women from the BEHP archive, from which I made a final selection of 37 men, all of whom began working in film before 1948, 17 of whom came from WCOs (using the proxy of state school education) and 20 who came from MCOs (using private or fee paying grammar school as a proxy). The focus is on men whose careers culminated in: studio construction roles and electrical lighting (N=8); sound and camera roles (N=18); and editor, director and producer roles (N=11). These were selected because they had the most consistent themes related to class and employment practices – most notably access into film production, training and development – that I could find in the BEHP archive.

#### 4.4.1 The emergence of class origins and male trajectories

The selection of the final 37 interviews took over two years to finalise. This was a result of what in hindsight was a slow reaction to the emerging issue of class origins and careers from my analysis. The aim of my research was to focus on the way workers entered and made careers and provide an historical analysis of employment practices surrounding access routes, training and career progression. Put more simply it has always been an historical analysis of 'Getting in and Getting on' (Randle and Culkin, 2001). The focus has also always been on behind-the-camera occupations engaged in film production. So, while workers may have worked in TV, documentary and advertising, I only selected interviews with people who had

worked in the field of commercial film production at some point in their careers. Of the final 37 selected all had worked in film production early in their careers.

By October 2013, I had carried out an analysis of 51 working lives: 37 men and 14 women, who worked in occupations below-the-line, and began their careers before 1960. The focus was on careers and flexible employment practices. However, as a result of the analysis, I decided that I would focus on careers that began before the series of collective agreements in 1947 and 1948, and on the association between class origins and careers.

I used the proxy of education to measure class origins: state school (WCOs) and private and grammar school education (MCOs). This is by no means a perfect indication of social origins, but having decided to focus on an historical cohort - all of whom went to school from approximately 1910 to 1935 - I found it was the most accurate measure of social class in that period and this was indicated in the historical literature (Marwick, 1963; Seaman, 1970; Branson and Heinemann, 1973; McKibbin, 1998)

After deciding on the new criteria for interview selection based my initial analysis, I first deselected 12 men from the original 51 interviews as they did not meet certain criteria. Interviews deselected did not have any data about their school background, had started their careers after 1948, or worked in occupations I found it difficult to relate to other occupations, for instance, two male make-up artists from WCOs and one male costume designer from MCOs were deselected.

In 2013 I interviewed a male make-up artist called Walter Schneiderman, who had worked on various films, including Elephant Man. I had initially intended to supplement the BEHP archive interviews with my own but having conducted the interview I decided this would be very difficult. Schneiderman had started in 1948 meaning he was just outside the period I decided to focus on. I therefore did not use his interview in the sample. I also decided not to

try to find additional interviewees, as the time period would mean there would only be a few and the interviews themselves would be rather different to the ones in the BEHP archive. A longitudinal study would be something worth exploring in the future, using the BEHP interviews and supplementing them with more recent interviews.

At the outset I had intended to include women in the sample, and I initially analysed the interviews of 14 women. Of the 14 women I had analysed in the original 51, none had attended state schools. I decided to see if I could find any women from WCOs who had started before 1948 and worked in film production occupations behind the camera. I could only find four more women, all of whom were from MCOs. After deciding to compare working-class and middle-class workers, I made the decision to omit these 18 women from the analysis. They all came from middle-class backgrounds, some were educated outside of the UK, and others started after 1948 and they often worked in gender segregated occupations, such as costume or continuity, meaning their trajectories were difficult to compare with those of men. There may have been scope for just using women in the sample who had attempted to enter into male dominated occupations, but this would have meant only using the careers of five women, who attempted to enter four different occupations in field A (a director, a producer, an editor and two art directors). The other difficulty was that as women from MCOs they faced a different type of discrimination from men from WCOs. I then made the decision to omit women workers from the research study and focus on male careers.

I also decided to explore higher level positions, 'above-the-line', so the research could also look at social mobility historically. I searched the archive and looked for transcribed interviews and I found ten men from MCOs who worked in high level occupations such as producers and directors and then rejected a further ten because their interviews were not adding anything new to my study and confirmed the class and career trends I had identified

from the men from MCOs I had already selected. However, in the process I did find two further interviews with men from WCOs, one of whom worked as a DOP and film director (interview 17) and another who worked as a sound mixer (interview 28).

By March 2014 I had reviewed a total of 76 interviews, of which 39 were omitted from my final sample (18 women and 21 men). In the finally selected sub-sample there are 17 men from WCOs and 20 from MCOs. The overview of all the 76 interviews with film workers who began their careers before 1960 is that there are certainly fewer interviews with people from working-class origins in the archive. The social origins of those in the archive that began after 1960 – which would have been more commonly in TV production – may be different. And this is certainly something worthy of investigation. However, as a snapshot of the period before 1960, the archive points to a general lack of workers from WCOs in many occupations in film, with the exception of studio construction and electrical lighting. This could partly be due to the way participants were selected and the imbalance of occupations, but it is a reasonable assumption that it is also because there were not many people from WCOs working in film production. While this cannot be proved or disproved, what emerged from my analysis of the BEHP interviews was that the trajectories into certain film occupations were much more challenging for men from WCOs than men from MCOs and apparently almost impossible for women from WCOs.

The paucity of workers from WCOs is most pronounced among women workers, meaning the experiences of working-class women in film production remain hidden from history. Of the 18 interviews with women I reviewed, 15 were clearly from MCOs, while the origins of the remaining three were unclear – the three women who may have been educated in state schools (Tilly Day, June Randall and Pamela Mann) worked in continuity, but the interviews do not provide enough information to be sure of their social origins. A more

detailed and focused study of working-class women in film and CCIs is certainly needed and the BEHP archive may offer a few interviews with women who started in a later period.

**4.5 Analysing and selecting content from interviews**

In March 2012, I started my research on the archive by selecting ten transcribed interviews with workers in 'below-the-line' occupations. These comprised seven men: one studio plasterer, one boom operator, two sound mixers, one focus puller, two camera operators. And three women: two continuity 'girls' and one female 'draughtsman'. I did a detailed analysis of the ten interviews, going through them several times and summarising each part, then relating them back to getting in and getting on, working practices and employment practices. Several things materialised from this initial research. I concluded that there was stronger content on themes relating to getting in and getting on and employment practices than there was on working practices and labour processes. It was also clear that I would need to obtain a broader and deeper understanding of the BEHP interviews and the historical context of the period they were covering, as there were many references to different studios, employers and leading above-the-line 'players' in the industry. It was also clear that I would not understand large sections of interviews that focused on technology and that some interviews had large sections that were just not relevant to my research aims.

As I began to explore more of the archived interviews, it was apparent that they were available in different formats: some were transcripts available online, some had transcripts available in hard copy, and some were only on audio cassette tapes. The interviews were sometimes filmed, but I chose not to analyse them in video format, as they were not consistently filmed. I took the decision to analyse as many transcribed interviews as possible, while double-checking them against the audio interviews for any errors. I found that some

transcripts in hard copy at the BFI library had more discrepancies than those online (History Project). I also found that the interviews ranged in length from one hour to four hours, with varying levels of relevant content.

I initially intended to transcribe any audio interviews that I selected, but after starting to do so, I came to the conclusion that it was not a constructive use of time, mainly because large sections were not relevant. Instead I logged areas of interviews I deemed relevant to careers and employment practices and selected these sections for transcription, logging other areas more briefly, with headings like 'technology' and a brief summary. Using the BEHP interview guidelines and key areas covered was useful for this process as it allowed me to see what themes were supposed to be covered and therefore provided an overview of the direction of the cross-section of interviews. Using the BEHP interview guidelines, I found I was able to categorise the more consistent discussions across the interviews more easily (see interview guidelines – Appendix 4)

### 4.5.1 Interpreting insider interviews

Another challenge of using the archive was the questions and the pursuit of certain themes through follow-up questions by the interviewers on the BEHP. Firstly, they did not always ask some of the questions I would like to have asked. This is especially true of class background and employment. There was an added complication relating to the fact that there were so many volunteer interviewers on the project. This meant that the direction of the interviews was not always consistent.

The interviewers (with a few exceptions) had worked in the film industry, often during the same period as the interviewees. This gave them understandings as 'insiders' (Davis and Paine, 2004). Having shared experiences meant they would sometimes take a more

conversational and interactive approach than is usual in a semi-structured interview. This could result in unwelcome interruptions. However, most of the insiders did allow interviewees to explore their own experiences and bring up memories they deemed important for discussion, with only a few prompts rather than abrupt interruptions, therefore following more established oral history methods (Thompson, 2000). I found this was especially the case when interviews were carried out by regulars such as Sid Cole, Alan Lawson and Roy Fowler, which might have been because they had more experience of interviewing. Having said this, the BEHP interviews are noteworthy for having a fair amount of insider interactions and interruptions.

Using oral history methods to analyse what was and was not discussed consistently was helpful, in that it enabled me to see how insider interviews could offer an insight into some of the shared and contested historical understandings of employment practices and customs within the industry. The oral historians Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (1990) refer to the way certain memories are selected for preservation while others are not, as 'selective amnesia' (Samuel and Thompson, 1990:7). In the BEHP interviews this is reflected in the recurring anecdotes about working with prominent figures in the industry such as Alfred Hitchcock or David Lean. These anecdotes often referred to a short moment in a career, but they were often elaborated on in great detail, suggesting they had been retold on several occasions. The selection for long-term memory and the polishing process in how the memory is told are signifiers not simply of unique moments of contacts with celebrities. They are perceived as important in increasing career chances in an industry in which careers were often dependent on reputation and working with top names in the industry improved career opportunities for crew members.

Why certain memories are not selected in a cross section of interviews is also significant, oral historians have described these as 'collective silences' (Passerini, 1982). A significant and largely unchallenged custom in the interviews was that across many occupations there were class discriminatory practices taking place which were clearly hindering working class access and training opportunities. It was also generally accepted (by interviewers and interviewees from middle-class origins) that many occupations were considered to be nearly all male and middle-class and this was not challenged. This collective silence was made more apparent by the contrasting approach of a regular interviewer (Roy Fowler) on the project, who had worked in the US TV industry as a production manager and was more of an outsider. Fowler's approach to class and careers is very different from that of other interviewers. While the insider interviewers are non-confrontational about reoccurring inequalities regarding class background, Fowler adopts a more oppositional position regarding these issues. Fowler is critical of the class-based inequality that he perceived evident in the industry. During an interview with a film producer (interview 9) who was explaining how he needed financial support from his parents in order to be trained as a low-paid production runner, Fowler interjects 'I mean that was one of the problems at that time was it not – that one had to be middle class just to be working?'. This class-based inequality was not something insider interviewers ever questioned.

### 4.5.2 Mapping class origins and career trajectories

In 2014, over two years into the research, I finally adopted a method of analysis which made the process much more effective. I mapped careers in four stages and, having grasped Bourdieu's class theory of habitus, capital and field and social trajectories, I was also able to trace trends in different occupational settings. This made it easier to select relevant

interviewees and data from the archive. However, this breakthrough had taken over two years to develop fully.

Using data from the initial analysis of 51 interviews, I began to build an analysis of the association between class and careers using a more selective approach, focusing on the way social origins mattered to careers. However, this approach was problematic as it meant that the interview, and most importantly the career trajectory of the interviewee, was not a whole narrative. So, I went back to the interviews and wrote a career synopsis, which included: access routes, early career development, progression, stagnation and changes. The progressions were transitions into other film occupations or progression into a higher grade in the same occupation. The stagnation was when interviewees explained – directly or indirectly – why they did not move into a higher grade. The changes were movement into a different studio and production company, from film to television production, advertising or documentary film making or from a more secure to a freelance job. Changes also included periods when film workers moved into a different industry; this could happen for a short period or was the moment they left the industry completely. I also included some of the key semi-autobiographical data, including parental occupations, familial support and influences before and film careers, education and early working experiences prior to film employment.

What emerged from this were four key stages across careers: The first stage being the transition from education to the labour market. The second, access routes into film. The third stage being development in film occupations, and the final stage being their career progression in film. It became apparent that there were some persistent class trends in the first three stages, while the final stage of progression was more mixed. The overall picture was that class origins mattered in a range of film occupations.

After analysing the careers of producers and directors, the final selection of 37 interviews included careers that culminated in a range of occupations: art directors, editors, producers and film directors, sound and camera technicians in various grades and studio construction workers and lighting electricians. I drew a diagram of the 37 careers, mapping progression through five hierarchal occupational grades in film production ranging from trainee to film producer (a later version of the diagram is figure 1). This showed that men from MCOs were reaching the highest grades in film much more frequently than men from WCOs, but as this was a small sub-sample that did not tell me much. What was also apparent, was that men from MCOs origins were often starting in the lower trainee or assistant positions and that these were more difficult for men from WCOs to get into. What emerged was that the career trajectories were revealing certain relatable class and employment trends in three occupational sub-fields. These were occupational fields which meant that certain careers were more open or closed to people from different class backgrounds. This pattern is displayed in Figure 1 and explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

**4.6 Ethical considerations when (re)using oral history interviews**

Nearly all the contributors in the BEHP sample that I selected are now deceased. This is also the case for the interviewers. The interviewees in the sample I selected have all signed a waiver agreement for their testimonies to be used for future use at the discretion of the BEHP project members. They have also waived their right to anonymity and the interviews are freely available for public use at the BFI library and many are now freely available online, either as a transcript or in audio format. For these reasons I made the decision early in the research process not to anonymise those in the sample. Although I have numbered them in this dissertation, they are all listed in an appendix of career summaries. The ethical

considerations for this research are therefore not a legal matter. But there is an ethical consideration in that none of the contributors were explicitly asked if their interviews could be used for my study.

The topic of class was never one that was a focus of the interviews, therefore I am using their accounts of the past to understand something they were not asked to address directly. This means they have no right to reply. If they had, perhaps the interpretation of class and careers might have been different. Bornat (2003) makes the valid point that when revisiting oral history interviews in a different period, it is important to 'reduce the distance' between yourself and the original research. To do this it is important to try to understand how the memories being discussed are shaped by the context of the interview, the time it is being recorded, and by whom, and for what reasons. To try to reduce my own distance from the original BEHP, I have gone to project meetings, read interviews with some of the key people involved in it and read through the guidance for interviewers. Having said this, I remain distant from the BEHP interviews, as I come from a different generation and never worked in the industry and therefore will never fully understand the interview interactions or why they are happening. I can speculate that class was not discussed because the interviews took place in the 1980s and 1990s as our interpretations about social class in Britain were changing. I can speculate that it was because of a long history of a meritocratic ideal in the film industry, or that being middle-class, white and male was the norm in many film occupations. But they can only be informed guesses, as I cannot ask anyone. On the other hand, the fact class origins and careers was so rarely discussed directly, but was so apparent in a sample of male careers, makes the topic all the more important, as Bornat (2003:50) points out, when issues that were not a focus of the original study are raised 'serendipity' makes the issue more authentic. The interviews provide a naturally occurring account of class origins and career trajectory, rather

than a subjective opinion about how that trajectory was determined or not determined by where they started out in life.

**Conclusion**

The various forms of analysis that I have explored in this chapter have been used to get closer to understanding the historical association between class origins and careers in film production. Any study of the past is limited by the resources available in the present. And as I studied the oral history interviews in the BEHP archive I noticed various gaps in terms of who has been interviewed and certain questions that might have been followed up. Nevertheless, the BEHP archive is a valuable means of examining an issue relevant in the present. There are few historical records of working lives in the UK film industry and there are no studies of the association between class origins and careers. This means that the BEHP archive can be used to bridge that gap in our understanding of the past.

I certainly would have benefited from more methodological literature on the analysis of oral history archives, many of which, like the BEHP archive, have been collected by volunteers and communities rather than academics and therefore require forms of analysis that are not explored in enough depth in academic literature, such as discussions of secondary qualitative analysis. Among the great strengths of the BEHP archive are the ways that a large section of interviews focuses on a life trajectory, connecting social origins to careers. The challenges have been in how to select and analyse a sub-section of interviews from a project that has lacked clear research aims and has inconsistencies in terms of the collection of participants and way they have been logged and indexed. The approach was to start with an intensive analysis of interviews and to then adapt a more flexible approach about the themes that emerged from the analysis and find the theoretical framework to help interpret them.

What became apparent was that methods of thematic analysis were simply not applicable to such a large archive with interviews that covered so many different topics. A method that could review careers was required. By mapping career trajectories and social origins using Bourdieu's class theory, it was possible to counter some of the challenges of using the BEHP archive. This approach enabled me to select a relevant sub-sample of workers and sort and sift through the relevant material in interviews more effectively. Having said this, it was only possible to reach that stage by gaining a better understanding of the interviews, through the initial in-depth analysis.

In hindsight, by trying to fit the interviews into an historical study of flexible employment practices, I initially took a more deductive approach to a study that has always needed to be inductive. It was only after I was more willing to adapt to the topic of class and career trajectories which emerged from my analysis of the interviews, that I was able to use them for my own research aims more effectively.

## Chapter 5 Class origins and occupational fields in film

This dissertation now explores the subject of class and careers through the sub-sample of 37 male trajectories. Chapters 6,7 and 8 discuss the different ways men from working-class origins (WCOs) and middle-class origins (MCOs) entered and made careers, by following their progression over key stages in their development. This chapter focuses on the social spaces or 'fields' (Bourdieu, 1984; 1986) the men in the research sample travelled through.

This chapter provides a detailed account of the way I have used a Bourdieusian approach to group the association between class and careers into three separate occupational sub-fields within film production. The occupational fields emerged after I designed a career model of the association between class and film occupations historically, represented visually in Figure 1.

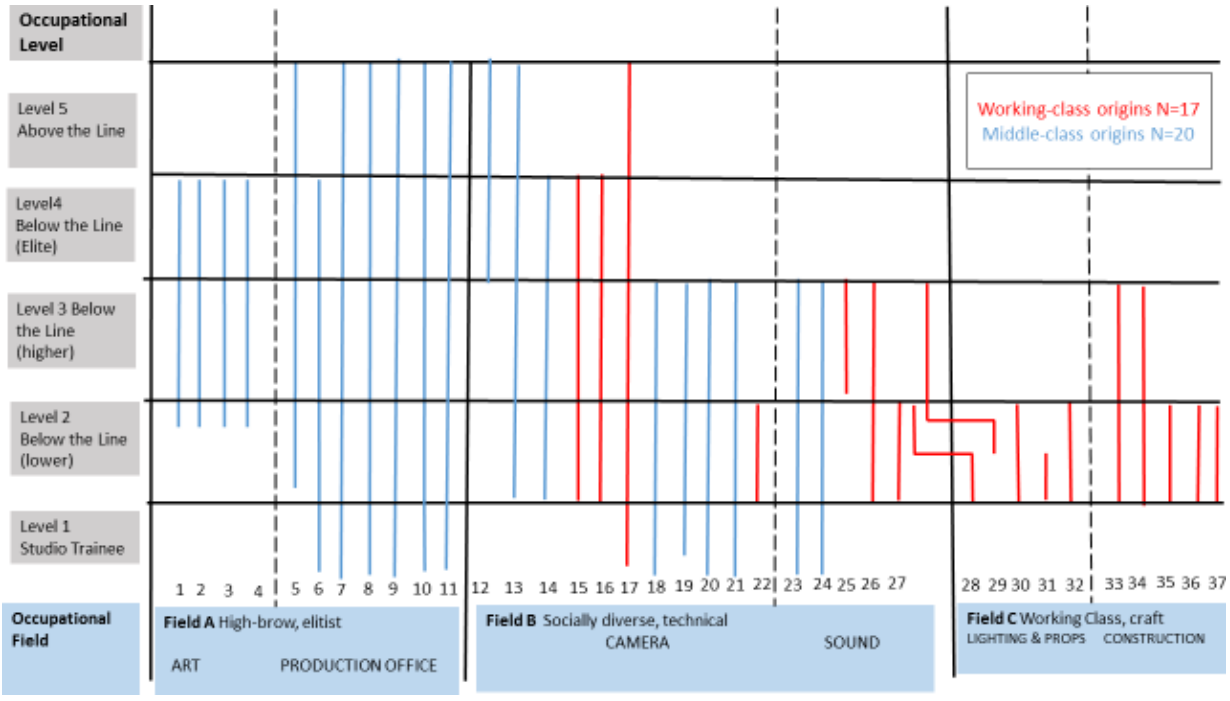

**Figure 1: An historical diagram of class origins and male career trajectories in film production occupations (a larger version of the diagram is in Appendix 1 )**

Figure 1 is a graph mapping the careers of 37 male workers, who began their careers in film production before 1947. These 37 men were, in many cases, forerunners in their occupations (many of which still exist today). Some occupations existed before 1927, but only for one generation, while others, such as sound, were in their infancy. All of the occupations represented in Figure 1 went through considerable change as a result of the implementation of sound technology which created some new occupations and shifted the technological requirements across many others. Added to this, the growth in film studios during vertical integration in the early 1930s increased both the managerial layers in film production and the managerial duties within pre-existing occupations. The emergence of the studio system increased the number of trainee positions. Although there are no clear statistics on this, the sample data points to studios introducing and/or increasing trainee roles, with some, such as GBPC in Shepherds Bush, experimenting with newly-formed apprentice training schools.

By way of explanation of the social origins of these 37 men, 20 (symbolised by blue vertical lines) came from middle-class origins (MCOs) and 17 (red vertical lines) came from working-class origins (WCOs). Class origins are classified according to education, with state education indicating working class origins and private or fee-paying grammar schools' middle-class origins. This is by no means a perfect indication but, as was discussed in Chapter 3 and 4, it is the most accurate indicator available for this generational cohort.

More detail about the working lives of these 37 men is provided in Appendix 2 (Table of interviews). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the way the association between class and career opportunities were mediated in different occupational settings.

The five grids running vertically numbered from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), represent occupational hierarchy in the vertical division of labour. The hierarchical levels are based on pay rates from a government report on the film industry from the period (Gater, 1949) and status in film, based on where occupations were listed on film credits (if they were listed at all). The specific occupations in each sub-field and the hierarchal levels within them are explained in section 5.1.

The three occupational social spaces (sub-fields) in Figure 1 are similar in some ways to the horizontal and vertical division of labour in film, but rather than just representing seniority or different departments, the sub-fields reflect the differing levels of openness and closure for men from working-class and middle-class backgrounds in certain occupations. Across the sub-fields, different capitals and resources that individuals possess (or do not possess) are valued in different ways and with differing levels of symbolic importance. These three sub-fields all exist within a broader field of cultural production, in which cultural capital, accumulated and embodied, provides overriding and dominant symbolic significance. However, the separation and distinction between the sub-fields within the wider field of cultural production provides a conceptual framework which I have designed in order to understand the relationship between class and careers historically.

By highlighting three different sub-fields for understanding the relationship between class and careers, it is possible to see how class-based inequalities occurred and, in a few cases, how social mobility was possible. What Figure 1 highlights is that progressing vertically in the same occupation was easier than making what Bourdieu (1984) calls ‘transverse

movements' across occupational fields, especially if these were more closed to certain social groups.

Women were not included in the final study and are therefore not represented in figure 1, however in section 5.3 the careers of 18 women who were analysed during the research are discussed, as they provide some initial clues about the intersection between gender and class in film occupations.

Field A is classified as highbrow and elitist, as these occupations were open to privately educated middle-class men (and to a lesser extent women) and closed to people from working-class backgrounds.

Field B is classified as socially diverse and technical as these occupations were open to men from MCOs and men from WCOs, usually travelling on engineering trajectories. Field B was closed to women of both class origins due to gender prejudices regarding sound and camera technology and engineering more generally.

Field C occupations are classified as working-class and craft-based, as these occupations were open to men on skilled manual trajectories. They were however closed to women from both class origins and to men from MCOs. The sub-fields are discussed in more detail in section 5.2, which provides explanations of the social forces around them.

**5.1: Occupational hierarchy and social mobility**

Running vertically in Figure 1 are hierarchical levels in film production. Each level incorporates several occupations in the sample. These are defined partly by pay – measured by collective agreements – and by occupational status – measured by the likelihood that an occupation would merit a film credit.

Starting at the top level of the chart (level 5) are 'above-the-line' roles that were always included in opening film credits: director, producer, screenwriter. Nine of the 37 in the sample reached level 5 positions.

The next level down (level 4) are high-status below-the-line roles: 'Chief Cameraman' – now called, director of photography (DOP), art director (AD) and editor, which were also often included in the film credits. In total seven of the sample had careers that culminated in these positions. Editors and DOPs sometimes progressed to the highest positions as directors and/or producers.

Altogether 16 of the 37 careers in the sample culminated in Levels 4 and 5, which were high status positions, 13 of which came from MCOs. The fact that these top-ranking positions were mainly filled by men from MCOs in the sample adds to historical perceptions regarding high status jobs and class origins in CCIs (Banks, 2017). Having said this, as a qualitative study and without the quantitative data to assess the class composition of the workforce historically, it is not possible to say this class-based inequality was the case through numbers alone. Instead this chapter – and the chapters that follow – provide a deeper understanding of the historical employment practices and processes that enabled these class- based inequalities to take place.

A further three men whose careers culminated in level 5 positions came from WCOs: Freddie Francis (interview 17), Freddie Young (interview 16) and Desmond Dickinson (interview 15), all of whom progressed in field B via a camera and engineering trajectory. That a career in camera provided opportunities for upward social mobility into these positions provides insights into the openness of certain film occupations that offered extended careers. The diagram in Figure 1 indicates that occupations in camera and, to a lesser extent sound, offered the most scope for upward social mobility in film production historically. Further

research into the social continuities and changes that have taken place within these occupations is certainly needed. As will be pointed out in later chapters, although camera and sound occupations were more open to men from WCOs, entry-level employment practices during the studio system era excluded them from industry-sponsored training and development before WW2. An historical study of class origins and training opportunities in the television industry from the 1950s would offer a useful comparison.

Level 3 consists of senior below-the-line roles, such as sound recordist, chief sound engineer, camera operator and studio-construction manager. Individuals whose careers culminated in these positions could expect a salary that was equivalent to higher paid professionals elsewhere in the labour market in this period, but this was counterbalanced by the fact that they were sometimes on insecure contracts during certain periods of their careers.

All 20 men from MCOs had careers that culminated in the top three occupational levels. Eight of the 17 men from WCOs had careers that culminated in these higher positions. However, the wider sample of BEHP archive interviews suggests these higher-ranking positions were predominantly middle-class destinations. The few working-class exceptions were purposively chosen for this research sample in order to map socially mobile trajectories. In general, the BEHP archive has far more interviews with men from MCOs in these positions.

Level 2 consists of below-the-line, lower paid occupations such as studio construction supervisors, senior lighting technicians (known in film as ‘Gaffers’), camera assistants (focus puller) and sound assistants (boom operator). All eight of the men in these positions were from WCOs. These were, however, the only examples I could find in the BEHP archive and I could not find any men from MCOs whose careers culminated at this level. There were women

from MCOs at this level in the archive, so for instance women in continuity roles (known at the time as 'continuity girls) were on a similar pay rate.

The positions in Level 2 were very rarely credited. The average pay rates were the lowest in the sample, but in comparison to equivalent occupations outside film production they were still comparatively high nationally, with weekly wages equivalent to lower paid professionals elsewhere in the labour market. These relatively high wages were counterbalanced by the precarious nature of employment, which is discussed further in later chapters. In terms of pay, grid A2 in figure 1 includes; assistant editor, and second assistant director roles, which were occupations in elitist trajectories (FA), but while some MCO men were in these occupations at the start of their careers, they all progressed to higher levels in field B and this middle-class progression was replicated in sound and camera roles (Grid B2) in field B.

None of those in the research sample had careers that culminated in the studio trainee grade (Level 1), but the class origins and final career destinations of those that started in these positions is significant. All 11 men who started in these positions reached levels 3, 4 or 5, indicating that a studio trainee position was a route towards an extended career. Ten of the 11 came from MCOs, indicating that they were also exclusionary. These trainee positions included production runner, clapper 'boy' (camera) and cable 'boy' (sound) and prepared trainees for careers in specialised film occupations, such as producer, editor, production manager or sound and camera roles. Studio trainees were often either just entering the labour market or were in the early stages of their careers; they are therefore the clearest examples in the sample of what the studio system could offer to younger entrants in terms of training and development. The starting pay was also the lowest in the sample, usually at £1 a week or lower, which was not enough to live on independently. This was below the national average

male under-18 weekly pay (£1.6s) in 1936 (Routh, 1980), potentially creating an economic barrier for people from poorer backgrounds.

While the class origins of men who reached different hierarchal positions sheds some light on the historical association between class and careers in film, the way these careers developed within the three sub-fields provides more telling insights into the class and career opportunities was mediated in different occupations.

**5.2 Occupational sub-fields in film production**

The three occupational sub-fields running horizontally have been identified as separate social spaces where the rules of the game were different and where the class habitus and capitals of individuals within them had different symbolic value. Never-the-less, there are certainly similarities and overlaps across the sub-fields and, as they are social spaces, the boundaries are not clearly defined. There is no perfect science for identifying fields. The analysis of each interview included a review of reflections about the technical and cultural aspects of their work. Overall, men from MCOs made more cultural references and referred to the cultural aspects of their work more often than the technical aspects, mentioning literature, theatre and art in relation to their own work and/or in relation to the films they made. In contrast men from WCOs were more inclined to discuss the technical aspects of their work, sometimes unclear about what films they worked on. Having said this, a class distinction between cultural references (middle-class) and technical references (working-class) became less pronounced among the men whose careers culminated in the higher grades in field B occupations, who tended to discuss a combination of cultural and technical aspects regardless of their class background.

Taking field A (middle-class composition) and field C (working-class composition), the argument is not that individuals from the 'wrong' class origins could never enter and make a career in them, merely that it would be harder for them to do so than those from the 'right' class origins. Borrowing Bourdieu's expression for this, an individual from working-class origins attempting to enter field A would be like a 'fish out of water'. And by the same token so would a man from MCOs in field C. The key difference is that field A provided more opportunity for an extended career and higher pay rates than field C. Although field B is socially mixed and had greater chances for extended careers, it is reasonable to assume from the BEHP interviews and historical literature that the higher positions were predominantly middle-class in composition; by the same token, careers that culminate in lower positions were more likely to be filled by men from WCOs, although there are fewer interviews available to assess this.

**5.3 Field A: Highbrow, elitist**

The sample of 11 careers in field A includes various roles: editing, production office roles, art direction and film direction (via an editing and production office route). Within this elitist sub-field there were two middle-class career pathways. Firstly, the route taken by art directors via Architectural College or Art College had similar patterns to traditional professional careers elsewhere in the labour market, which effectively excluded people from working-class backgrounds, as these routes were effectively elitist in this period. Secondly, career pathways taken in editing and production office careers (specialised occupations with no established professional pathway), were more often established via film industry sponsored training. These pathways were therefore different but led to the same processes of closure for people from working-class backgrounds.

There were a hybrid of occupations and career trajectories in field A, however they were identified as 'elitist' for several different reasons. The first reason is that the occupations within field A have the most scope for extended careers in film. The next two reasons are based more on clues from the analysis of the BEHP archive and the content of the interviews. The wider search of the BEHP archive, which is by no means comprehensive, provided no evidence of entrants from WCOs. Another clue is from the content of the BEHP archive interviews, in which the privileged access routes into these occupations were presented as normative in insider interview interactions (between film workers), only being occasionally challenged by the interviewer Roy Fowler, who had worked in the US industry, giving him an outsider's perspective. This does not mean to say that men from WCOs could never access field A, but it does suggest that they would have been atypical in all of these occupations.

What the analysis of the 11 careers in field A reveal are three key processes by which people from MCOs were able to enter and make careers in these occupations, which also excluded people from WCOs. These were therefore classed as processes of closure in field A.

The first process of closure was economic support, all but one of the 11 men had a high level of familial economic support (economic capital), which was used to help them early on in their careers.

The second process of closure was high status industry contacts: seven of the sample accessed the industry through high status (elite) contacts via their middle-class family or private school (social capital); where a social contact was not used, two men gained access via the Architectural College (attendance at which required economic capital) while another two approached a studio manager/executive to gain access (potentially cultural and social capital). Therefore nine out of 11 men gained access to the elitist field via middle-class contacts and/or a privileged higher education (which is explored further in Chapter 7).

The third process of closure was the 'symbolic mastery' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019) surrounding these occupations. Apart from art director roles, the occupations in field A did not require any technical background or qualifications. Although some occupations, for instance, editing, required technical training, all the occupations in field A had a considerable amount of what Friedman and Laurison (2019) call 'ambiguity of knowledge' around them, in which highbrow cultural capital and 'symbolic mastery' provided legitimacy.

These classed processes of closure extended to women who were able to enter these occupations but found it much harder to progress within them. While field A was closed to people from WCOs, it was a less masculine social space than fields B and C and therefore provided some openness for women from MCOs to enter. This does not mean it was necessarily an equal space, in fact the interviews with women indicate access to a number of occupations, such as editing, were overtly discriminatory. This partly explains why women could enter the field, but found it much harder to progress in it than men. Therefore, field A was a social space with some openness for women from MCOs, but with glass ceilings which limited progression. For both men and women from WCOs it was a closed social space for which entry was extremely difficult.

### 5.4 Field B: Socially diverse, technical

Field B is identified as a socially diverse space which was mainly open to men on engineering trajectories. It consists of 18 careers that culminated in camera and sound occupations. There are nine men with WCOs and nine with MCOs in this occupational sample.

There were no women in the BEHP archive who started in this period – although one woman was identified who did start a career in camera in the 1960s. The content of the

interviews also suggests that very few and possibly no women would have entered these occupations before 1960.

Field B is reflective of occupational spaces that Savage (2010) refers to as creating a new class of 'technocrats', which was an expanding group made up of middle-class and socially mobile working-class men and included those working in new technical engineering roles. As Savage points out, these were overtly masculine occupational fields, which often excluded women. Within these social spaces, Savage (2010) argues that technical and scientific knowledge was valued over highbrow cultural capital. However, in the wider field of the film industry and cultural industries highbrow culture was valued and was more significant than in the engineering and scientific fields of the period, which Savage (2010) is referring to. In this respect symbolic capital in field B was a contested terrain, while there was room for men on technical engineering trajectories, certain cultural capitals were also valued. For men progressing into higher positions (levels 4 and 5) the sample of interviews in field B occupations certainly suggests that highbrow cultural capital was significant, although less so than in field A.

In field B, careers culminated in occupations situated in four different hierarchal levels (L's 2-5) represented vertically in Figure 1: 3 directors (L5); 3 DOP's (L4); 4 camera operators, 4 sound mixers/recordists, 1 Chief sound engineer (all L3); 2 assistant sound recordists, 1 assistant camera operator (all L2). For men from WCOs, entering a career in camera and sound provided space for upward social mobility as the vertical levels within the field had more potential for extended careers than the craft field (Field C). Having said this, the wider BEHP sample points to a much higher proportion of men from MCOs who entered field B and progressed into these extended careers. However, the lack of interviews with men who had

short careers (culminating in level 2 roles) means it is difficult to say if these were more likely to be working-class destinations.

Field B is labelled a 'technical' space because the content of the interviews pointed more overtly to the technical aspects of their work than those in field A. But the cultural aspects of their work were none-the-less discussed in their interviews. Men who reached higher positions (level 3 upwards) tended to discuss their careers with references to the technical and the cultural aspects of their work. The men in this field had a variety of capitals that were embodied and accumulated before entering film production. In this respect certain aspects of a middle-class origin did give them an advantage; high status social contacts, economic capital and higher-status (legitimate) cultural capital; could all be drawn on to gain an advantage over less privileged entrants. However, it was a field where certain technical resources that could be accumulated through training and work experience, sometimes termed 'technical capital' (Bourdieu, 2005; Savage 2010) were also of symbolic value, which, to some extent, levelled the playing field between men from the two social origins. Field B occupations were by no means egalitarian, but they were more open to working-class trajectories than field A occupations and provided the greatest opportunities for upward social mobility in the sample.

A reason for the mixture of working and middle-class men in field B occupations is the range of early career trajectories into them. These can be exemplified by early careers that began in, Field C occupations (working-class film production field), electrical engineering elsewhere in the labour market and elsewhere in the film industry (but outside production). The fact that these trajectories provided opportunities to enter these occupations is why they were more socially diverse than those in field A.

On the other hand, the overall impression of field B is that while these trajectories tended to include men from both class backgrounds, entry-level routes provided by the film production studios were discriminatory and excluded men from WCOs. In the sample, these entry-level trajectories were the most common route for men from MCOs (6 out of 9), who did not have comparable engineering and technical skills upon entry. These entry-level studio trainee positions also excluded women from all class backgrounds.

The fact that these trainee positions were middle-class, male spaces and could be more commonly provided within the vertically integrated studio system suggests that as film occupations were developing, so too were class discriminatory practices surrounding who was able to work in them. There were various processes of closure for working class men evident in these trainee positions in both field A and B, which are explored further in Chapter 7.

Careers in camera and sound therefore provided career opportunities for men from WCOs in a range of levels in film production, with the potential to travel considerable social distances. These opportunities were a result of the socially diverse trajectories into these occupations. However, conversely, discriminatory entry-level employment practices also developed around camera and sound occupations which excluded men from WCOs. These exclusionary practices are explored in more detail in Chapter 7.

### 5.4 Field C: Working-class, craft

Field C consists of eight careers that culminated in Studio Construction and Electrical Lighting (although two further careers began in field C and culminated in field B). In comparison to fields A and B, careers were shorter, mainly culminating in lower status positions (level 2), apart from Studio Construction Managers (L3) who had equivalent average pay rates to Sound Recordists and Camera Operators (L3) in field B.

This was a male dominated sub-field, which was a result of the manual working-class trajectories through craft occupations. Practical, hands-on, craft-based skills were the most important resources for sustaining a career. The content of the interviews suggested that practice-based skills were more important than a knowledge of films as a cultural commodity, which had more field-specific value in the other two sub-fields. Individuals in field C did not always know what film they were working on and this contrasted with field A and the majority of men in field B (with the exception sound technicians in level 2 positions).

One man; Les Hilling (Interview 31), entered film as a trainee via his wide family networks in field C occupations, but this was presented as being an exceptional trajectory. The majority of these eight men entered film production having established their vocational skills in other (male segregated) industries (mainly construction). In a similar way to field A, I am not suggesting that an individual from the 'wrong' middle-class background could never work in these positions, but I am suggesting these were trajectories which were shaped through working-class origins and therefore men from more privileged backgrounds were unlikely to travel through them and would be atypical of these occupations. Women from any class background would have also been atypical in this field.

As is explored further through the data in the following chapters, this was the field that the largest numbers of men were trying to move away from in order to improve their career and pay, which is a reflection of the fact that there was little room for pursuing an extended career in field C.

**5.6 The hidden histories of working-class women film production**

Eighteen interviews with women from the BEHP archive that I initially analysed were eventually rejected for the final dissertation, and therefore do not feature in Figure 1. The reasons for this are explained in Chapter 4. However, from the research some tentative but potentially significant conclusions were drawn regarding social trajectories and gender. I have excluded the accounts of three of the 18 women who worked in hair and make-up as I found these extremely hard to connect to the occupational fields illustrated in figure 1. The intersection between class and gender is a sorely under-researched issue within CCIs. The historical class composition of women in film and TV is rarely ever mentioned in the academic literature. One of the few references to it is an observation by the film and TV producer Tony Garnett, commenting on the perceived rise in young people from working-class backgrounds who were entering UKFTV in the 1950s and 1960s, who makes the point that it was very rare to find any women from WCOs.

By looking at the gendered occupational division of labour in film, it is possible to see the potential processes of closure for women from WCOs. What the study of female workers suggested was that some of the occupations predominantly filled by women, such as continuity and costume design, were in career trajectories which could possibly be connected to the elitist sub-field (field A). This, coupled with the fact many working class social trajectories were in masculine fields, suggests that women from WCOs were excluded from most trajectories into film production careers.

Costume designers and female art directors had trajectories that were dependent upon their middle-class origins and similar to the male art directors in field A. The interviews with continuity ‘girls’ in the sample demonstrate the complicated, isolated and eclectic social spaces women were inhabiting in order to sustain a career in film production. In the sample

of 18, there were eight women who worked in continuity at some stage in their career. Of these eight, five either moved into higher positions in film production or in documentary film making, suggesting it was an important stepping-stone for women who were making very early inroads into higher positions in film.

As an occupation continuity can be placed (certainly historically) in production office roles in field A. On the whole women who worked in continuity tended to come from middle-class backgrounds as they had trajectories via typing colleges, often starting in film as production secretaries. Having said this, there may have been some openness to women from working-class backgrounds in these roles that requires further research. Once they moved into continuity these women were often on casual contracts in project-led employment and dependent on men in high ranked positions from MCOs (field A) for their next job. They also had to work closely with the film crew (field B) on set. An interview with Kay Mander is a good example of the way women in continuity moved across social spaces as she had social networks across all three fields highlighted in Figure 1, while others had social networks with individuals in field A and field B.

An overview of these women was that their MCOs gave them certain advantages, but they were still at a disadvantage when compared to middle-class men. This was because families and private schools invested less effort into female career trajectories. This partly explains why these middle-class women, unlike many of their male counterparts, were not able to access the industry via a family or school contact and, instead, were more likely to gain access through social contacts they had made in jobs before entering film, which was a more common entry route for men from WCOs.

More interviews with women who worked in hair, make-up, continuity and wardrobe roles might provide some examples of working-class social trajectories into film production

and these may provide insights into the ways working-class women could shape careers in the industry, but from what I have found, women from WCOs would have found it extremely difficult to enter and make a career in film production as they were excluded from so many film occupations due to their class and gender.

**Conclusion**

The overall picture from the sample in terms of career status is that men with middle class origins (MCOs) had careers that culminated in higher positions in terms of pay and status, while the career destinations of men with WCOs were mixed, but more likely to culminate in lower ranked positions. This is not a representative sample, but it does add to the 'reasonable assumptions' regarding the history of class origin and careers in UKFTV and CCIs more generally, that the composition of the workforce in higher status positions was middle-class (Banks, 2017).

What Figure 1 also demonstrates however, is the more significant contribution of this thesis, namely the way class origin helped shape careers in different ways depending on the social spaces (fields) surrounding different career trajectories. The sub-fields provide a picture of the historical association between class origins and careers in different occupational settings as the practices and customs within them were emerging and developing during the early period of the British Studio System in the 1930s. It is not possible to say what the social composition of film occupations were in the 1930s, however, this analysis of the association between class and careers, demonstrates the ways in which class origins impacted on career chances in different occupational settings historically.

Using these sub-fields to understand the association between class and careers, provides a more nuanced picture of the processes of closure and openness to people from

working-class backgrounds embarking on different occupational careers. Without being able to find any clear examples of women from working-class origins in the BEHP archive, it is hard to draw any clear conclusions, however the sub-fields do suggest that women from WCOs were doubly disadvantaged during this period, as they were excluded from the elitist field due to their class background and from fields B and C due to their gender.

The historical diagram of class and male careers in film occupations (Figure 1) is an illustration of the conceptual model discussed in this chapter, which makes an important contribution to our understanding of class and careers historically as it identifies the processes of class discrimination and opportunity across different film occupations. By doing so the model provides a challenge to meritocratic assumptions regarding careers in the industry. As a conceptual and methodological framework, the model is by no means perfect nor generalizable to all studies of class and careers, however it is a potentially useful exemplar of how to map the historical relationship between class and careers in different occupational and organisational settings.

The following chapters explore the career trajectories of the men in the sample, breaking down each section into working-class and middle-class backgrounds to compare their experiences. However, as will be highlighted throughout, the sub-fields men entered also played a significant factor in deciding their eventual destination.

Chapter 6 explores their education, their career aspirations, the role of the family and access to the film industry. Chapter 7 focuses on their training and early career development in the Studio System. Chapter 8 focuses on the career progression, looking at the ways men from different class origins moved within and sometimes across the sub-fields.

## Chapter 6 Class origins and career decision making

This chapter focuses on career decision making, exploring why men entered film production and how their career trajectories were shaped by their social origins. It is structured around the two types of class origin of the men in the sample, starting with those from middle-class origins (MCOs), followed by working-class origins (WCOs). In these two sections, the three occupational sub-fields in Figure 1 are referred to: field A – elitist and highbrow, comprising men from MCOs who began in production design and low production office roles; field B – socially diverse and technical, comprising men from MCOs and WCOs who began their careers in sound and camera occupations; and field C – working-class and craft-based, comprising men from WCOs who began in electrical, property department and studio construction roles.

Section 1 introduces the origins of the men in the sample, pointing to the key differences in terms of advantages and disadvantages of the two social groups. Section 2 compares the attitudes regarding starting pay and longer career prospects. Section 3 compares the decision to work in film among the two social groups. Section 4 focuses on the role of families in decision making. Section 5 compares different school and higher education experiences and how they influenced career decision making, as men entered the labour market.

### 6.1 Indicators of middle-class advantage and working-class disadvantage

The distinction between private and state school is used as a key indicator of class background historically (McKibbin, 1998), but like any one indicator this is not a perfect measure. The age of 14 is used as a break off point for social origins, as it indicates a clear difference in school leaving age between state (14) and private school (16) children.

The social origins of the middle-class men were generally more straightforward to identify than the sample of working-class men. Middle-class male trajectories followed a typical early pathway. They attended private or grammar school until the age of 16, at which point they took one of three options: they continued into higher education, entered an occupation in film production, or a profession elsewhere in the labour market, before they accessed the film industry. All three options led to a trajectory towards an extended career in film production.

The men classified as working-class in the sample, especially the nine who entered field B, had very different trajectories. Three men had parents who themselves had come from MCOs, but who had travelled on a socially downward trajectory, which forced them to send their sons to state schools (interviews 15, Desmond Dickinson; 16, Freddie Young; and 25, Peter Birch). This meant these three men from WCOs had a mixture of working-class and middle-class social surroundings and made references to middle-class family members who had an influence on their career trajectories. These mixed class experiences also meant that when they entered film occupations, they did so with some experience of being in middle-class social spaces. It also meant that they had different career influences and expectations from other working-class men.

There were also men from WCOs who were on upward trajectories before they entered film production (interviews 25, Peter Birch; 26, Cyril Crowhurst; 27, Micky Hickey; 28, Harry Miller).

Nonetheless, despite the sample of working-class men having more blurred social origins and early career trajectories than the sample of middle-class men, there are three key commonalities that link all 17 men labelled 'working-class'. Firstly, men from WCOs never referred to their state education as something that benefitted their career in film production. Secondly, men from WCOs never mention a parent or family member ever stimulating a career interest in film. Lastly, none of the men from WCOs had a high-status family connection in film, which contrasted sharply with the men from MCOs. In this sense these men had shared disadvantages, which compared unfavourably with those from MCOs.

Having said this, while the overall picture of working-class disadvantage and middle-class advantage is evident from the sample, the extent to which this overall trend was true differed across the range of film occupations. Occupations in field C required the sort of vocational skills that men from working-class backgrounds were more likely to accumulate than their middle-class counterparts, therefore giving them an advantage - even if this was a rather limited one - in terms of offering extended careers. Added to this, certain trajectories through engineering, which were emerging geographically during the 1920s and 1930s, provided opportunities for men from WCOs to enter and make careers in field B occupations.

### 6.2 Class origins and starting pay

With the exception of art directors, the typical way men in field A occupations entered film production was on low starting pay in trainee positions on short term contracts. The pay was between £1 and 25 shillings per week. As one trainee assistant director who started at ABPC Elstree in 1932 explained, '25 shillings was not to be sneezed at, but it certainly wasn't enough to live on' (interview 9, E.M. Smedley-Aston).

This low starting pay was in sharp contrast to field C, where men from WCOs could earn around £4 per week, meaning that starting pay was certainly a pull factor, as Ronnie Udell (interview 34) who started as a studio carpenter explains:

> "…as a carpenter and joiner the local money being in the country was a pound and five pence a week whereas in the film industry on their 52 hour week we could get 4 pound 11 shillings on a flat week and of course there was such a lot of overtime had to be worked out because the studios [sets] were built in the day, maybe shot over night and cleared in the morning… (Interview 34, Ronnie Udell: field C)

According to this statement, there was therefore a big difference in pay compared to the average for carpenters in the country. Other craft workers confirm that the pay was comparatively high. Gus Walker, who began his career as a studio carpenter (interview 33) claims that with overtime pay it was equivalent to a professional wage. Ernie Diamond, another studio carpenter (interview 36) pointed out that while he was initially reluctant to work in film production as it was 'rough work', after a week on the production of Boadicea

(1927) he was 'shocked' at how good the money was and pursued a career in the industry despite already earning high wages as a cabinet maker.

Trainees and assistants in fields A and B were on low pay and would often work long unsociable hours with no overtime pay. This was a point of contention in the 1930s, as they worked closely with electricians and carpenters in field C occupations who were being paid overtime. The initial disparity in pay in favour of men from WCOs in field C, did however change over the course of their careers, as the men from MCOs in field A occupations would progress to level 3, 4 and 5 positions where wages were upwards of £10 a week, which contrasted with men in craft occupations (field C) who generally had short career trajectories.

The accounts of men from MCOs in field A and WCOs in field C therefore demonstrate clear differences in terms of starting pay, economic circumstances and career decisions in film production.

In field B occupations, class distinctions regarding starting pay become more blurred, but on the whole men from MCOs have similar attitudes and opportunities to those on elitist trajectories, namely that they would (and could) accept a low starting pay for a longer career in the future. With the exception of Fred Tomlin (interview 29) who had moved from lighting electrician (field C) into sound (field B), for the nine men from WCOs in field B, starting pay did not act as a major incentive. The main incentives for entering camera and sound occupations were that they were perceived as a positive career opportunity, with room for extended careers and potential growth in creativity, technical experience and future pay.

Across the sample there was a distinction between middle-class men and working-class men entering field C, however this class difference was less clearly defined among men in field

B, where starting pay and longer career prospects were cited as important pull factors for men from both class origins.

### 6.3 Middle-class career aspirations

As the following statements suggest, middle-class men commonly had the intention to work in the industry before they entered the labour market, and this applied to those travelling through elitist trajectories (field A) and technical trajectories (field B).

> 'I decided the only thing I really wanted to do was work in films' (interview 7, Sid Cole: field A)

> 'I was a youngster at school and I started going to the movies on Saturday afternoons with my father, and I became completely smitten with them, I can only say that. I just couldn't wait to get involved in them'. (interview 10, Eddie Dryhurst: field A)

> I left school at the age of 16 to start work. I had more or less decided that I wanted to go into the film industry because my interest went back a long way even though I was only 16. […] (interview 24, John Aldred: field B)

> 'I was just sixteen and I thought if I went into sound, I would be following my inclinations […] I was interested in the artistic side of things, perhaps, and I thought, films sound like a marvelous idea. […] (Interview 23, Gordon McCallum: field B)

John Aldred and Sidney Cole say they 'decided' they would work in film. Eddie Dryhurst says he 'couldn't wait to get involved', while Gordon McCallum felt by working in film, he

would be following his artistic 'inclinations'. They share a desire to enter film, often for creative and cultural reasons, but they are also confident about their career trajectory into film, suggesting it is a career they were destined to follow.

There were a few exceptions in the sample, for instance Vernon Sewell (interview 13) had started his career as an engineering designer, but had lost his savings during the Wall Street crash (1929) after which he used a private school contact to gain access to the film industry, moving across occupations, and then making the decision to become a director as he says:

> 'I started off as assistant on the camera, on the silent movies, then when talkies started I did a course with RCA and I became a boom swinger to start with, … And then I realised, the only job in movies to have was the director, he had all the fun! […] So I set out to be a director' (interview 13, Vernon Sewell: field B)

For Sewell a career in film was not his first option, but it was still on his career horizons, with an early intention to have an extended career as a film director. Despite these exceptions the general rule among men from MCOs was that they had made the decision to work in film occupations before they entered the labour market, suggesting that their education and social surroundings made a career in film seem like the 'right' one to have.

### 6.3.1 Working-class career aspirations

For the majority of working-class men, a career in film production was not part of any clear design upon leaving school. This was particularly true of men on traditional working-class trajectories in Field C, as Gus Walker (33: Field C) puts it; 'I'd had no thoughts about the film industry, I didn't know about it'. A common working-class trajectory was to have worked

for several years elsewhere in the labour market, usually over three years and in some cases ten years, before entering film production. Cyril Thawley (interview 35), who had been working on casual contracts in construction, started in film production aged 30. Like other construction workers this was out of economic necessity, more than design, as Thawley explains:

> 'I was cycling around Denham and I saw the studio being built. […] It was a massive place, so I thought this looks probable, you know, because them days there was no dole, there was no social services or anything, so I had to find what work I could…' (Interview 35, Cyril Thawley: field C)

Thawley had migrated from the north of England to pursue work in the south east. As was discussed in Chapter 3, in the 1930s this was a common migration for workers in construction and electrical engineering.

In total there were nine men in the sample from WCOs who entered field B occupations. Six men from WCOs embarked on an occupational career which was outside film production, but transferable to sound and camera roles. In sound occupations, four men from WCOs; Peter Birch (interview 25); Cyril Crowhurst (interview 26); Micky Hickey (interview 27) and Harry Miller (interview 28); all entered film having been working in other cultural and creative industries, respectively: radio, music, cinema projection and theatre (in sound effects). Manny Yospa (interview 22) entered after a period of being unemployed and becoming involved with the Labour film unit, whereupon he was able to join the ACT union and gain access to the commercial studios in 1942. Fred Tomlin (interview 29) had an early

connection to film workers as his mother ran a café near a film studio, however he had worked for ten years in other industries before he started working in film.

Three men from WCOs (interviews 15, Desmond Dickinson; 16, Freddie Young; 17, Freddie Francis) made the decision to work in film as school-leavers, which was atypical of men from WCOs in the sample and more reflective of men from MCOs. All three men began by working as 'boys' (low-paid, like 'teaboy') in photography printing and then moved into low status positions in production camera crews either while teenagers or in their early 20s. These three men went on to have extended careers in the film industry. Their experiences show that camera offered some entry-level opportunities to men from working-class origins in the 1920s and 1930s, which was not evident from any of the entry-level positions in field A.

The openness of camera roles can partly be explained by the occupational connections to printing and engineering and by the fact they had not yet become established occupations in the newly emerging sound studios of the 1930s. Having said this, Desmond Dickinson and Freddie Young (interviews 15 and 16) both started before 1927 and had become camera operators (level 3) by the time the studio system emerged in the early 1930s. Freddie Francis (interview 17) was therefore the only person in the BEHP archive from a working-class background who entered film production as a trainee and follows a trajectory more typical of men from MCOs. Freddie Francis's transition into film production was still different from that of his middle-class colleagues. He started in film production aged 17, by which time he had already completed a year on an engineering course and a 2-year photography apprenticeship, which gave him more technical skills than many of the middle-class school-leavers who were on a similar trajectory as camera trainees.

In most cases working-class men in field B had a desire to work in the film industry, which, in a similar way to middle-class men, was partly because it provided opportunities for extended careers; the difference from men from MCOs was that the intent was not stimulated by the same social processes via middle-class schooling and families, which is explored further in the following sections.

### 6.4 Middle-class families and career aspirations

Men from MCOs across the sample indicate that their families and social surroundings helped shape early trajectories into film production. Some parents were hesitant about their children starting careers in film as it did not fit into traditional perceptions about the 'right' middle-class career path. Entrants told stories about their parents trying to dissuade them from working in the industry or being disappointed about their career decision:

> My mother […] set her heart on having me well educated. So when I went home and told her I'd got a job and how pleased I was and how I was earning one pound a week, her face somewhat fell because she'd originally thought of me being a lawyer or journalist or something exalted like that. It reminds me of the Desmond Dickinson[5] story "don't tell my mother, I'm working in the film industry, she thinks I've an honest job playing a piano in a brothel." (interview 7, Sidney Cole: field A)

The joke about pretending they did not work in the film industry is revealing in that it shows that middle-class entrants in the 1920s and 1930s were embarking on careers that were not deemed culturally acceptable by their families. The objection was sometimes due to the low starting salaries in occupations in fields A and B. It was also because film was

[5] Desmond Dickinson features in the sample and was a DOP in the film industry.

perceived to be an industry where it was difficult to sustain a steady career, which contrasted with a secure 'salariat' status which was perceived to be a middle-class pathway.

Having said this, what is more striking in middle-class accounts is how supportive parents were after they accepted their children's career direction, for example, John Aldred (interview 24: field B) was determined to get into the film industry and he says that after trying to dissuade him; 'my parents had resigned themselves to the fact that I was destined to a career in the film industry', after this his father, a dentist, used a contact to get him an interview at a film studio and then financed him through the first few years in his (low-paid) career.

Despite parental scepticism about pay and job security, the cultural aspects of working in the film industry were more attuned to middle-class habitus and this was reflected in some of the families of those in the sample. For some entrants there was a direct link to the film industry and/or other CCIs, which influenced decisions:

> My sister was on the stage, she was a ballet dancer […] My mother – before the family came on the scene – had been a concert singer, she was a contralto […] my father was the director of publicity for, I think at that time, Universal Films and he'd been working in the film business since 1917 […] so we had show-business connections […] my father […] suggested perhaps I should look at the film business. (interview 19, Alan Lawson: field B)

Middle-class family members and friends who were not involved in the film industry were also able to see the potential appeal and sometimes initiated an interest, for instance Hugh Stewart's (interview 8, field A) father-in-law, who was a doctor, suggested Stewart

would like to work in film. Reflecting on this, Stewart says he thought it 'would be a marvellous idea' saying; 'It suddenly hit me, I'd never even thought such a thing was possible…'. In another example, E.P. Williams, an art director, reflected upon his initial interest in a film career, saying:

> '…during the time I was a student [as an architect], I happened to be walking to the Tube one day with a friend of my father's, another doctor [his father's occupation], and he asked me what I thought I would do when I'd qualified, […] And he said "Have you ever thought of becoming a motion picture designer?" And I said "no, I hadn't, it sounds like a good idea". He said, "Well have you seen 'Robin Hood'?"[…] And I said yes, I had. He said, "look at that, marvellous to be able to design those sort of things." (Interview 2, E.P. Williams: field A)

Occasionally middle-class men would start working in the family business outside of film production, but once they had convinced their parents about their choice of career, they were given support and were able to draw on different capitals within their middle-class circles, as Aston explains:

> '[going into film production was] purely a career choice. […] my father was an accountant and he and his brother had quite a good business going […]. And you know, the obvious thing was that I should follow into the business but he [my father] was very understanding on these things and when it became fairly obvious that I had no aptitude for figures and that I didn't want to go into accountancy, he never played the heavy father […] He was awfully good about it. In fact, it was

> through him that I did get an introduction to Elstree [film studio].' (Interview 9, E.M. Smedley-Aston: field A)

In this sense occupational trajectories in the film industry were being shaped and/or supported by middle-class families and family friends even if there was some opposition initially. What this points to is the scope within middle-class families to help shape a myriad of careers, even ones that were outside more normative or established middle-class trajectories.

### 6.4.1 Working-class families and career aspirations

Men from WCOs did not mention their families ever encouraging them to work in film production after leaving school. On the whole, if they discussed the role of a family member in their career decision making it was about a potential trade elsewhere in the labour market, as Ernie Diamond (interview 36) a carpenter explains:

> '…my dad asked me what I wanted to do. […] And I said; what about your trade Dad? – my father was a carpenter and my grandfather was a carpenter […] He said your uncle's working in a cabinet making factory making gramophones, so I went and saw my uncle.'

This was the case even when working-class families had connections to the film industry, for example, Fred Tomlin's (interview 29) mother worked in a café frequented by film electricians, and Tomlin remembers bringing tea to studio workers working on film sets as a boy. Despite this potential network, Fred Tomlin did not use his mother's connections to

work as a lighting electrician until he was 24, having worked elsewhere in the labour market for 10 years.

Another example; Les Hilling (interview 31), had a number of relatives working in a film studio, but upon leaving school was encouraged by his school teacher and his mother to work in retail and it was not until he was unemployed that he used his family connections in film to get work as a low-paid 'boy' in the Property Department at Gaumont-British studios.

The notion of a career in film production was also absent in the families of WCO men on sound and camera trajectories in field B. Although, some of these men did refer to parents influencing early career decisions elsewhere in the labour market which helped them embark on a longer career in film production. This ultimately led them on a trajectory into field B occupations, for instance Cyril Crowhurst (interview 26) was encouraged by his father to get the qualifications to pursue a professional career in electrical engineering, as he explains:

> '[My father was] self-educated more or less and [learned] by experience more than anything else, I think […] But he was very keen, I mean, he more or less bullied me into going to this Poly and I did and […] you don't get Higher National Certificate with Distinction for nothing you know. […] Well, of course, eventually, becoming a Chief Sound Engineer of a big (film) studio, I had the knowledge of all these things, and this meant something. (interview 26, Cyril Crowhurst)

Here, Crowhurst is pointing very clearly to the importance of his father's influence in persuading him to move into professional engineering, which provided opportunities for a longer career trajectory into level 3 of film production. In this respect film production careers were unlikely to be a prospect that was discussed within working-

class families or circles, however certain occupations that provided opportunities for extended careers were and this could place them on a trajectory (more often than not, a technical trajectory) towards a film career.

**6.5 Middle-class education and career aspirations**

Men from MCOs all went to fee-paying schools. The reputation, status and educational standards of these schools varied and to a certain extent this is replicated in the origins of those in fields A and B. Men in field A occupations tended to go to the elite private schools, while the men in field B were educated in less established private and county grammar schools. One indication of this distinction between middle-class men is that those in field A, travelling on elite trajectories, referred to their education to a greater extent than those who entered into field B occupations.

The elitist private schools attended by those in field A included Westminster Boys, Bedales (known for being a progressive private school with a focus on the arts) and Marlborough. In some cases, they attended universities (interviews 7, Sidney Cole; 8, Hugh Stewart), which was rare even among middle-class men in the 1920s and 1930s. For some, private schools were not institutions where they felt they belonged, but the schools were still mentioned as places that stimulated and/or encouraged them to target a career in film. Philip Leacock (interview 11) was the son of a businessman and went to St. Christopher's preparatory school in Hampstead, London and the Bedales private boarding school in Hampshire. On his education he says:

> 'I don't think they liked me. I was very small. […] I never finished school so – I was never very interested in the academic side. […My interest in film] really started

> possibly because they had a very nice darkroom at the school and I became interested in photography. And that led to an interest in film and shooting little 16mm films.' (Interview 11, Philip Leacock: field A)

A more common connection to the film industry via a private education came from a general interest in culture and the arts, which was stimulated in private schools and universities. Peter Tanner attended Westminster boy's school, where he developed an interest in writing and storytelling via highbrow culture:

> 'Westminster is a literary school and one for languages, Greek and Latin are essential subjects there, but I did for a literary life, I always wanted to write as a matter of fact.' (Interview 6, Peter Tanner: field A)

This connection to highbrow culture was reflected across the sample of middle-class men but was more prevalent among those in field A occupations. In some cases, interviewees reflected on the ways they were able to develop their cultural capital, while also developing social networks among like-minded pupils. For example, Hugh Stewart (Interview 8) entered field A as a low-paid trainee at Gaumont-British studios, before doing so, he attended private school and then studied English at Cambridge University, he explains that his membership in various literary societies at Cambridge was due to his interest in literature and drama. Here he accumulated cultural capital and as he goes on to explain he formed networks with other students that he would work with early on in his film career.

In some cases, men from MCOs entering field B, such as the sound recordist, John Aldred (interview 24), had educational experiences that reflected those in field A, but the majority had more negative experiences. They attended smaller and less well-known private

schools, or went to fee-paying county grammar schools, both of which had lower fees. In cases like Tubby Englander (interview 18) and Gordon McCallum (interview 23), their education was interrupted by financial problems or ill health. For others (interviews 19, Alan Lawson; 21, Len Harris) they did not like academic work and saw working as a film technician as a way out and into more 'hands-on' or practical careers.

To some extent there was an educational levelling between men from MCOs and WCOs entering field B, in that they did not view school as significant in their decision to work in film; however, this should not be mistaken for an equal educational experience. Despite the fact there was a less direct link between a privileged education and a trajectory into film production for MCO men in field B than in field A, there was also no clear indication that their education was a barrier to their careers. Added to this, for those men from MCOs who did not do well educationally, there were still economic and social advantages they could draw on.

### 6.5.1 Working-class education and career aspirations

State school education was never referred to by working-class men as influencing their decision to work in film. All the state-educated men in the sample left school at 14 or earlier and entered the labour market at that age. In general, there was a 'collective silence' among working-class men about their experience in school. Where there was reflection on state schools and transitioning to the labour market, they tended to be dismissive reflections or with stigma attached to them. For those in field C the best to hope for was a route into some form of work-based training, here Tom Peacock (interview 37) using the collective 'we' describes his schooling:

> ‘I never came out with any diplomas I can assure you that. I could play football, I could play cricket, but I couldn't get no diplomas. [I left school aged] Fourteen. That was the age you see. […] unless you won a scholarship […] had nothing, did we? […] I was lucky to get a job, out of school. […] I went to this factory I was like a boy, and I went sweeping up and making tea and all that, […]

The dismissive attitude towards state schools was common among WCOs men in field C. In field B, education was discussed with embarrassment or a sense of loss. In some cases, men from WCOs reflected on missing out on a ‘good’ education due to the need to work and earn money. Harry Miller was born in 1908 and left elementary school when he was 12 to work as a stagehand in the theatre:

> ‘It was an ordinary council school and you had to be in what was called X7 for six months before you could take this exam that was called a labour exam. If you passed this exam you could either go to grammar school or leave school entirely. So I chose, because my family was large and that, to leave school and go to work’ (interview 28, Harry Miller: field B)

Harry Miller is one of the older men in the sample and therefore left school at 12 rather than 14, but his experience of not being able to afford to receive a longer education has commonality with other working-class experiences of education between the wars. Miller moved across from field C to field B and reached a level 3 position as a sound mixer, but this had very little to do with his education and much more to do with the considerable experience he had of working in theatre. Other men from WCOs on socially mobile trajectories were more

dismissive of their state school education. Freddie Francis was extremely dismissive of his education in state school:

> 'My parents were not very rich and my dear old mother, bless her, had never been to school […] So I had very little education, really. I went to one or two what were called in those days, elementary schools, which was the lowest common denominator' (Interview 17, Freddie Francis: field B)

Francis did however go to technical college, where he began an engineering course, which he left to take up an apprenticeship with a photographer and then managed to access a trainee camera position as a 'clapper boy' in the film studios. He mentions the active role of his father in these early career steps, which was rare among working-class men in the sample and more common among middle-class entrants. His ultimate success in film (Freddie Francis reached level 5 as a director) perhaps helps explain why he is so dismissive of a state education. From his point of view, it did not prepare him for his chosen career, while a private education might have done. For someone who spent much of his career working in a field that was on the whole middle-class – and this included his time at Elstree as a trainee – his contrasting state school education would have been very apparent, and might explain the reference to his state school as 'the lowest common denominator'.

It is a limitation of the BEHP interviews that these issues are not explored further; what Francis really felt like in occupational spaces that were predominantly middle-class, remains unclear from his interview. A lack of follow up questions related to education and class is replicated across the interviews with other men from WCOs.

For two other high achievers in the sample (interviews 15, Desmond Dickinson; 16, Freddie Young), a sense of loss was expressed when comparing the private education of other family members with their own state education, which was perceived as a missed opportunity. Desmond Dickinson (interview 15) entered the film industry as a 'boy' in the film labs in 1918, before moving into production as a camera assistant in the 1920s, here he explains why he had ended up going to a state elementary school:

> 'My brother had been to a very good school, my dad had been to a public school, but my family had run out of money, because my old man was a fool you see. The family paid for my brother to get an apprenticeship at this aviation company and my mother asked if I could work there as an office boy when I was 13' [in 1915]. (interview 15, Desmond Dickinson)

In one quote, Micky Hickey (interview 27), who worked as a sound assistant (level 2 in field B) does suggest that his education in state school held him back from moving into a higher position:

> 'I often used to say to my wife, in those early days at MGM, I'd say, "I only wished I had that much of Steve's brain, Oscar's brain," you know, he was brilliant. I only wished I had that much of his brain, because I can't knock my childhood, … but I didn't have the education, the money wasn't there…' (interview 27, Micky Hickey)

Here Hickey is referring to two men he worked with. The insinuation that 'the money wasn't there' suggests it was there for his colleagues. It is the comparison of their 'brains' with his own which makes him feel he cannot achieve what they can, which he directly relates to his education. The quote seems to be referring to his perception of himself as not having

the creativity to move into a higher role, but it also suggests that by comparing himself to more educated middle-class colleagues who were in a majority in sound roles, Hickey feels less confident due to his 'inferior' education.

A state or private education was the clearest indication of class status between the wars. If someone discussed their state school education, they would effectively be revealing their 'lower' working class status. Although this could have been explored more in the interviews, the sample of men from WCOs suggests that state education was perceived as a hindrance, certainly in field B, where working-class men worked closely with privately educated middle-class colleagues.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results presented here suggest that middle-class school leavers entered the labour market with clear intentions to work in film production. For middle-class men in elitist trajectories (field A) and to some extent technical trajectories (field B) there are clear connections between their interests in – and references to – highbrow cultural capital and their desire to work in film. In sharp contrast, working-class school leavers were unlikely to embark on a career in film production as it was not on their career horizons; the majority did not perceive the emerging film industry as a place where they could work and therefore entered later in their working lives.

The key differences between the two social groups were the impact of family and education on early career trajectories. Middle-class social surroundings and a private school

education influenced and encouraged decisions to work in film production; despite initial objections from some parents, which could have deterred them from entering film, their class dispositions towards film production careers tended to be a stronger pull-factor. Also, their determination to enter the industry led to parental support among middle-class families. Added to this, families and schools provided a stock of capitals and resources to make film a realistic career in the minds of middle-class school leavers.

This middle-class intention to work in film upon leaving education contrasted with men from WCOs, educated in state schools. This was because their families and state schools did not encourage an interest or provide a stock of capitals that led towards a film occupation in field A or field B.

While this class difference does provide an overall comparison between the two social classes, it tends to obscure some of the more nuanced and emerging working-class connections to film and other CCIs in the period between the World Wars. The sample of men from WCOs in field B demonstrate that there were trajectories available to men from WCOs that could eventually lead to a career in camera and sound roles. These trajectories suggest opportunities for upward social mobility within the wider scope of CCIs were emerging in the 1930s.

## Chapter 7 Class origins and historical entry routes into film

The early career trajectories of the research sample of men from WCOs and MCOs suggest that class origins mattered across a range of film occupations during the period of the British Studio System.

To better understand the processes of closure and openness that men from working-class and middle-class backgrounds encountered historically, the access routes and the early career opportunities across different occupational settings were analysed. Individual trajectories across the research sample varied, with occupations offering a range of access routes. However, the process of mapping early career trajectories and comparing them across the sample has shown some clear, and contrasting, entry route trends among the two social groups. As will be explored through the data below, these trends suggest historical pathways into different occupational groups were closely associated with class origins. They also point to indirect and in some cases direct class discriminatory employment practices in a range of occupational settings in film studios.

Each chapter section is divided into two parts, starting with men from middle-class origins, (MCOs) followed by men from working-class origins (WCOs). Sections 7.1 and 7.2 discuss experiences of initial access routes, highlighting the class trends in terms of how those in the sample gained initial access into occupational groups. Sections 7.3 (MCO) and 7.4 (WCO) focus on the typical early career and training experiences across the two class groups. Early career trajectories that were atypical of the sample are discussed at the end of each

section. Early career experiences were defined as covering the period leading up to progression to the second phase in their film production careers, when individuals broke into a higher grade or indicated they felt more established in an occupation. Progression to a second phase in career development was identified in three different ways across the sample, depending on their trajectory: transitioning from an entry-level position to an assistant role; shifting to another occupation entirely; or shifting at a moment that the interviewee pointed to as representing being more settled in the occupation they had accessed upon entry.

The general theme across the research sample was that access routes were arbitrary. Across the sample of 37 men, only three, all of whom came from WCOs, accessed the industry through formal channels and they did so during the Second World War, when the Ministry of Defence and the trade unions had greater control over access and training. The remaining 34 men all gained access through informal channels, often through a family or schools contact, a former work colleague or in some cases by approaching a supervisor while passing a film studio. There were however some contrasting class themes in the access experiences of the 37 men.

### 7.1 Middle-class access routes

The most common middle-class route into film occupations in the sample was via weak ties to high status social contacts in film production. These contacts either worked in studio management or higher-level production roles (grades 4 or 5). This was most prevalent among those entering entry-level production office and editing roles in field A occupations, but was replicated in sound and camera occupations in field B.

Thirteen of the 20 men from MCOs accessed film production through a family or school contact. Three of the remaining seven men (interviews 5, Reggie Beck; 10, Eddie Dryhurst; 23, Gorgon McCallum) attempted to access the industry through their social contacts and failed, suggesting that although a social network increased the chances of entry considerably, it was not always a guaranteed route. The remaining four middle-class entrants did not have social networks into film occupations, but were able to get in as a result of considerable family investment in their higher education (interviews 2, L.P. Williams; 3 Cedric Dawe; 14 Eric Cross) and/or entrepreneurial endeavours (interview 12, Cyril Pennington-Richards).

Privileged access among the middle-class sample was a research theme that emerged early in my analysis and I labelled the accounts of them in the BEHP interviews as, 'privileged entry route narratives'. Across the sample of men from MCOs, access was very often dependent on a high stock of inherited capitals, which could be economic, social or cultural capitals, or a combination of them.

A common language was deployed to describe how inherited middle-class capitals were used to gain entry, which was not as prevalent in the working-class sample. For instance, interviewees refer to the practice of using a school or family contact to gain initial access as, 'getting an introduction', suggesting it was customary practice. This trend was further evidenced by the interactions with insider interviewers, who were also very often from MCOs and never challenged these privileged entry routes. Across the sample of interviews, privileged access was very often discussed between former film workers in a way that suggested it was the norm, for example, Hugh Stewart (interview 8), who gained access to a highly regarded entry-level position as a trainee editor at the vertically integrated Gaumont-

British Picture Corporation (GBPC), is asked by the interviewer how he accessed the position. Hugh Stewart (interview 8) accessed the film industry through a friend of the family who worked as a senior editor at the studio, but he jokes: 'I know a man who knows a man who's the godfather of somebody in the film business'. In response to this the interviewer laughs, without questioning the connection.

The term 'getting an introduction' was used in the middle-class sample and signposted the use of a high-status social contact, with influence in a film studio, which they used to give them access to field A and B positions, albeit very low-paid ones. 'Getting an introduction' could sometimes mean a job interview was not required and men from MCOs were instead given jobs on the strength of their privileged connections, for instance Vernon Sewell (interview 13) went to Marlborough Private school in the 1920s, which he explains provided him with a number of useful social connections:

> 'I met some very valuable friends there who became friends all my life and it was through a Marlborough friend that I got into the film business […] Because my friend had an uncle called Archibald Nettlefold […] who owned Nettlefold studios, […] And it was through him I got into the movies'. (Interview 13, Vernon Sewell)

In other cases, family ties, rather than school ties, were used to obtain a job. For example, an art director (interview 1, Edward Carrick) explains how he got a job through the studio executive, Basil Dean, because of the influence of a family friend who was an investor in the production company; Associated Talking Pictures (ATP, Ealing studio), providing him with a position as an assistant art director at the studio before it had been built:

> 'I went down to see the old Countess of Warwick, she was a wonderful woman. […] she somehow heard in roundabout ways that I was on hard times, so she said,

> "Do come down and stay a week at this place near Dunmow – Eastern Lodge". Off we go and there was Basil Dean[6] being ever so nice to her because he was trying to raise some money for a film studio. Only the other day I was looking at some old letters and there was a letter from Basil Dean saying "I would like to remind you that I met you at Lady Warwick's the other day and that you were very interested in films […] and would you like to come and see me next time you are in London." So off I went' (interview 1, Edward Carrick)

More typically, men from MCOs used loose family ties to gain access to an informal interview in which they were assessed for an entry-level position. For instance, a sound mixer (interview 24, John Aldred) got an introduction through his father's dental patient, while a camera operator gained access through a former neighbour (interview 18, Tubby Englander). These weak ties through family were not always straightforward. The first introduction for Peter Tanner (Interview 6) came via his mother's contact; the Head of Production at GBPC studios, who decided there was no position available for Tanner at that time. In response, Tanner's uncle arranged a cocktail party and invited various guests from the film industry to get him another introduction, which then led to an entry-level position in editing (field A). Tanner was therefore able to draw on a high stock of social capital from his family to gain access. These networks highlight the scope of middle-class weak ties and loose associations which middle-class men entering the labour market could draw on.

When there was not a social contact through their families, men from MCOs could draw on other inherited capitals, for example Len Harris, a camera operator (interview 21), had no

[6] Basil Dean was a prominent studio producer who started Ealing Studios, which was then run by his production company Associated Talking Pictures, which he financed through rich benefactors like Lady Warwick and through deals with US film distributors

family or school contacts so his father paid for a course at Regents Park College which was running one of the first film courses in the country. According to Len Harris, the course was not altogether useful in terms of the practical training he received, but his college tutor used his networks in film to enable Harris to access an entry-level position at Gaumont-British Picture Corporation (GBPC).

### 7.1.2 Informal one-to-one interviews

An introduction to someone in a film studio often led to an informal one-to-one interview, usually with a studio manager or a high-level senior (male) production worker. Men who began their careers in production office and editing occupations in field A tended to have these informal interviews. They often led to a trial period for a low paid entry-level position as a 'boy' (these are discussed further in section 7.2). An example of this is Sid Cole (interview 7) who was determined to get into the film industry. Below he explains the importance of getting an introduction through a social contact, in this case an old boy's network:

> 'I decided the only thing I really wanted to do was work in films. So I started writing around to all the studios and companies I could find out from telephone directories and yearbooks and got the usual "sorry" replies. […] Then I went to visit Westminster City School as an old boy, and I was talking to one of the masters who asked what I wanted to do …. he said, "I can help – I'm a neighbour of Sir Oswald Stoll, [studio owner] I'll give you a letter of introduction." He gave me the letter and I sent it off with a brief note. Two days later I got a letter saying, "please call at Stoll Studios, Cricklewood at 9.00 on Monday morning". I went to Sinclair

> Hill's office who was the director of productions and sat down – he offered me a cup of coffee and a cigarette – and I was in. I saw Ossie Mitchell and he said, “you can start right away, £1.00 a week for six weeks and we'll see how it goes”.’ (interview 7, Sid Cole)

The quote above points to the way in which low-paid temporary positions enabled studio managers to assess the potential fit (mainly cultural) of young men who had gained access through family or school contacts. Another notable example of this is the editor/producer Hugh Stewart (interview 8). In 1932 Gaumont-British Picture Corporation (GBPC) started what was to be a short-lived entry-level apprenticeship school, which according to Stewart started with 30 apprentices. Having got an introduction through a family contact, Stewart went for an interview, here he recounts the interaction with the studio manager:

> ‘I went and met Ian [family contact] […who] then sent me on to […] the studio manager, who was very nice, and he said, "Well what are you interested in?" And then I suddenly realised I knew nothing whatever about the film business, and I daren't say, "I'd like to be in the photographic department," if indeed there was such a thing! So, the only thing I knew was the cutting department, which Ian was the Head of. I said, "Well I'm very interested in the cutting department." So, he looked at my non-existent credentials and said, "Well I suppose that would be a good idea,"’ (interview 8, Hugh Stewart)

The fact he accessed the film industry in this way is significant as it was for one of the early entry-level posts at a large vertically integrated production company, which would be setting industry standards, or at least be used as an exemplar for other companies. This is not

to say that Stewart did not have potential for the job; from his overall interview it is clear he had a tendency to be rather modest, and he may well have had a narrative eye, but the process nonetheless points to practices that favoured applicants from MCOs.

The informal approach to selection extended to art direction roles in field A, which were more clearly defined around vocational skills and training in architecture and design. For instance, L.P. Williams (interview 2), studied to be an architect for five years at the Architectural Association (AA). The AA was a common route for art directors, as one interviewee points out, once you graduated from the AA, you had 'access to any employment' (interview 3). However, in the quote below, Williams describes how he was selected at a small studio (Stolls, Cricklewood), suggesting it was not just his design training that mattered:

> 'I got on the tram with my portfolio under my arm […], where I met Clifford Pember, who was art director to Herbert Wilcox. He was a well-known stage designer – […] He was an old Wykehamist [private school] and he had been at the Architectural Association in his youth. […] So anyhow, we talked for an hour or so, and he said "right, well when would you like to start?" So, I said, "Wouldn't you like to look at my portfolio?" "No" he said, "Not interested in that – I've talked to you, we'll get along alright". And that was that. And that was in March 1928. Just before talkies came in.' (Interview 2, L.P. Williams)

Williams had expected to have a more formal interview, where he would display his work to a potential employer, however he was surprised to find that he just needed to show he would 'get along' with the senior art director. The recruiter's impression that he would fit in was therefore more important than his vocational credentials.

The informal nature of job interviews in field A occupations suggests that – at least as the Studio System was emerging – men from MCOs were often employed on the basis of their familiarity and shared habitus with studio executives and senior workers. This class-based familiarity provided openings that were closed to most men (and women) from WCOs. This advantage is further evidenced by the fact the majority of those in the MC male sample (13 of the 20 men) did not have technical skills relevant to film occupations upon entering the industry.

The cross section of middle-class access routes demonstrates the association between class origins and access into film occupations during the period of the studio system. Men from MCOs were able to draw on a high stock of inherited economic, cultural and social capital in order to enter the film industry. The most common advantage men from MCOs had over working-class entrants were high status networks. This provided them with what many of them called an 'introduction', which was essentially an informal job interview. Once an introduction was provided, a shared class background with recruiters provided a clear advantage.

**7.2 Working-class access routes**

Men from WCOs in the sample had more varied trajectories into film occupations than those from MCOs. Of the sample of 17 WC men five gained access through a social contact working in field C occupations (interviews; 17, 28, 29, 31, 33), five accessed the industry during wartime labour shortages (interviews 15, 16, 22, 27, 32), while the remaining seven

gained access through having relevant occupational skills and experience (interviews 25, 26, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37). Refer to Appendix 2 for names. Refer to Appendix 1 for career trajectories.

However, on closer inspection the overall working-class entry trend was *what* they knew, rather than *who* they knew. Fifteen of the 17 men from WCOs were able to draw on technical capital they had accumulated before entering film production that played a key part in their initial access into film production roles. The remaining two men from WCOs did not have clear technical skills related to the film occupation they accessed but nonetheless had over three years work experience gained elsewhere in the labour market (interviews 29 and 31).

Among the working-class sample there were certainly different levels of occupational expertise upon entering film production. But the majority entered the industry with a substantial amount of experience in other industries: six of the 17 had worked for over ten years elsewhere in the labour market and a further eight had worked for over three years. These were usually in occupations with skills that were transferable to film. This contrasted sharply with the middle-class cohort, of whom 16 of the 20 entered film either directly after finishing their education or with one to two years' work experience; just four had worked for over three years.

Three atypical working-class trajectories into film production were Desmond Dickinson (15), Freddie Young (16) and Freddie Francis (17). All three started as teenagers, made early decisions to start a career in film, and then entered occupational pathways that were more typical of men from MCOs. All three also travelled the furthest social distance in the sample: two (15 and 16) culminating in a level 4 position (as DOP's); and the third progressing to a level 5 position (director) for several years, before moving back to DOP.

### 7.2.1 Working-class networks

Compared to the MCO sample, the social networks of those from WCOs were limited in that they did not have high status contacts. Six of the men from WCOs did use networks to help them access the film industry: two men had strong ties via family members working in the film industry (Harry Miller, 28; Les Hilling, 31); two men developed weak ties to the industry during their working lives elsewhere in the labour market (Cyril Crowhurst, 26; Gus Walker, 33); two were able to draw on weak ties from their family ( Freddie Francis, 17; Fred Tomlin, 29). These were all ties to workers in field C occupations, with the exception of one – Cyril Crowhurst (interview 26) – who accessed the film industry via a sound engineer he worked with previously in the music industry. The remaining 11 men from WCOs did not gain access through a social contact.

The relative newness of many film occupations and studios between the wars might explain why there were only two examples of entry through strong ties via family members working in the industry. One example is a stagehand, Les Hilling (interview 31) who gained access to a low-paid position on an hourly wage through his family members who had a bond to the studio, as he explains:

> '…how they came to be lifted a bit more, was one of them got killed on location, that was an uncle of mine. I think it was a Jessie Matthews picture and he had a family of five all young at the time and Gaumont said straight away as soon as they're available to start work we'll give them jobs. […] There was one that went to be an electrician, and Johnny […] he was a wardrobe master, […] One was in charge of woodmill. My father was in charge of the timber store […] So they said why don't you come work in the studios.' (interview 31, Les Hilling)

This is a tragic and very unusual association to a film studio. Overall there were very few examples in the sample of such family networks working in studios. The access to field C occupations does reflect a more common working-class trend, however.

The other example of using a direct family tie to access film production was Harry Miller (interview 28), who accessed film as a property master through his father who worked in the same role at Elstree studios. Miller had followed his father's trajectory through theatre props into film production, but then embarked on a career in sound production working on one of the early sound films made at Elstree. Miller is the only example in the sample of someone following in a parent's footsteps, which is perhaps a consequence of how new many of these occupations were.

Two men in the working-class sample were able to draw on social capital through their families. Fred Tomlin (interview 29) was able to access temporary work as an electrician through a network of workers in field C occupations at GBPC film studio. Tomlin had access to a network of working-class electricians who frequented his mother's café near a film studio in the 1920s and 1930s. Through film production electricians, Tomlin was then able to transfer into sound (in field B), where he remained as a boom operator (level 2) throughout his career.

### 7.2.3 Technical capital

Most working-class men in the sample were able to draw on accumulated technical capital, having acquired skills and experience in other industries and/or through technical college. Apart from Les Hilling (interview 31) this was the case for all ten men entering field C

occupations. Of the five who entered studio construction Gus Walker (interview 33) was able to access film through a social contact from technical college, but he did so having gained occupational skills as a carpenter. The other four construction workers in the sample, accessed the industry by talking to a charge-hand at the studio who would hire them on a casual daily basis to assess if they had the adequate skills. The interviews indicate that this was common practice in studio construction roles. This day trial was made easier to operate for studio managers as the interviews also indicate many construction workers in film production in the 1930s were on hourly pay rates and casual daily or weekly contracts.

Entering film with electrical skills provided opportunities for working-class men in field C (electrical lighting) and field B (level 2 sound) occupations. As studios were being built and/or installed for new sound technology, electricians and sound engineers had opportunities to enter film production occupations. They moved into positions as studio electricians. Others were able to move into sound occupations (field B) as one sound engineer explains this was the case at Elstree (ABPC) in the early 1930s:

> 'When they installed the place there they had a lot of wiring to be done, they had electricians in and they took a lot of them over to be on the staff in the sound' (interview 26, Cyril Crowhurst)

Ted Hallows (interview 30) wired a small studio for sound in 1934, after which he was asked if he wanted to move into film production in an electrical lighting role working; 'on the spot rails' (meaning on the scaffolding above the studio set where he operated a large arc lamp). Hallows followed a traditional working-class trajectory into field C; he left school at 14 in 1927, completed an electrician's apprenticeship and worked for an electrical company wiring new businesses, gaining seven years of experience and vocational skills before entering

film. However, the opportunity to enter a film occupation was a result of the new sound technology that was being introduced. As will be explored further in section 7.4.2, new sound technology provided a number of opportunities for men from WCOs to enter film production.

### 7.2.4 Exceptional working-class circumstances

War is sometimes considered to have provided opportunities for women to enter male career trajectories in certain industries and this has been posited in relation to film production employment but has not been explored in this research. Wartime certainly provided opportunities for five working-class men in the sample to enter film production, four of whom entered field B occupations (interviews 15, Desmond Dickinson; 16, Freddie Young; 22, Manny Yospa; 27 Micky Hickey), which were occupations that provided opportunities for extended careers and socially mobile trajectories. These wartime opportunities extended to entry-level training, which is explored further in section 7.2.

Across the BEHP archive of over 700 interviews, cases of working-class men accessing entry-level training were rare. In the sample of those starting before 1947, there is only one working-class example who received comparable training to men from MCOs. The significance of these trainee positions in propelling careers in the film industry during the period of the studio system is explored in section 7.3. The case of Freddie Francis (interview 17) who started as a 'clapper boy' at Elstree studios in 1933 aged 17, demonstrates how difficult it was to access these positions through working-class trajectories. Francis progressed to DOP (level 4) and film director (level 5) later in his career and therefore travelled the furthest social distance in the sample. In order to access an entry-level position, Francis had taken an unusual working-class trajectory and had several factors that worked in his favour.

To begin with, he wanted to work in the film industry at school age, which was unusual among the working-class sample. His father worked as a street bookmaker and was able to develop a variety of associations in working-class communities and used one of them to get his son 'an introduction' into the film business. Francis started in film aged 17 but had already completed a two year photography apprenticeship. His low starting pay of 25 shillings per week could have acted as an economic barrier, but it was offset by the fact that he was still living at home and was supported by his parents. It was therefore a combination of factors that came together that enabled Freddie Francis to embark on his atypical working-class trajectory into film production.

As has been shown through the data above, working-class entry into film production was due to a range of factors, which made entry routes heterogeneous rather than homogenous. These factors ranged from a reduction in labour supply during wartime (interviews 15, 16, 22, 32 and 24), weak family ties within working-class communities (interviews 17 and 29), strong family ties (interviews 28 and 29), or weak ties gained elsewhere in the labour market (interviews 26 and 33). A common theme that is true of 14 working-class entrants (this excludes interviews 15, 16 and 31) was that they entered the film industry on the basis of technical capital accumulated in their occupations outside film production. In this sense technical capital, rather than social capital, was the most important asset for working-class men entering film production.

### 7.3 Middle-class men and early careers in film

The most common early career experience among men from MCOs in the sample (13 of the 20) was to start in a low paid entry-level position. This contrasted with the sample of

men from WCOs of whom only one (interview 17, Freddie Francis) out of all 17 followed a similar trajectory. Entry-level positions into field A and field B occupations were available in a cross section of studios ranging in size. They were highly regarded across the data set as they offered training and development into occupational groups that offered extended careers in film production.

It is difficult to classify these entry-level positions because there was not a consistent approach across studios, however the sample of 14 men (this includes the one trainee from WCOs, interview 17, Freddie Francis) who entered through them during the studio system period, it was possible to identity two industry-wide trends. Firstly, entry-level positions tended to last from 9 to 18 months, during which period entrants were dependent on familial support. Secondly, they almost always had 'boy' in the title, indicating that they were closed to women. These consistent trends indicate an economic barrier for working-class entrants and a gender barrier for women from any class background.

### 7.3.1 Entry-level pay and conditions

The class composition of these entry-level positions is rarely discussed directly in the insider interviews. On the one occasion class is discussed (in interview 9, with E.M. Smedley-Aston), the subject is raised by a regular interviewer; Roy Fowler; who was something of an outsider, as he spent most of his career in the US television industry. Fowler makes the observation that the low starting pay was a process of closure for people from working-class origins:

**Roy Fowler:** Tell me – when you were earning 25 shillings a week, did you find it necessary for your family to contribute?

**E.M. Smedley-Aston:** You bet you.

**Roy Fowler:** I mean that was one of the problems at that time was it not – that one had to be middle class just to be working?

The entry-level pay certainly was one factor that meant these entry-level positions were mainly middle-class but, as was pointed out in section 7.1, exclusionary recruitment and selection practices were also a contributing factor.

The issue of low starting pay was a constant theme in the interviews and became a bone of contention between the trade unions and employers in the 1930s. The consensus was that entry-level pay was not a living wage. As one trainee who started in 1932 explains, his starting salary; 'was not to be sneezed at, but it certainly wasn't enough to live on' (interview 9, E.M. Smedley-Aston). Another 'cable boy' (sound trainee) who started in 1936, said of his pay that it was 'barely enough for travel expenses' (interview 23, Gordon McCallum). Despite the low pay, trainees were expected to work long and unsociable hours. As one trainee at Stoll studio in the early 1930s explains:

'Finishing times were purely arbitrary, you couldn't put a finishing time ever, you just went on and on until they said, "Okay cut, we'll see you tomorrow morning." You could go on until 9, 10 o'clock at night. You could finish at 7 o'clock at night, […] and sometimes you could work all night, you went on all night and half the next day. But working conditions were purely arbitrary then. And of course, the same goes for weekends, you could work seven days a week if necessary. More

> often than not you never worked five, you always worked six. Saturday was part and parcel of the week.' (Interview 18, Tubby Englander)

In the 1930s, workers in field A and field B occupations did not receive any overtime pay; this included those in entry-level positions, as another camera trainee who started at GBPC, Gainsborough studio explains:

> '…[production companies] weren't so worried about schedules in those days because they could work late to make up time and they didn't have to pay anybody any overtime […we] just had egg and bacon suppers' (interview 21, Len Harris)

Another trainee in an entry-level position in a production office (field A) explains the common use of long hours from workers in field A and B occupations:

> 'The ordinary camera crew, assistants and odd people and so on, they didn't matter because they didn't have to be paid. Although I will admit we got 1/6d supper allowance which had to be spent in the studio canteen. But by working to 10 o'clock at night, that was the only perk we had. But you know, one did it and looking back on it one thinks one must have been stark, staring mad. But one didn't think so at the time.' (interview 9, E.M. Smedley-Aston)

Vernon Sewell (interview 13) started as an assistant in sound and confirms that no overtime pay and long hours was a common and contentious practice for all workers in field A and B occupations:

> '…the overtime was used a hell of a lot, but the technicians, we got no overtime. The 'sparks' did, the workmen, but the technicians got nothing. We could work

every night until one o'clock in the morning. If you were lucky you got a bottle of ginger beer and a sandwich.' (interview 13, Vernon Sewell)

The lack of overtime pay meant that many of the workers in field A and B occupations would work very long hours, and this was particularly unfair for trainees as their weekly pay was so low. Low-paid, entry-level positions during the Studio System therefore played an important role in terms of initiating and socialising new recruits into the film industry culture, testing their willingness to work long working weeks and unsociable hours on film projects.

### 7.3.2 Middle-class trainees and communities of practice

The consensus regarding the actual training on entry-level routes was that they lacked clear structure, as one trainee in field A explains, 'we were just pushed into the place and made assistants and sidekicks and that kind of thing' (interview 8, Hugh Stewart). On the whole, duties were menial but, as one sound trainee who started at Elstree in 1935 explains, after an initial period when trainees might be kept away from expensive equipment, some of the menial tasks could become more useful in terms of learning and development:

'I became the loading boy. […] I kept film loaded for the cameras, the sound cameras, and I did any other menial task that was necessary. Keeping the sheets, the records and that sort of thing, going to get things from the stores that were needed and all this very essential but menial work. Then more, of course, loading the film, in itself, and doing hand tests, developing hand tests to see that the light valves were clean and no obstruction and all that sort of thing – that was quite important.' (interview 23, Gordon McCallum)

The actual tasks they were asked to do as trainees were only part of their training and development. What respondents point to as beneficial was the learning environment they were exposed to in the Studio System, where communities of practice could develop because production companies had on-going productions over long periods of time. This provided opportunities to learn on the job, by watching more experienced workers, with whom trainees could develop relationships. As one trainee who started at Elstree studios in 1932 explains: '…there were a number of pictures on the go the whole time. […] there was about eight sound stages and there was at least two or three pictures on the go at a time' (interview 9, E.M. Smedley-Aston). In this environment trainees would learn from watching more experienced technicians, as this camera trainee who started at Stolls studio describes:

> '…[it was] Dickie Dickinson, he started it all off […] I was apprenticed, as it were, to his crew and he was the one that gave me the immediate information. But, like so many other people, as from then you picked it all up. You kept your eyes open and you asked questions and you developed everything in your own way. […] it was entirely up to you to pick everything up as it was presented to you, not wilfully presented to you but you had to, you had to keep your ears and eyes open.' (interview 18, Tubby Englander)

During the Studio System era an entry-level position gave entrants time and space to learn and build relationships with the same group of workers, as an entry-level camera trainee says of his early career at GBPC Gainsborough studio:

> 'At Gainsborough, although we were nearly always in production, there were gaps at times and although you had to work day and night more or less, they kept you on in between production, […] Gainsborough kept their production crew,

technical crew. The people they put off were the construction people [field C], but I noticed you nearly always got the same people back again and you got to know them quite well through the years of course…' (interview 21, Len Harris)

A typical early career experience among men from MCOs was through a studio entry-level position. This meant low starting pay, long working hours, and fragmented and unstructured training. However, entry-level positions also provided opportunities to learn on the job within studios where communities of practice offered rich environments for gaining experience from and developing networks with other film workers.

### 7.3.4 Atypical middle-class entry routes

There were seven other men from MCOs who did not enter occupational groups through an entry-level position, showing that this was not the only middle-class trajectory into film production. Art Directors (interviews 1-4) tended to develop their early skills and experience elsewhere in the labour market through early training and careers in art, architecture and design. Three men from MCOs who entered camera occupations were to some extent atypical of middle-class trajectories into field B occupations (interviews 12, 13 and 14). All three had careers culminating in grade 4 or 5 positions but entered film production slightly later in their working lives, having developed vocational skills before entering film. Although these early careers were not developed through entry-level positions, they were still dependent on economic capital, be that to start a business (interviews 12 and 13) or take a photography course at college (interview 14). The seven men from MCOs who did not start in film through entry-level positions therefore still had early career experiences and entry routes that were dependent on a high stock of inherited capitals.

## 7.4 Working-class men and early careers in film

The data in this section reveals that training and early careers among men from working-class origins tended to be more fractured than among men from MCOs. Typical experiences in the sample were a lack of early training and development in the film industry. Working-class men tended to develop their skills elsewhere in the labour market and were able to transfer them to film production. This was particularly true of field C occupations and those entering sound occupations in field B. Camera was atypical of this general trend and was also the occupation in which men from WCOs were able to travel the furthest social distance in the sample. This section describes early working-class trajectories in field C occupations, followed by sound and then camera occupations in field B.

### 7.4.1 Precarious early careers in craft occupations

Occupational trajectories among men from WCOs contrasted with those in fields B and C. In field C there were fewer opportunities to have extended careers. Level 3 was the highest position craft workers could reach (as studio construction manager). Two studio construction managers in the sample (interviews 33 and 34) started as studio carpenters in the 1930s and then gained promotion to manager roles in the 1950s. Both men had therefore worked in the film industry for a number of years before they reached higher grades, but neither man mentioned any studio organised training or mentoring.

Early career experiences in craft occupations tended to be precarious, with little evidence of industry training or development in the 1930s. As Gus Walker (interview 33) explains:

> ‘In early days […] people worked in Elstree and different places on daily rate, you could be called for a day. They used to wait outside the gate. That didn’t happen at Denham, you were hired by the week, but the thing is you could get two hours notice. This operated until the big agreement was made by the time it was Ranks then in 1944, but prior to that you were on two hours notice.’

In order to keep working in a precarious environment, craft workers were dependent on vocational skills and their ability to perform under pressure; in this environment there was high turnover as Tom Peacock, a studio plasterer, explains:

> ‘…there was no permanent [employment]. The better you were for them, the more you'd be kept there, they used you. See you don't go and sack a good man, do you? […] And if you could get up to the top, well then you're recognised. […] there was pressure in the studio […] It was too much for some, they'd be, "Oh I don't want it, I'd rather be on the building where they're doing their little jobs”.’ (interview 37, Tom Peacock)

This meant that early careers in studio construction tended to be fragmented, with workers sometimes having to work elsewhere in the labour market and re-enter the film industry as causal workers. An example of this is an early period in Ernie Diamond’s career in film production as a studio carpenter. After two years (from 1926 to 28) working off and on at Stolls (Cricklewood) studio, he moved across studios, as he explains:

> ‘In 1928 we all got the sack. I went in one day from Cricklewood Studio, the next morning to Lime Grove Gaumont-British […] I soundproofed the glass house at Lime Grove. […]I went to Wembley [Fox] after that, in 1929. Only had the one film. We did what was called a “foreigner”, went in the studio and put a set-up, had a

> set figure for it. After Wembley I went to Ealing, they wasn't filming then, they was building.' (interview 36, Ernie Diamond)

After helping to build the studio, Diamond moved back into studio production at Ealing studio (then Associated Talking Pictures) where he worked for several years as a studio carpenter on weekly rolling contracts. It had taken several fragmented years before he could reach that point of relative stability. In this environment those entering studio construction occupations in the 1930s could expect very little early career development.

### 7.4.2 Sound occupations and working-class opportunities

Men entering field C occupations often wanted to shift into field B occupations as the pay and opportunities for longer careers were higher. Before turning 21, Les Hilling (interview 31) was employed on low rates working as a stagehand, a rigger and an assistant in the special effects and model making department at GBPC studio. After turning 21 he needed to make a decision about what he would do. Reflecting on his decision he says becoming a stagehand was a poor career decision:

> 'Right now, I come up to the age of 21 and I suppose I was stupid really, I jumped into the job of stage-hand just to get the full rate. I mean I was silly really. I should have made up my mind to suffer a bit longer and gone into sound or camera, but we don't do these things right do we, we're only wise after the event. Anyway, there I am, a stagehand now' (interview 31, Les Hilling)

The regret from Les Hilling regarding his career choice at the age of 21 is due to the fact that camera and sound technicians were increasingly being afforded more status in film

production and could expect a higher rate of pay than stagehands, who he says were among the lowest paid in the industry.

In some cases, men from WCOs were able to move straight into higher grades in sound as the new technology required their skills, giving them considerable labour power in the early sound studios. An example of this is the career of Peter Birch (interview 25). Birch had been working in communications, radio and then early television as an engineer in the 1920s, when he was recruited into the film industry at Welwyn ABPC Studios as head of sound. As he explains:

> 'I couldn't see any future actually in the disc rotating television. It was too crude, so I got the offer of a job as sound chief in a film studio. My type of person with sound experience was the only type of person they could employ to run their sound department at its inception, so I ran the British Instructional Films at Welwyn [in 1930]. And after I think about two years with them, the Sound Chief of Gaumont, George Gunn, he asked me if I would care to make a change. Well […] I was rather tired of going to Welwyn Garden City and I thought, Gaumont at Shepherd's Bush would be much more to my liking.' (interview 25, Peter Birch)

The transition from the very early television technology to film, was, however an unusual entry route in the 1930s. Harry Miller had worked in theatre, and moved from the property department in field C to sound effects (field B) on the production of Blackmail (1929), one of the first sound films made in Britain. This production opened up a number of positions for men from WCOs, as Miller indicates here;

> 'Blackmail started and they had two systems, Western and RCA. And to help them do all the installation and things they took a couple of charge-hand electricians

> […] And they graduated to [sound] mixers [grade 3]. They were two of our early mixers. […] They [the other workers in the sound department] asked me to join the sound department as an effects man.' (interview 28, Harry Miller)

Like other men from WCOs, Miller was given the opportunity to work in sound because he had clear vocational experience and skills; he had a background in sound effects working in theatre and could therefore move straight into the role with no need for any industry-sponsored training.

Another man who made the shift from field C to field B in the sample was Fred Tomlin (interview 29). He started in 1932, working on casual day work as a lighting electrician, across several studios, until he accessed work at Gaumont-British Picture Corporation (Highbury Studio) in 1933, whereupon he was asked to move into the sound department as a boom operator (grade 2, field B). As he explains below, Tomlin was never given any training in the studios however, the communities of practice he encountered while working for a longer period at a larger studio, provided the environment where his tacit knowledge could be recognised by co-workers:

> '…[on] the arc lamps [electrical lighting] you just picked it up as you went along […] before they asked me to go over on the sound, the chief electrician called me off the spot rail and he said, "I want a word with you." We'd been doing a picture with Bernie Knowles [prominent DOP], he was lighting it, and he said, "Bernie Knowles pointed you out up the rail and he has said, 'That man is very helpful,' he said, 'he knows every move I'm going to make, every lamp I want pulling he's already standing behind it, ready to do it,', so I thought I'd tell you that, because they very seldom compliment the people like that." And I suppose really that was

why he asked me eventually if I'd be interested in going over onto the sound department. But as I say it was only because I was intensely interested in all that sort of thing...' (interview 29, Fred Tomlin)

The experience of Ted Hallows (interview 30) suggests that this trajectory from electrician to sound was not always possible:

'I tried to switch to sound, I tried to switch at Teddington [Warner-Brothers First National Productions in 1930s], but I was blocked there because […] they wouldn't swap me because of the unemployment. I tried again at ABC [Elstree Studios in 1950s] before I was made supervisor and it was the same thing, they got people on their books and they wouldn't transfer.' (interview 30, Ted Hallows)

In the 1930s, as sound occupations were becoming more established in the film studios, competition for level 2 positions as boom operators and assistants was coming from men who had started in entry-level positions with less technical experience. The fact that many of the men moving through these entry-level positions were likely to have been from MCOs is not addressed directly in the sample of interviews. However, Tomlin's account of how he accessed a position in sound, does indicate that early sound technicians were becoming aware of competition from middle-class trainees:

'Bill Salter [head of sound at Shepherds Bush studio] was asking for a "rough and ready boom operator."… Didn't want any of these educated young boys who were coming into the business, he wanted somebody rough-like who could say, '"Quiet!" and things like that, you see! So, I got the job, they said, "Don't go back to Islington, you're here."' (interview 29, Fred Tomlin)

The reference to 'these educated young boys' suggests he is referring to inexperienced men from middle-class origins, who were perceived as lacking the technical experience that Tomlin and other early sound technicians had gained before entering sound departments in film studios. The reference to having 'somebody rough-like' can be interpreted as a way Tomlin and other early sound technicians saw themselves in competition to the new entry-level recruits from MCOs. The more experienced sound technicians would sometimes train those coming through entry-level positions, as a sound trainee from MCOs explains in his interview (John Aldred, 24), the best actual training he received was from Cyril Crowhurst (interview 26) at Pinewood studios.

Peter Birch, Cyril Crowhurst, Harry Miller and Fred Tomlin (interviews 25, 26, 28 and 29) all took advantage of emerging sound departments in the early 1930s. They had different routes into the industry, but they had a considerable amount of work experience before entering film. The skills and knowledge gained from that experience were the main assets they brought with them. This is a common feature of working-class entrants in the sample, who often did not have the chance to gain training and experience in a similar way to men who accessed the industry as trainees. Instead, they were expected to have gained the necessary skills outside the industry and quickly adapt to sound production.

### 7.4.3 Working class men trained in film studios

The training and development available during the studio system was not completely closed to men from WCOs. Two men were able to develop their early careers in film production during WW2. Micky Hickey (interview 27) accessed the film industry through the

Army Film Unit (AFU) in 1941 and was trained as a sound camera operator at Wembley studios by technicians from the Rank organisation. This was to prove useful, not just in terms of practical training but also in terms of gaining industry contacts. After WW2, Hickey was able to gain access to a secure position in the sound department at MGM Borehamwood studios through the network of sound technicians he had trained under, one of whom was the sound mixer John Aldred (interview 24), who was from MCOs. As will be explored further through the data presented in Chapter 8, the class diversity in field B occupations did provide some bridging capital which enabled working-class men to develop middle-class networks and improve their career chances.

Manny Yospa (interview 22) also accessed the film industry during WW2. He did not receive the intensive training that Mickey Hickey received in the AFU, but he was given the opportunity to work as an assistant in a camera crew over two years. Yospa started his career in film production at Associated British Picture Corporation (ABPC), working on a string of feature films – information commercials and war documentaries – all of which provided useful training and experience. As Yospa points out, it was his early training and development at ABPC during wartime that enabled him to access further employment as a focus puller after WW2.

The experiences of Mickey Hickey and Manny Yospa point to the way the wartime period opened working-class opportunities in sound and camera occupations. However, these opportunities should not be overstated. Both their working lives prior to entering film suggest that, like other men from WCOs, vocational experience gained outside the film industry also contributed to their careers. Hickey was given his opportunity having worked for ten years as a cinema projectionist, Manny Yospa had worked for two years as a camera operator on

labour movement documentaries and had gained union membership of the Associated Cinematograph Technicians (ACT) before he started in the commercial studios.

Two men in the sample (interviews 15, Desmond Dickinson; 16, Freddie Young) began working in the film industry during WW1. They were included in the sample as it became hard to find many examples of working-class men who progressed to higher levels in camera roles. They started as 'boys' in the laboratories, processing films in post-production before moving into production roles as camera assistants after WW1.

In the late 1920s, as the studio system emerged, the role of Director of Photography (DOP) was called 'Chief Cameraman'. This position had high status within the film industry by the 1930s, with some immigrant workers from the USA being paid high wages and being labelled 'Ace' technicians. The term 'Ace' technician became code for high paid workers from abroad. These international workers were discussed with a mixture of praise and criticism by the respondents in the sample. But prior to the prestige of the Ace technicians who entered the industry following expansion in the late 1920s, when Desmond Dickinson and Freddie Young started in the early 1920s the Chief Cameraman (DOP) was still a role in transition as many directors did the lighting themselves, as Dickinson explains:

> 'cameramen were looked upon then as engineers to mend machinery which wasn't very good. The lighting of the things in the very early days, the directors interfered with. That's why everything was dark' (interview 15, Desmond Dickinson)

This link between early camera roles and maintenance can be perceived as an indication that camera occupations evolved considerably in the 10-year period from 1920 to 1930, with

the status attached to them increasing as the Studio System emerged in the late 1920s. It also suggests that this was an occupation with a history of openness to men from WCOs which continued during the studio system era.

One example is the trajectory of Freddie Francis who was able to gain access to an entry-level position as a 'clapper-boy' at ABPC Elstree studio, on 25 shillings per week. Francis does not talk directly about his training in the period from 1933-1937; instead he refers to various people in camera crews across studios in Elstree, Hertfordshire who helped him progress during his early career. His experience of moving from clapper boy to clapper loader suggests that communities of practice extended across Elstree studios:

> 'Bill Haggett [HOD of camera department at ABPC Elstree] came up to me. He had just had a call from his opposite number over at B&D [British and Dominion studio], just the other side of the fence; Bill Law' […] So at 8 o'clock one night I went over to British and Dominion to start work on a movie. And we went on until about 3 o'clock in the morning. Anyway as you know, in those days if you worked until 3 in the morning, you would be given 1/6 d for your supper and you had a taxi ride home' (interview 17, Freddie Francis)

Francis does not refer to class in camera occupations directly in his interview, however the working environment and the colleagues he worked with, suggests that the class composition of camera departments, at least at Elstree, was diverse.

The data above suggests that sound and camera occupations did offer opportunities for men from WCOs in the 1930s, who were able to access communities of practice in which

technical capital had field-specific value. These working-class opportunities in the early stages of careers, could then be used to embark on a mobile trajectory.

Nonetheless, the overall trend among the sample of men from WCOs is that they received very little entry-level training during the Studio System when compared to men from MCOs.

**Conclusion**

The recruitment and selection practices and entry-level training opportunities available during the studio system era favoured male entrants from MCOs. The custom of accessing initial employment through middle-class family or school networks, often in highly regarded but low-paid entry-level positions, was most prevalent in occupations with the greatest opportunities for developing extended careers into high status positions. These employment practices therefore enhanced the chances for men from MCOs to reach high status positions in film production.

The experiences of men from WCOs mainly highlight the advantage middle-class men had over them. In order to level the playing field, they often required technical capitals and an ability to display their vocational skills over a short period in film studios. The training that was available to men from WCOs was often a consequence of unusual circumstances, such as increased employment opportunities during wartime or rare working-class family associations to the film industry. These atypical working-class trajectories, coupled with the high stock of technical capital they had to bring with them upon entry, highlights their

disadvantage when compared to the sample of men from MCOs for whom family and school networks into film were much more typical and provided easier access routes.

The research sample also points to the way a typical middle-class trajectory provided an advantage in terms of training and development during the Studio System. Early career development during the Studio System tended to be informal and lacked systematic methods or processes of training, however it was still a rich and valuable early career experience. The most highly regarded training was available through the low paid entry-level positions in field A and B occupations. The accounts above indicate that these positions were mainly open to middle-class men as the processes of accessing them and being able to sustain a living while on them, required a high stock of social and economic capitals from parents. The one example of a working-class trajectory through an entry-level position does suggest that these opportunities were not completely closed to men from WCOs; but the fact that they were more open to men from MCOs strongly suggests the emerging entry-level training opportunities during the studio system were exclusionary rather than inclusive.

## Chapter 8 Class origins and career progression in film production

Chapter seven highlighted classed disparities and inequalities between men from MCOs and WCOs in terms of initial access and early years training and opportunities. This chapter focuses on the way their careers progressed, starting from the time many in the sample had – to some extent – become established in level 2 positions (Figure 1). In these later stages of career development, those in the research sample were attempting to progress to higher positions, or, in some cases among the sample of working-class men, maintain their careers at level 2.

Evidence from the sample of careers and data gathered for a government report in the 1940s (Gater , 1949) shows that level 3 positions in film production (such as sound mixer and camera operator) had average pay rates comparable to those of managers and high professionals in other industries (see Appendix 3). Level 3 was the minimum career position for the twenty men from MCOs in the sample, all of whom had 'extended careers'. Nine of the 17 men from WCOs reached level 3 positions. However, as section 8.5.2 will explore, only two of these socially mobile trajectories started in the studio system era and culminated in positions that were targeted by men from MCOs in the sample. Careers that culminated at level 3 or higher (especially in sound, camera, editing, production management and art design) were therefore – occupationally at least – 'middle-class' and upward trajectories into them for men from WCOs therefore represent the clearest indication of upward social mobility historically.

Section 8.1 provides a potted history of the nature of employment in film and television production through the experiences of those who were there. The 37 careers in the research sample span a period from approximately 1920 to 1990 in the film and television industries. This section focuses on the way workers experienced the period immediately before, during and after the British Studio System, from approximately 1925 until the late 1960s. This analysis of the research sample provides empirical data on the way employment was experienced during the studio system era, which was not possible to ascertain from the literature review of the period discussed in chapter three. Sections 8.2 to 8.5 focus on the association between class origins and career progression, with the main focus on how men entered into level 3 positions and further and why some of the working-class sample stayed at level 2. The association between class and careers differed in the three occupational fields highlighted in Figure 1 and discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Sections 8.3 (field A), 8.4 (field C), and 8.5 (field B) therefore focus on careers in each occupational field separately.

## 8.1 The nature of employment during the studio system era

The cross section of interviews indicates that in the context of film production there was employment uncertainty across occupations throughout the period, but that this fluctuated over time and across different careers, occupations and production companies.

The extent to which workers in the sample experienced secure employment was dependent on the historical period and the production companies they accessed. For instance, an editor and producer, Sidney Cole (interview 7) and a studio construction worker, Ernie Diamond (interview 36) had long periods of secure employment at Ealing from approximately 1940 to 1955. A sound mixer, Gordon McCallum (interview 23) was on a

permanent contract at Pinewood (Rank) from around 1940 to 1980. In contrast to this, a camera operator and DOP, Eric Cross (interview 14), and a boom operator, Fred Tomlin (interview 29), were both on temporary contracts across studios throughout their careers. Fred Tomlin explains his career on temporary contracts:

> '…from the time that I started in 1932 – apart from the war years when I didn't do anything at all – up to the time that I retired at sixty-seven, I was never once on the payroll of any of the big studios. Either Shepperton, Pinewood, Elstree, MGM, or any of them. […] all those years I was never, ever on the payroll of the big studios and yet I was working all the time. […] Never on the permanent staff.' (interview 29, Fred Tomlin]

The extent to which certain occupations were secure also seemed arbitrary. Sound technicians in the sample tended to have more permanent contracts than camera technicians, partly because they could also do engineering and maintenance in studios during down-turns in production. However, the example of Tomlin above demonstrates that this was not always the case.

Occupations in studio construction were precarious in the 1930s; however, in the post-war period, some of these workers could be on secure contracts, as they were employed by the studios that hired them out to independent production companies.

In general, employment contracts were short term in nature, but production companies would often keep workers on these temporary contracts for a long period of time. Employment was therefore flexible, but not always project based, since workers might be employed for a number of years in the same studio and did not have to re-enter the labour market on a regular basis. Moreover, by the late 1940s they were insulated by trade union

and employer agreements and strict regulations over labour supply, meaning that even when they did need to re-enter the labour market there was a restriction on the number of new workers who would be competing for jobs.

### 8.2 Fluctuating employment trends from 1925 to circa 1970

The structural arrangements surrounding employment changed over the period from 1925 to the 1960s. The section below explores these shifts through the career experiences of some of the men in the research sample.

The overall trend towards employment flexibility was a recurring theme across the period from 1925 to the 1960s. However, the nature of employment shifted following four significant interventions and events: the Quota Act in 1927; the Second World War from 1939 to 1945; the 1947-48 collective agreements; and the decline in film production and the rise in commercial television production in the 1950s. The general theme in terms of the way workers experienced these interventions and events was that they increased employment opportunities and/or increased insulation from insecure employment, therefore benefitting the careers of those in the research sample.

#### 8.2.1 1925-1938

The career of Desmond Dickinson (interview 15) provides an insight into the way employment changed in the period before and after the 1927 Quota Act. In 1925, Dickinson was working as a camera assistant on a weekly wage of £2.10s, comparable to the average male wage in that period. Employment opportunities in 1925 were scarce due to the lack of

films made in Britain and the dominance of US films in the UK film market. As a result of this, in 1925 and 1926 Dickinson was forced to work on a casual basis in studio construction, on the production of the silent film Boadicea. As he explains: '… many of us [camera crew], me included, were put off, because there weren't any pictures being made […] I had to get a job making this squashed armour' (interview 15, Desmond Dickinson)

The experience of Desmond Dickinson was indicative of the UK film industry in 1926 when employment prospects were generally bleak. In 1927, Dickinson experienced a sharp increase in work, as a consequence of the low budget quota films that followed the government intervention (Quota Act, 1927). He had progressed to a higher camera position, earning nearly double the wages he had earned in 1925 and he was managing two camera crews, most of whom were on temporary contracts. Asked to explain what it was like working on these quota films he says:

> 'True slavery, we worked any hours. I had one year where I only had three days off – they were Sundays. We used to work normally one all-nighter each week, so we worked all day, all night and all day the next day. I would have a double lot of camera boys' (interview 15, Desmond Dickinson)

Two of the 'camera boys' Dickinson hired were young men in the sample who had started after the 1927 Quota Act ('Tubby' Englander, interview 18; Alan Lawson, interview 19). For them, and many others in the sample, the cheaply produced quota films provided opportunities in a variety of ways.

The Quota Act did lead to the vertical integration of the film industry and increased employment opportunities; however, it did not provide secure employment for many in the sample. Instead production companies often kept workers on temporary contracts, as they

did not need to provide any long-term financial obligations to workers and could react quickly to any downturns in production. Employment during this period could therefore be unstable, with some working across studios on insecure contracts, but there was plenty of work available, as Eric Cross explains:

> 'I freelanced and went everywhere, I worked in every studio in the country, I suppose. Ealing a lot. A lot of second unit stuff at Ealing. […] I operated at Wembley when any big film came along, operated the second unit. [I did this for.. ] years, I can't remember, until I went to Denham.[…] The beginning of the war I suppose. […] I worked a lot on the Paramount quota quickies. We made too numerous to mention. I don't think they were ever shown – they used to put them on in the early morning and nobody was in the cinema. [working conditions were…] pretty well rush and tear. As we were making them for a pound a foot we couldn't spend much time on them. We enjoyed them. We enjoyed making them. It was work.' (interview 14, Eric Cross)

The account from Desmond Dickinson (interview 15) made before that of Eric Cross - that working on quota films was 'true slavery', shows that not all film workers 'enjoyed' working on quota films, due to the long hours and working conditions. However, the comment from Eric Cross that 'it was work' is a pertinent one. The Quota Act generally benefited the careers of those working in the period from 1927-1938. This resulted in the sort of nomadic career that Eric Cross (interview 14) experienced, but more common in the sample was the experience of Eddie Dryhurst (interview 10) who worked as a production assistant and script editor for 20th century Fox at Wembley studios in the 1930s and describes his contract at this time:

> **"**I worked on a weekly basis, I was paid a weekly salary and a week's notice on either side sort of thing. And we used to go on month after month, year after year, but we were not under contract.' (interview 10, Eric Cross)

Working-class trajectories in studio construction (Field C), were uncertain, due to the temporary contracts in the 1930s. For the working-class men who experienced casual employment, the use of the term 'freelance' employment was not an accurate portrayal of their working lives. When he was asked if he was a freelance worker by his interviewer, Les Hilling (interview 31), who was working as a low-paid stagehand in the property department at the time, says:

> 'Well it's not freelance in the true sense of the word, its no – freelance, it sounds nice. It invariably went, if the picture was finished, you were finished as well, just went without saying you know. One accepted that, it was just a run of the mill thing, this is what happened. […] obviously NATKE or ACT, I had hardly heard of at this stage.'

The experiences of Desmond Dickinson (interview 15); Eric Cross (interview 14); Eddie Dryhurst (interview 10) and Les Hilling (interview 31) all discussed above, provide a snapshot of the contrasting way workers experienced insecure employment in the period from 1927-1938.

### 8.2.2 1939 to 1945

The beginning of WW2 resulted in a decline in film employment. Film studios were taken over for armament production, while some of the workers in the sample were called

up for the war. However, around 1941, commercial film studios became more involved in the war effort and workers in the sample were given reserved occupation status, while new recruits were brought into army film units. This provided employment opportunities, training and increased status to film technicians in the sample, especially those in sound and camera occupations. For example, the camera technician Freddie Francis was working as a camera assistant (level 2) before the war, but his time in the Army Film Unit from 1941 was a great benefit to his career as he explains:

> '…nobody had a good war, but I suppose I had a very educational war because by now I was able to light and do almost anything, my education had been increased completely, very much so.' (interview 17, Freddie Francis)

By 'light' Francis means he had learned techniques in cinematography (level 4) and although he did not become established as a cinematographer until 1956, he had moved into level 3 as a camera operator and gained expertise in level 4, which otherwise might not have been available to him in that period of time.

### 8.2.3 1946 to 1955

Two economic downturns in the film industry that dramatically reduced production were in 1936 and 1948. In 1948, the economic crisis in the film industry (discussed in Chapter 3) meant the art director L. P. Williams (interview 2), who was working for the Rank Organisation at the time, lost his job and he left the industry altogether to become a farmer. The other 37 in the sample remained in the industry. For those that remained in the film industry after 1948, what followed were a series of protections for film and TV workers. The

demarcation agreements made in 1947 changed the nature of employment in several ways, as Manny Yospa a camera assistant and trade union organiser (interview 22) explains:

> 'I think one thing which changed the face of the industry was the union making an agreement with the producer's union. […] there was a lot of discussion and argument beforehand, and eventually it was knocked out, we all had minimum wages for our grades, we had set hours and set holidays and sick pay and all the various – you know. And the employers kept very much strictly to the agreement.' (interview 22, Manny Yospa)

Another important aspect of the period after 1947 was that the trade unions, and the different craft sections within them, began to control the supply of labour, thereby insulating existing union members from competition from new recruits, but also deciding who should work in the industry. Yospa explains the process:

> '…I was active in the union and I became secretary of the camera section. Now the craft sections of the union – you'd have a sound section, a camera section, continuity sections – they all seemed to have a sort of 'guild' outlook, and they were very craft orientated and very keen on keeping up the standards. […] we had the job of vetting people to come in. Because at that time anybody wanted to become a cameraman and we sort of had to check whether they were alright. Usually relatives of cameramen already in the business got in quite well and the others, if they gave a good enough case, we let them in' (interview 22, Manny Yospa)

It is not entirely clear from the interview, what Yospa means by 'alright'. He presumably is referring to new recruits having the right skills and aptitude for the job but may well be

referring to them being loyal trade union members. One way of ensuring they were 'alright', was the practice of allowing relatives to access the industry. This was a recurring theme in the sample of interviews, with workers mentioning recommending younger relatives for jobs.

In the research sample of 37, only two men, both of whom came from WCOs (Harry Miller, interview 28; Les Hilling, interview 31) accessed the film industry through a direct relative who worked in film. This was mainly because it was a young industry in the 1930s. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the generation who had started in the 1930s was beginning to help shape some of the employment practices and customs in the industry, one of which was nepotistic practices that had become normalised within trade union guilds.

### 8.2.4 1955 to 1970

As film production declined by the 1950s, workers had the option to develop their careers in television production, where employment was more long-term and stable than film. They also took the opportunity of accessing short-term employment in commercials, so that some in the sample either moved into television permanently on secure contracts or moved across TV and film production throughout their careers.

Two camera technicians (Tubby Englander, interview 18; Alan Lawson, interview 19) both of whom had experienced insecure employment in the 1930s, started working for the BBC in the early 1950s on permanent contracts, where they finished their careers. But the amount of work available at the BBC was limited and in the mid-1950s there was a shift away from film production into employment in commercial television production, which for workers who were already freelancing in film, offered several opportunities. Manny Yospa

(interview 22) who was a camera assistant and started working on the TV series 'William Tell' in 1958 explains:

> '…television series started coming in then, and that was quite a good thing because you had to do thirteen stories, and to do that it took about a year, so you had a year's solid work straight through.'

Yospa would also work on commercials, often working for an advertising company making cigarette commercials for the British American Tobacco company which as he says were much more short term, but useful for topping up his income, 'get a couple of day's commercials and you'd made enough money for the week'

By the late 1960s, employment in film production had declined to such an extent that many of those in the sample had moved into television or had found it difficult to access employment and moved into other careers or retired. This was particularly true of men who had reached higher positions which became harder to find. For instance Hugh Stewart (interview 9) had been working as a producer on a permanent contract for the Rank organisation in the 1950s and then as a freelancer in the 1960s, but in 1968 he could no longer find work and left the film industry to become an English teacher in his late 50s.

In summary, the overall picture – excluding the economic downturns in 1936 and 1948 – is that the various events and interventions in the film and TV industry from 1927 to 1955 progressively benefited the careers of those in the sample, either through increased employment opportunities or through protective regulation. This benefited men from WCOs and MCOs in the sample. What this suggests is that film workers who started their careers during the studio system era faced periods of insecurity, but were insulated through a number

of protections, while they were also able to take advantage of various opportunities to re-enter the labour market when they needed to.

These structural factors surrounding employment meant that the majority of those in the sample found they could maintain a career and sustain a living in film or television production, despite working on a mixture of secure and temporary contracts. This meant that in order to sustain and maintain a career they were not heavily dependent on social capital and networks. Chapter 7 demonstrated how important high-status social capital was in accessing the film industry and early years training. However, the impression I got from analysing the sample of careers was that the employment opportunities, and the later insulation from 1947 onwards, might have provided scope for upward social mobility for those from WCOs who did manage to gain access the industry and initiate their film careers. Nonetheless, while there were examples of social mobility in the working-class sample, the comparison between the two classes showed a significant disparity in terms of the number who progressed, the extent they progressed and the speed at which they progressed.

**8.3 Class origins and career progression**

Men from MCOs in the sample were more likely to reach higher grades in film production than those from WCOs. They were also likely to do so more quickly, despite entering at an earlier age, with less vocational and technical expertise.

All 20 men from MCOs made some form of progression into higher grades, reaching grade 3 as a minimum. Fourteen progressed to grade 4 or 5 (as art director, editor, director of photography, editor, producer or film director) the remaining six progressed to level 4

intermittently, two of whom moved into television production, two became sound editors and two culminated in level 3 positions in film camera to sustain careers.

Of the 17 men from WCOs, nine men had careers that stagnated in grade 2 positions, although these were often at the peak of level 2, for instance Ted Hallows (interview 30) reached the position of senior lighting electrician (‘gaffer’). The remaining eight men from WCOs reached level 3 positions or higher, with five having careers culminating in occupations that were more open to middle-class trajectories. These were: two directors of photography (interviews 15 and 16), one film director (interview 17), and two production sound recordists (interviews 25 and 27). The other three men from WCOs who reached level 3 did so through occupations that were more open to working-class entrants: sound maintenance (interview 26), and studio construction management (interviews 33 and 34).

Men in the sample from MCOs generally entered film careers at a younger age than those from WCOs (age 20 compared to 23 in working-class sample) and had much less vocational experience and expertise. Men from WCOs had worked, on average, seven years prior in other industries, where they had often accumulated relevant and applicable vocational expertise, mainly in construction and carpentry or in electrical engineering. Despite a comparative lack of vocational experience, men from MCOs had extended careers in film production. Added to this, when compared to the eight men from WCOs who reached level 3 or above, men from MCOs progressed more rapidly: on average the 20 men from MCOs reached level3 after five years in film production, compared to nine years for WCO men.

There were two key reasons for this class-based inequality. Firstly, the occupational trajectories of men from MCOs provided the most room for extended careers in film

production. Secondly, the extent and influence of the social capital and networks they held enabled them to enhance their careers.

The following sections therefore focus on the use of social capital and networks in careers, which are discussed in each of the three occupational fields highlighted in Figure 1.

### 8.4 Working-class trajectories through field C occupations

Field C was comprised of men from working-class origins, with ten men starting in these occupations and eight men having careers that culminated in them. There was no evidence of these occupations being open to women. There was also no evidence of men from MCOs working in them. Career progression in studio construction and electrical lighting was relatively short and limited when compared with field A and field B occupations. Level 3 constituted the career ceiling, which was studio construction manager.

The impression from the interviews is that work was highly pressurised, and in order to maintain a career, craft workers needed to have the technical skills and the ability to produce work quickly.

There were examples of networks being used to access and maintain work in studio construction, where what were termed 'work gangs' were used to carry out day and night shifts on casual contracts, as Gus Walker (interview 33) explains:

> '…we had a lot of shipyard builders come down [at Denham studios]. There was a big Scottish element in the studio and on the night work it was a Scot that was in charge and I must say he was pro Scottish'

These 'work gangs' in studio construction were comparable to semi-permanent work groups (Blair, 2001) in the contemporary film industry, and were following employment practices they had developed in other industries in the 1930s, such as shipbuilding.

In some cases, studio construction workers were dependent on their working relationships with art directors (designers) who would put a team or gang together for certain productions. An art director who worked at Elstree in the early 1930s describes the working conditions and labour practices as the studios began to expand as 'chaos', where it was important for him to select a regular team of craft workers, similar to the 'semi-permanent work groups' in the contemporary industry:

> '…there was a long queue outside the workmen's gate 24 hours a day. Everybody was working day and night, literally, to get anything out on the screen and it was absolute chaos […] One should appreciate the fact that there was no organisation whatsoever. They [studio construction workers] were sacked at a moment's notice if they collapsed. And the next person in the queue outside the gate was taken on. […] As it resolved because of the pressure of work, I got the reputation of being the quickest person in the business, and it has been that way ever since. That was done quite accidently by forming my own little gang as it were, and they stuck to me whenever possible. (Interview 3, Cedric Dawe)

### 8.4.1 Progression and class ceilings in field C

Studio construction manager was the highest position available to men in field C trajectories, which offered a comparable income to that in level 3 occupations. Gus Walker

progressed from a carpenter on night shifts in the 1930s to studio construction manager by the 1950s. Walker progressed to the position of manager within the Rank organisation on permanent contracts, however in the late 1950s he went freelance, drawing on networks with art directors he had developed in the studio. As he explains below, he developed these networks over a long period working for the Rank organisation at Denham and Pinewood studios:

> '…there was a lot of talented people and I can remember lots of them that were starting as draughtsman and eventually were becoming art directors and designers […] I was closely associated with John Box and apart from that we were friends. I knew him as a draughtsman when he came out of the army and he started at Denham on the drawing board and he later qualified as an architect and he later became an art director and we worked together on Warwick Films" (interview 33, Gus Walker)

John Box, to whom he is referring, was the brother of the prominent producers Sydney Box and Barbara Box and brother-in-law of the film director Muriel Box, therefore being associated with him and his family would have been useful during his career.

Gus Walkers' access to middle-class networks is an example of 'bridging' social capital (Putnam, 2000), but there was never any suggestion from Walker's interview that he would move into a middle-class trajectory and become a designer himself. Walker's trajectory and use of middle-class networks therefore suggests that the field around craft occupations provided only limited opportunities, even to the most successful men within them.

### 8.5 Middle-class trajectories through field A occupations

Art directors in field A (interviews 1 to 4) started at a high level (3) in film production upon entry, having trained and worked in design in other industries. Their progression therefore took place prior to entering film production, in what were middle-class trajectories in architecture and design. When comparing the trajectories of art directors with those of working class men on craft trajectories (field C), the indication from this is that a class based division of labour which had developed in architecture and construction was replicated in film production. The evidence from the sample of craft and art director careers, suggests that if someone came from WCOs and wanted to work as an art director during the studio system era, they would have needed to start a trajectory in design elsewhere in the labour market, rather than in the film industry.

The emerging opportunities to work in production office and editing occupations were not subject to a class-based division which had been established in more traditional industries, therefore anyone could supposedly access these occupations via the film industry. The difficulty that men from WCOs experienced in trying, as demonstrated in Chapter 7, were the discriminatory access routes into editing and production office occupations, which excluded people from working class backgrounds, due to a combination of cultural, social and economic factors.

All seven men in the sample who entered these editing and production office trajectories (interviews, 5-11) started in positions with very little experience or vocational expertise. They were often trained in the film studios in auxiliary trainee roles, learning about camera, sound, editing and production management in the film studios. In this sense they had

the most to learn in order to reach occupational maturity but were often provided with some of the widest and most diverse training available in the studio system era.

The progression into higher paid positions at level 3 was fast when compared to other occupations. They also had the furthest to travel in terms of careers, with their auxiliary training, and any given chosen specialism afterwards, allowing them to enter into above-the-line positions as a director and producer.

In order to progress they were very often dependent on close associations and/or wider networks with high status senior colleagues, who very often helped them gain their early and most significant film credits, which were important for establishing their careers in higher positions in film.

Hugh Stewart (interview 8) worked as an editor and producer; he first accessed an auxiliary trainee position at Gaumont-British studios through a family friend, the editor and producer Ian Dalrymple, who became his mentor and helped him develop his early career as he progressed from trainee to assistant editor to editor in a period from 1933 to 1936, by encouraging the studio to let him work as an editor and gain a film credit on the production of The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934) directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Dalrymple then advised him to move to another studio to work on low budget quota films to gain experience, for which he wrote a letter of recommendation. As Stewart explains, these experiences established his reputation as an editor:

> "…he [Ian Dalrymple] did give me the opportunity of editing 'The Man Who Knew Too Much' for Hitchcock. And I suppose it's fair to say that – and everybody must know this – that you learn more about your job from the bad pictures you work on, because you have to do so much to salvage them. But you get your jobs on

> the basis of the good films you work on, so it's all pretty unjust. So, I used to get jobs on the basis that I'd cut for Hitchcock, but I learnt on films which really I've virtually forgotten, because you had to make something out of rubbish – and it's marvellous training." (interview 8, Hugh Stewart)

Sidney Cole (interview 7) also started as an auxiliary trainee, and then worked as an editor and producer later in his career. He accessed an early job at as an editor through Thorold Dickinson, whom he knew in the industry and who was then working as a production manager on the film; Midshipman Easy (1935). Cole then worked on temporary contracts as an editor until returning to Ealing in 1940 to work on the film; Gaslight, again with Dickinson who was by then a film director. In a similar way to Stewart (Interview 8), Cole benefited in his early career from a close association with a more senior mentor.

E.M. Smedley-Aston (interview 9) worked as production manager and producer; he did not discuss having a close association with one person, and instead he developed several different contacts in his first three years working for Associated British Picture Corporation (ABPC) at Elstree studios. He developed networks mainly through the local pubs in Elstree:

> '…after a while you made various acquaintances […] in the Red Lion and another place up the road from the station […] and there was a sort of word of mouth thing gets around and so on' (interview 9, E.M. Smedley-Aston)

It is not clear from his interview if he used these contacts to gain access to jobs in other studios, but he does point to various unnamed contacts after he left Elstree in 1935.

The Highlander pub in Soho, London (the pub changed its name to the Nellie Dean in the late 1960s) was also mentioned several times in the interviews as an important place for

film networking. Philip Leacock worked a director and producer during his later career. He started as a trainee and assistant editor and accessed jobs in commercial studios through a network of documentary film makers who moved into commercial film making, here he points to this network of workers:

> 'I was a sort of junior member of the sort of inner circle around [John] Grierson [documentary film maker] I suppose really. But as I say I was only allowed to buy a drink in the Highlander very, very occasionally, that sort of thing, and stood at the back. But I was very close to them all really.' (interview 11, Philip Leacock)

These networks and close associations provided these middle-class men with important early breakthroughs in their careers where they reached levels 3 and 4, all of which helped them reach level 5 later in their careers.

The impression from the interviews is that these networks were almost exclusively middle-class in composition, although they were not always totally male. From the wider sample of 76 interviews, the careers of two women from MCOs also progressed through similar networks: Muriel Box, who progressed from continuity to film director and script writer, and Kay Mander, who worked in continuity and as a director/producer in documentary. The careers of both women have been publicised (Harper, 2000; Fox, 2014). They were both women pioneers in British film and they faced many gendered discriminatory practices which hindered their careers. What is not often discussed is that they are also exemplars of the way these elitist trajectories were open to women from MCOs socially and culturally, but not structurally.

### 8.6 Socially diverse trajectories through field B occupations

There are 18 men in the sample who entered sound and camera trajectories in field B: nine from WCOs and nine from MCOs. For those entering these trajectories there were opportunities to have extended careers in level 3, 4 and 5 positions. The wider sample of interviews suggests that extended careers in sound and camera were more commonly middle-class in composition, but they were nonetheless open to men from diverse class backgrounds. In this respect they offered the most scope for upward social mobility in film production historically.

Career progression in field B was slower than field A. In field A the average number of years to reach level 3 was five, whereas in sound and camera the average was eight years. This was even longer for those in sound, for whom the average was ten years for men from MCOs and WCOs.

#### 8.6.1 Working class ceilings in field B occupations

Field B occupations were more socially diverse than other trajectories in the sample, but they could still be categorised as open social spaces. Opportunities for men to enter and make careers in camera and sound occupations were by no means equal or egalitarian. Added to this, unlike field A, there was no evidence they were at all open to women from either WCOs or MCOs. As was discussed in chapter five, the knock-on effect of this was that the chances of women from WCOs to enter and make a career in film production were extremely limited.

The three men who remained in level 2 positions were all from WCOs. They provide explanations for not progressing into level 3 positions which are associated with their working-class origins. After moving into sound from electrical lighting in 1933, Fred Tomlin (interview 29) continued working as a freelance boom operator (level 2) until he retired in 1975. He explains why he never moved into a higher grade in sound:

> 'I'd sooner be an in-work boom operator than an out of work mixer [level 3], because I never stopped working. Despite the fact that I was never on the payroll of any of the big studios I was always working. And in between jobs when I wasn't working I had enough money – we [he and his wife] always had enough put by to see me through to the next picture, I always had another picture or series coming up so it was okay. And that was, I think it worked out about forty-two years.' (interview 29, Fred Tomlin)

Manny Yospa (interview 22) had received industry-sponsored training during WW2 and after the war he had established his career as a focus puller and camera assistant (level 2), however he was unable to move into higher positions in camera occupations or into the higher end of film production. He suggests that this was because, although he was able to draw on social contacts, he did not have the right ones to progress:

> 'I had a few regular [contacts], who employed me … but I never got onto the big stuff, the big names. I think there must be … a freemason's lodge and they all sort of gave each other jobs, because it was always the same people doing them! And I never got in on that.' (interview 22, Manny Yospa)

Micky Hickey had also received industry-sponsored training during WW2 and after the war he was working as a sound camera operator (level 2); however apart from two short-term jobs as a sound mixer in television, he remained on level 2 throughout his career. Hickey compares his own education to that of some of his middle-class colleagues and suggests that this is why he did not reach the positions they did, 'I can't knock my childhood…but I didn't have the education, the money wasn't there' (interview 27, Micky Hicky)

### 8.6.2 Extended careers and class origins in field B

There were six men from WCOs who reached level 3 positions in field B. These six men were not easy to find in the BEHP archive and required some flexibility in terms of the sample criteria. If I had found enough men from both backgrounds in the sample who reached level 3, I would have only selected those that started after 1927 and progressed from level 1 or 2 in the industry to a higher level. This would have provided more scope to compare and contrast middle-class and working-class experiences of extended careers in the studio system era. However, only two men from WCOs (interviews 17, Freddie Francis; 28, Harry Miller) in field B did this. Of the remaining four extended careers Freddie Young (interview 16) and Desmond Dickinson (interview 15) had progressed to level 3 before 1927, Cyril Crowhurst (interview 26) chose a trajectory in sound engineering at level 3 rather than production, and Peter Birch (interview 25) entered film production at level 3 in sound – having progressed in sound engineering in radio and early innovation in disc-rotating television before he entered film in 1930. Examples of upward social mobility during the studio system era across a range of film production occupations (editing, sound, camera, production office, set design) were therefore very rare, but were more likely to happen in sound and camera occupations.

In camera trajectories, the progression of men from MCOs was generally faster than men from WCOs – five years compared to ten years – but there were only three men from WCOs who reached level 3 and two of them (interviews 15 and 16) progressed to level 3 before the studio system era. The seven men from MCOs travelling through camera trajectories progressed to level 3 at a similar rate (five years) to the seven men travelling through editing and production trajectories in field A (four years). On average the nine men from MCOs in field B reached level 3 positions by the age of 25, similar to the seven in production office and editing roles who did so by the average age of 24. The average age for the six men from WCOs who reached level 3 (in field B) was 30.

The only clear explanation for the class-based disparity in career progression is that men from MCOs in field B generally had better career opportunities in their early careers: six started as entry-level trainees (interviews 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24) and one as a level 2 assistant with little technical expertise (interview 13). All seven therefore received a high-level industry-sponsored training during the studio system era. The remaining two men from MCOs (interviews 12 and 14), were given much less training, but their early trajectories were nonetheless a result of their MCOs; Cyril Pennington-Richards (12) had begun his career by starting his own radio and film commercial companies, which had required initial capital; Eric Cross (14) had studied engineering and then photography at college. These were both therefore early trajectories that men from WCOs would have found it difficult to enter.

I could not find any other explanations for why they had extended careers or why they progressed more quickly than men from WCOs. Social capital and networks were used to maintain careers and progress, but networks tended to benefit men from WCOs and MCOs, while none were as influential as those used in Field A trajectories. In the context of field B it

was difficult to interpret the extent to which these networks used by men from MCOs were more or less influential than those used by men from WCOs.

The extended career of Freddie Francis (interview 17) provides an example of the way social mobility was possible in the studio system era. Francis received the same industry-sponsored training as many of the men from MCOs in the sample. He was then able to progress to the position of camera operator (level 3) during WW2. Camera operators work closely with the film director, while the Director of Photography (historically called cameraman) work closely with focus pullers to get the lighting right. After WW2, Francis developed a close relationship with two prominent film directors – Michael Powell and John Huston:

> 'Mickey [Michael Powell] and I became great friends, because Mickey is a terrible bully and he loves it if people shout back at him. And we used to have terrible rows, which Mickey used to love. […] And I did several films with Mickey, the first one was The Small Black Room, then I did The Elusive Pimpernel, Gone to Earth and then Tales of Hoffman. […] I was the operator and Chris Challis was the cameraman [DOP]. I used to do all the second unit photographing if there was any. […] Soon after that I got with John Huston [USA director]. I did Moulin Rouge as a camera operator. By the time we got to Moby Dick I said "John, I really must go off on my own", so he allowed me to do all the second unit and model stuff. And then at the end of that, then I did A Hill in Korea [1956], which was my first film as cameraman [DOP, level 4]' (interview 17, Freddie Francis)

Freddie Francis had the most extended career among the sample from WCOs and is the best example of upward social mobility in the sample. His upward trajectory was assisted by

studio system era training, further training development and promotion during WW2 and a close relationship with two prominent film directors. One explanation for his progression could of course be that he was an exceptional camera technician, which is confirmed by the fact he won two film Oscars for cinematography. But the fact that his entry-level experiences and upward trajectory was an exception to the general rule among the sample of working-class men, while being a more common trajectory among men from MCOs, only highlights the detrimental effects of the discriminatory entry practices during the studio system era. The success of Freddie Francis therefore poses a question regarding class-based inequalities during the studio system era: how many more men and women from WCOs might have succeeded had they been given the entry-level opportunities that so many men from MCOs were given?

### 8.6.3 Socially diverse networks in sound occupations

An engineering background was common to sound occupations in the early studio system era and many of the pioneering heads of sound (HOD) brought this philosophy and training into the industry, as Cyril Crowhurst a sound HOD in the 1940s:

> 'DP Field [early sound HOD] was a lovely man, he was very bright, very alert and a real fine engineer in every way. […] I hope I would like to put myself in the same bracket. [We] were more interested in seeing things working right, organised well, and things were done properly and well. All this production, of course I know that's what matters […] but you provide the service of your part of it, an insignificant part, but it's as top-hole [good] as it can be. That's been my philosophy all the way through.' (interview 26, Cyril Crowhurst)

The technical capital men from WCOs had developed outside film then provided opportunities for men from MCOs, to improve their occupational skills, as John Aldred (interview 24) a sound mixer from MCOs explains:

> '[DP Fields] was as reticent in offering advice as he was in delegating. […] What did happen was that after he left to join up [in World War Two], his place was taken by Cyril Crowhurst who was a well-known character, sound engineer and he did institute a lot of training in the evening because we were getting quite a lot of turnover in staff at that time and half of them didn't know much about equipment, so he used to have sessions once a week on motor systems and the sound recorder and amplifiers and things like that. It was really much better than going to school and reading books because you are talking about the equipment you're using during the day and learning more about it. And I found that very useful. That stood me in good stead later on in life.' (interview 24, John Aldred)

Sound occupations during the early studio era were shaped around engineering and technical capital. Networks within this field were developed within trade unionism and social drinking in local pubs. The first six years of Fred Tomlin's (interview 29) career as a boom operator were dependent on these networks in the studios, here he explains how he got his break into sound from electrical lighting:

> 'So, I went over and I saw George Gunn, [who] later became in charge of Technicolor. George Gunn, and Bill Salter was with him, and it was Bill Salter who was asking for a "rough and ready boom operator." Rough and ready [like] one [boom operator] over at Islington was Charlie Wheeler. And Charlie Wheeler was one with a loud voice. And he'd […] be bawling, "quiet on the set," and this, that

> and the other, he was quite a loudmouth. And […] this is what Bill Salter wanted over at Shepherd's Bush. Didn't want any of these educated young boys who were coming into the business, he wanted somebody rough, like…' (interview 29, Fred Tomlin)

In 1938, after five years working for Gaumont-British Picture Corporation (GBPC) on temporary contracts, Fred Tomlin and other trade union activists in the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) were all fired. As he explains it was a network of sound engineers that kept him in work:

> 'Anyway, we all got the sack, and that was that you see. […] that was in 1938 and now things were desperate because […] there was no work about. But eventually I was saved because I had a telegram from Elstree Studio […] And who had got me the job but Charlie Wheeler because he'd got the sack as well, because he was one of the ETU members […] at Shepherd's Bush [who] came out on strike so he got the sack as well. But he'd got a job at Elstree. He'd put my name forward and I got on a second unit of a picture called – oh I don't know; it was some pirate thing they were making over there. And then the chief of the sound there, a man called Atkins, he said, "I've got one or two pictures coming up, I'd like to give you a job over here." […] So I got on a picture called Poison Pen and Bert Ross was the mixer. And we got on very well together on this thing. And we used to go and have a drink in the bar over there and Atkins was in there […] and it became a regular thing…' (interview 29, Fred Tomlin)

It was through these drinking sessions that Tomlin was offered further employment, but the connection and bond that helped develop his connection was through shared activism in the trade union movement.

The career progression of Harry Miller, who came from WCOs and who moved from the property department (level 2, Field C) into the position of sound mixer (level 3), was dependent on a network of men from MCOs and WCOs, who were working in sound production at Elstree studios and developed in the Electricians Trade Union (ETU) and the emergence of the Association of Cine-Technicians (ACT). As he explains below:

> 'Blackmail [first sound film in 1929] started and they had two systems, Western and RCA. And to help them do all the installation and things, they took a couple of chargehand electricians called Bert Ross and Charlie [surname unclear] and they helped me do all the installations and that. And they graduated to mixers. They were two of our early mixers. The chief of sound was a chap named Atkins […] They asked me to join the sound department as an effects man […] we all joined ACT, sort of founder members. […] we were getting a bit fed up with the money, because the best paid men in the studio were the electricians.' (interview 28, Harry Miller)

In 1936 Harry Miller moved, with other men in the sound department, from Elstree to Denham studios. At Denham the same group of men continued to be active in the ACT union, while Miller progressed to assistant dubbing mixer (level 3). Miller's upward trajectory to level 3 during the studio system era was therefore partly due to the diverse social space surrounding sound occupations, within which strong networks and bonds were formed through trade union resistance as sound workers established themselves in the industry.

**Conclusion**

What section 8.1 has shown is that, despite several changes, the nature of employment throughout the period of the studio system was insecure. Nevertheless, the institutional changes and interventions generally insulated careers and created opportunities. This meant that while social capital and informal networks did assist careers, the men in the sample were not overly dependent on them to maintain and progress across occupations as they did not have to regularly re-enter the labour market and could sustain careers over periods of time working for the same employers. Employment opportunities arising from the events and interventions over the period from 1927 to 1955 benefited men from WCOs and MCOs. Evidence of upward social mobility taking place in this period was nonetheless rare. In fact, the sample of careers suggests that during the studio system era men from MCOs had much better employment opportunities than those from WCOs.

These middle-class advantages were clearest in field A and field C. Field A trajectories were closed to people from WCOs and they offered the greatest scope for extended careers in film production. The networks that developed within field A occupations aided careers to the greatest extent in the sample, so that men from MCOs who gained access into these trajectories, were doubly advantaged as they were able to access elitist entry and development in early careers and elitist networks in later careers.

Occupations in field C offered men from WCOs employment opportunities and careers in film production; however, they were relatively short careers culminating at level 2, with only limited access to level 3. Men who travelled the furthest in field C were able to develop relationships and networks with art directors and draughtsmen in field A and while this benefited one man in the sample (Gus Walker, interview 33) in terms of accessing freelance

employment, there was never any indication that these networks could then be used to access employment in field A occupations in set design. Career trajectories in fields A and C therefore represent some clearly drawn class-based inequalities in terms of opportunities to have extended careers to and beyond level 3.

Career trajectories in field B were more socially diverse and offered opportunities for those entering them to have extended careers. This is why there were more examples of social mobility in camera and sound than in any other occupations in the sample. However, on closer inspection, even in these more socially diverse occupations, upward social mobility was still limited during the studio system era. The career of Freddie Francis (interview 17) suggests that if more people from WCOs had been given the same entry-level opportunities as men from MCOs, there might have been more upward social mobility in film production historically. The trajectory of Harry Miller (interview 28) also suggests that where occupations had more social diversity, men from WCOs could access more influential social networks, which could aid career progression. But it is hard to draw any clear conclusions from isolated cases. The extended career trajectories in the sample provide more evidence that opportunities for upward social mobility in film production were extremely difficult, while opportunities to enhance careers among men from MCOs were by no means easy, they were certainly much more common.

## Chapter 9 Conclusions

The premise of this thesis is that: the association between class origins and career trajectories develop over time and in order to understand them, it is important to trace the way class and career opportunities are mediated through different occupational settings historically.

The main research question used to explore this is as follows:

> How did men from working-class origins (WCOs) and middle-class origins (MCOs) enter and make careers in film production during the period of the British Studio System?

The subsidiary questions were explored through the data presented in chapters 5, 6,7 and 8.

1. In what ways did class origins shape career decisions to work in film production?
2. How did men from WCOs and MCOs enter film production careers?
3. How did men from WCOs and MCOs develop their careers in film production?
4. In what ways did the association between class origins and careers differ across emerging occupational spaces in UK film production during the period of the Studio System?

The following sections begin by reviewing the limitations and strengths of the research and where there is room for future studies. Sections: 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, and 9.5, then address the five subsidiary questions above, in turn. There is overlap as the findings from these subsidiary questions are interlinked and interdependent. The chapter closes with the historical and theoretical contributions of this thesis.

## 9.1 Strengths and limitations and potential future research

There are three main limitations that I would like to discuss in relation to this research. The first is the exclusion of women's careers from the analysis. The second is the historical limitation of focusing on careers that began before 1947, coupled with the limitations of using a range of occupations rather than narrowing the focus. The third limitation was using the BEHP archive as the main primary source, which created some challenges. Below, I will address each limitation in turn.

### Excluding women from the final sample of careers

The careers of women were researched but not used in the final sub-sample, this was because as class background emerged, I wanted to use a sample of careers of people from WCOs and MCOs so that I could compare the two classes running through the dissertation chapters. After reviewing 18 female careers, I could not find any who were from WCOs. There were two who may have come from working-class backgrounds who worked in continuity; Tilly Day and June Randall, but their family and school backgrounds were not clear from the

interviews and June Randall was educated in Australia. Because of this I could not provide a class-based comparison of the careers of women in film production. There is a case to be made for having focused on middle-class women, this could have been more focused on the way women were excluded and included in certain gendered occupations and the barriers they faced. I attempted to do this, but felt the thesis was being pulled in too many directions and the class comparison, which runs through the dissertation chapters, would have been difficult to maintain. Women from middle-class origins in the sample faced a set of discriminatory practices in the film industry which meant they were openly blocked from progressing in their careers whenever they attempted to enter male occupational spaces.

The process of analysing the women in the initial sample through a Bourdieusian framework did seem effective in that the analysis suggested that the trajectories into many gendered female occupations – in costume design, continuity and hair and make-up – were middle-class, with those working in continuity on trajectories through typing colleges and those in set and costume design through architecture and art college. A Bourdieusian analysis of a more robust sample of women might have added another dimension to the historical model in Figure 1. The difficulty with doing so, was that the sample of 18 women was disparate, with some who started after 1947, others who were educated outside of the UK and too few women in an occupation to observe the development of trends. Continuity was the one occupation where there were enough interviews to observe trends, but without clear examples of women from WCOs, it would still mean adapting the PhD to a different set of questions.

The careers of women historically (and of the specific women I looked at in the archive) have also been discussed in literature, and I felt I would be going over ground that

had been covered with very little else to contribute. For instance historical research into the role of women in British film production by Harper (2000) focuses on women editors, directors, costume designers, art directors and producers, while there is also literature on women in the documentary movement (Fox, 2014) and women who worked in continuity (Williams, 2013) in the 1930s. These published contributions do not focus on class background, but many of the themes regarding careers and issues around gendered exclusion are documented. The focus on gender and class in film employment is still therefore something that requires historical attention. Drawing on some of the initial analysis I have done using a sample of women in the BEHP archive, and adding to it with further research into women's careers, would be something I would like to pursue in the future and/or share with those with research interest in the subject. An important pursuit for future research would be how class and gender intersect, but this would, in my view, require purposive targeting of women from working-class backgrounds.

**Excluding an analysis of careers that began after 1947**

The focus on careers that began before 1947 meant that I have not assessed the impact of the entry-level closed shop on the association between class and careers from 1947 onwards. The PhD dissertation by Ian Reid (2008), focuses on the association between the trade unions and employment practices from circa 1950 onwards and concludes that many employment practices in the 1930s became formalised during the late 1940s and 1950s and continued in the period up until the 1990s. However, there is not an analysis of the relationship between class and employment and if trade unions increased or decreased opportunities for people from working-class backgrounds. The impression is that trade unions sometimes challenged the use of informal contacts to access the industry, but there was also

nepotism, with trade union members actively getting their family members union membership which provided them with access to the entry-level closed shop that existed from 1947 until 1990. The issue of union control over the labour market and how this related to class background and opportunities would be useful to research in the future and would contribute some important historical context to the period from 1947-1990. This would be possible to pursue through the BEHP archive and through primary interviews as there would still be many people alive to provide an account of this period.

Another early aim was to highlight the continuities and changes that have taken place through time. But to do so there would have needed to be a stronger link through time from past to present. This would require another set of research into careers that started in the period between the 1950s to the 1980s and even then, the contexts within which class encounters career opportunities are different. In terms of the association between class and employment in the UKFTV industry a more longitudinal study might make a useful contribution, by comparing the careers of people in a few occupations such as camera and sound roles and researching the careers of a combination of workers from working-class and middle-class backgrounds who started in different periods. This would provide a comparative insight into class-based opportunities and inequalities in three different stages of the UKFTV industry. The research from this dissertation would provide a picture of careers that began in the 1920s and 1930s and it might be that the research of a number of contemporary authors could be used to understand the careers of people who started in the post-1990 period as the labour market became less regulated, but further research might need to be done on people who began their careers in the 1960s, although the work of Grugulis and Stoynova (2012)

might provide a useful starting point for this. Another issue would be how gender, disability and race intersect with class and if and how this could be explored historically.

The strengths and limitations of using the BEHP archive were discussed in depth in Chapter 4. In summary, the limitations of using an oral history archive or any qualitative archive in which the researcher has not conducted the interviews mean that there are two key limitations: the content of the interviews and the sample of interviewees selected. The fact that I did not conduct the interviews means that the research is dependent on the questions and directions of a number of interviewers, therefore the questions I would have liked to ask and pursue further, in particular on the class related issues, are not always there. What is significant however is the fact that the relationship between class and employment opportunities was so prevalent in the interviews, despite the fact it was never pursued in the interviews directly; this gives this data a certain purity in that it exists without any influence from interviewers. This is due to the semi-biographical approach of the archive from its inception, which was influenced by oral history. This approach also lends itself to Bourdieu's approach to understanding class-based inequalities in that provides insights into ways that backgrounds help shape careers.

The limitation of the archive sample is that there is a clear imbalance of occupations, and arguably, a knock-on effect of this is that there is a lack of working-class voices in film employment history. There is not an even spread of occupations and there is a lack of occupations covered in lower paid positions, in particular in, studio construction, electrical lighting, hair dressing and wardrobe. These are all occupations where there may have been people who came from working-class backgrounds and with more of these occupations it might have been possible to trace some trajectories of women from WCOs and/or more male

working-class trajectories. As a source the BEHP archive must be understood in the context of the wider lack of historical documentation of these careers and voices. Despite its limitations, the BEHP archive offers insights into the association between social class background and careers in film production, which other sources simply do not provide. As an historical source the BEHP archive, without ever setting out to do so, therefore remains a valuable resource for the subject of class and careers in the film and television industry, while also providing empirical data on the way people entered and made careers historically. This demonstrates the strength of oral history and the need for more academic analysis of the many archives that are available to researchers.

A synthesis between the oral history interviews and historical literature was possible to some extent in relation to the structural arrangements surrounding employment. But any synthesis between the sample of interviews and literature was very difficult to achieve on the subject of class origins and careers in film historically. My approach was to use literature on the contemporary UKFTV industry and class origins and use the sample as a way to understand the historical background on the issue, but throughout the research this has been a difficult and sometimes limited approach as the association between class and careers and the ways workers enter and make careers need to be understood within the social, economic and political environment they encounter. What the research has contributed is a context and framework from which to understand the historical association between class and careers across a number of film occupations as they were emerging and/or evolving during the period of the studio system. In relation to understanding the past, the research presented in this dissertation could be developed and added to with the discovery of other oral histories and/or other historical sources on the subject of class and careers. In relation to the study of the

contemporary film and television industry and the broader scope of the cultural and creative industries it does provide some historical background to the issue and does this with a nuanced approach across a number of film occupations. It would however benefit from a more longitudinal approach with a picture of the ways people entered careers in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s.

More synthesis between literature and the BEHP archive would perhaps be possible with historical case study research into film studios, such as Ealing Studios or the vertically integrated companies: Associated British Picture Corporation and British Gaumont Picture Corporation. A theme that emerged from the sample of interviews, but for which there was no explanation or wider evidence, was that many of the men from WCOs in the sample accessed film production through the studios in Hertfordshire, many of which were connected to ABPC. This is also something that I would like to pursue in the future through case study research.

**The limitations of the occupational sub-fields presented in figure 1**

The historical classification of a variety of film occupations into three occupational sub-fields is by no means definitive. The formula used to understand the three occupational sub-fields is based on a sample of interviews with men who had trajectories that travelled into and through them, which is not precise. What it offers is an historical map of the association between class origins and film occupations, but what I would say of this is that it is an early map of territory that has not yet been fully explored. It is based on the experiences of a sample of men who were early pioneers in these occupations. But this is a limited sample and the question of how their class background may have encountered these occupations

was never a topic of discussion in the BEHP interviews. Nevertheless, it offers a starting point from which further research can be built.

Added to this there is room for more research into the occupations they were entering historically. From the outset I aimed to develop an overview of the status of the different occupations in the film industry at the time, which is presented in Figure 1. However, if a study into fewer occupations had been chosen, it might have been possible to go into more depth regarding specific occupational identities and how they developed and evolved over time. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the field surrounding different film occupations.

**9.2 Class origins and career aspirations in film**

Middle-class school leavers in the research sample entered the labour market with clear intentions to work in film production. These decisions early on in career trajectories were connected to their middle-class social surroundings and private schooling. The sample of the eleven middle-class men who entered into 'highbrow, elitist' occupations in field A, recounted experiences in private schools, middle-class families and wider circles, that imbued a set of cultural tastes and dispositions which drew them towards film careers in art design, editing and production management. Their middle-class origins also encouraged them to believe that their prospects of entering and making a career in these elite occupations were achievable. The sample of the nine middle-class men who entered into 'socially diverse, technical' occupations (field B), had also, often, made the decision to work in film before they entered the labour market. Their recollections of their schooling were mixed and generally less highbrow than the men in field A and they were drawn to a mixture of the cultural and

technical aspects of a film career. Middle-class parents did sometimes oppose careers in film, as they viewed it as an unsavoury environment with uncertain career prospects, but by the same token they tended to become supportive and assisted early careers once they realised their sons were determined to work in the industry. The conclusion drawn from the sample of 20 middle-class men is that as many film production occupations were emerging and evolving in the 1920s and 1930s so to were middle-class aspirations to work in them. A trajectory towards film production was therefore increasingly on the 'career horizons' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997) of the middle-classes in the period between the wars.

In sharp contrast, on the whole, the 17 working-class men educated in state schools were unlikely to embark on a career in film production upon leaving school as it was not on their career horizons; the majority did not perceive the emerging film industry as a place where they could work and therefore entered later in their working lives, having transitioned from school to work in industries elsewhere in the labour market. Despite this general class difference in aspirations to work in film production, there were a few exceptions. None of the working-class sample of eight men on trajectories into and through field C occupations had any aspirations to work in film production after leaving school. They often became interested after working in craft trades and learning about the high overtime pay available in the film industry. The sample of men from WCOs who eventually travelled through field B occupations provide examples of some of the technical trajectories that were emerging for men from WCOs that could eventually lead to a career in camera and sound roles. These trajectories provided opportunities for upward social mobility within the wider scope of CCIs in the 1930s, with examples of working-class trajectories through early television, music, cinema projection and documentary film making in the 1930s. This sample of nine working-class trajectories that travelled through field B are examples of social mobility and 'class ceilings' in film historically.

Among these nine men there were three who wanted to work in film upon leaving school, all of whom had extended careers in camera occupations and were drawn to the technical and artistic aspects of camera work.

In summary, on the question of class origins and career intentions, the key differences between the two social groups were the impact of family and education on early career trajectories. Middle-class social surroundings and a private school education shaped and encouraged decisions to work in film production. In strong contrast, working-class origins provided very little connection or inclination to work in the industry.

**9.3 Class origins and entry-level practices**

The history of access to entry-level training and development in the film industry has not been subjected to much empirical research, however anecdotal references point to a (male) meritocracy, in which a 'teaboy' or 'clapper boy' can make his way to the top (Barr, 1977; Guardian, 2007). The sample of interviews suggests that while this was perhaps true, a more accurate description would acknowledge that the tea or clapper 'boy' would most likely have come from a middle-class background.

The process of learning tacit skills, on the job, by working with more experienced workers, within 'communities of practice' (Grugrulis and Stoyanova, 2011) has been shown to be a tried and trusted way of developing early careers in film and television. In the contemporary context it has been argued that these learning opportunities have become more difficult to find as employment has become more temporary and these communities of practices have become more fragmented (Grugrulis and Stoyanova, 2011). During the studio system era the communities of practice that trainees entered were stronger because there

was greater employment stability. This was an advantage for those able to gain entry-level access as trainees as they were able to learn on the job from more experienced film workers and develop social networks that would benefit later careers. Early career development on these trainee trajectories lacked systematic methods of training; however, the sample of careers suggests that they were highly regarded and offered opportunities to enhance reputations and build valuable social contacts.

The analysis of the data discussed in Chapter 7 demonstrated how the sample of men from MCOs could often draw high status contacts through private school and family networks, which provided opportunities to enter occupational trajectories with the greatest scope for extended careers, most notably in production office, editing, sound and camera occupations. This social capital aided recruitment meant that they entered film production with very little prior work experience or relevant skills. Added to this, middle-class families provided economic support to help them sustain a living while working in low-paid, entry-level positions. The social capital aided recruitment into these trainee positions and the low starting pay made them the domain of middle-class men and excluded those from less advantaged backgrounds.

The one example of a working-class trajectory through an entry-level position does suggest that these opportunities were not totally closed to men from WCOs, but the way that men from MCOs accessed trainee positions suggests that working-class trajectories into them were difficult and rare. The training that was more commonly available to men from WCOs in the sample was a consequence of atypical circumstances or associations, such as increased employment opportunities during wartime or rare working-class family associations with the film industry.

The data presented in Chapters 6 and 7 therefore strongly suggest that a historical association between class origins and entering a film production career was firmly established, indicating that there has been a history of class-based barriers regarding access and entry-level training in film production.

**9.4 Class origins and career destinations**

The question of the association between class origins and making a career in film production is more complicated, but it is interlinked with the access and entry-level training. In the contemporary UKFTV industry, workers need to regularly re-enter the labour market to maintain a career; this is mainly done through social capital aided recruitment, which has been shown to be bonding capital between men from MCOs, rather than bridging capital that might help stimulate social mobility (Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Randle et al, 2015; Friedman et al, 2017). Social capital aided recruitment in UKFTV has therefore been labelled as a process of 'opportunity hoarding' (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012).

In Chapter 3, a review of the historical literature concluded that the film industry has been structurally weak throughout its history (Blair and Rainnie, 2000; Blair, 2001; Blair, Grey and Randle, 2001). The high financial cost of production has often been heavily dependent on US investment to survive since the 1920s and 'such dependency has proved to be unreliable' (Blair, Grey and Randle, 2001). This suggests that uncertainty surrounding employment has been a continual issue for film production workers.

Nonetheless, the era of the British Studio System, which lasted in film from the late 1920s to the 1950s – and then effectively transitioned into television from the 1950s to the 1980s – provided some security within the project-based nature of employment. Added to

this, the entry-level closed shop (from the 1940s to the 1980s) provided labour market protections (Gater Report, 1949; ACTT, 1983; Sparks, 1994 Ryall, 1997; Reid, 2008).

As shown in Chapter 8, careers historically went through periods of employment stability and instability. Men in the sample discussed coping with periods of uncertainty, but they also experienced long periods of employment for the same employer and/or studio. In this environment they were able to develop skills and contacts in communities of practice which could be established during the studio system era. In this environment, social capital and informal networks did assist the careers of men from both class backgrounds. There is some evidence to suggest that it benefited men from MCOs to a greater extent, because they were able to develop high status contacts, especially in field A occupations. Men from WCOs also used social capital to maintain careers in field C occupations, but it was more often bonding capital with other men from WCOs rather than bridging capital with men from MCOs, and even when they had middle-class social contacts, they did not use them to make 'transverse movements' across occupations or socially mobile transitions into higher level positions.

These historical structural arrangements meant that workers in the past were less dependent on social capital aided recruitment in order to sustain careers than workers today. This certainly insulated men from WCOs and MCOs, but it did not noticeably alter the association between class origins and career destinations. This was because the career destinations of the men in the sample were being shaped through their early lives, their early career decisions and the entry-level opportunities and training that were in large part shaped by their class background.

During the period of the studio system, especially from 1927 to 1938, opportunities to enter into film occupations that offered extended careers, were dominated by men from

middle-class origins, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7. Furthermore, as Chapter 8 demonstrated, the local labour market during the British Studio System from the 1920s to 1950s and afterwards provided at least some insulation from employment uncertainty in film production. This aided the careers of men from both class backgrounds, but ultimately entry-level practices during the early period of the studio system excluded men from WCOs from entering a range of film occupations.

**9.5 Class origins and occupational fields**

The contemporary UKFTV field has been identified as being dominated by middle-class habitus (Randle et al, 2015). This affects working-class entrants who find it harder to adapt to this middle-class field when they embark on an internship (Allen et al, 2013). Those from MCOs therefore bring a stock of capitals and resources, which have symbolic significance or field-specific advantage in UKFTV occupations, especially occupations that require less technical expertise and have a 'heightened sense of ambiguity of knowledge' (Friedman and Laurison, 2019:202) and are therefore more susceptible to cultural and social posturing.

The picture provided by the career samples studied here is that the field surrounding employment in film production during the period of the studio system was on the whole middle-class and male, but this differed depending on the occupational spaces that men entered. What has emerged from this analysis of a cross section of careers that began before 1947 is an historical map of the association between class origins and occupational destinations, shown graphically in Figure 1. What this demonstrates is the different associations between class and careers in three occupational spaces.

Field A occupations were closed to people from WCOs and they offered the greatest scope for what Ashton and Field (1976) refer to as 'extended careers'. All 11 men in the field A sample reached level 4 or 5 film positions. These positions provided the highest average pay rates, but also the greatest amount of autonomy over the content and meaning of films. Some of the occupations in field A required a certain level of technical training, especially editing and art director roles, but they were also susceptible to a 'heightened sense of ambiguity of knowledge' (Freidman and Laurison, 2019). The middle-class men who entered field A referred to their highbrow cultural capital in their interviews, and in doing so they pointed to their cultural legitimacy in field A occupations. The networks that men developed in field A occupations were cashed in to advance careers, so that men from MCOs who gained access into these occupations at entry level, were doubly advantaged as they were able to develop the relevant technical training and experience and social capital to advance in these fields.

Occupations in field C offered men from WCOs employment opportunities and careers in film production, but they were what Ashton and Field (1976) refer to as 'short-term careers', often culminating at level 2 (Figure 1), with only limited access to level 3. There was some evidence that men who travelled the furthest in field C were those who were able to develop relationships and networks with art directors and draughtsmen in field A but although they were in art departments, this social capital was not used to make transverse movements (Bourdieu, 1984) into design occupations in field A.

Career trajectories in fields A and C therefore represent some clearly drawn class-based barriers in terms of the limited opportunities available to men from WCOs to have extended careers to and beyond level 3 film occupations.

Career trajectories in field B were more socially diverse and offered opportunities for those entering into them to have extended careers. This is why there were more examples of social mobility in camera and sound than in any other occupations in the sample. Nonetheless, even in these more socially diverse occupations, upward social mobility was still limited, and this was partly due to the lack of early career opportunities that were available to them when compared to men from MCOs. The four extended career trajectories in the sample indicate that opportunities for upward social mobility in film production were extremely rare. While opportunities for men from MCOs to enhance careers were by no means easy, when compared to men from WCOs their trajectories into and through field B were smoother. In conclusion camera and sound occupations offered some opportunities for men from WCOs, but they were still social spaces in which men from MCOs had greater advantages.

One of the limitations of the BEHP interviews in relation to this research is that the question of how socially compatible men from WCOs felt in field B occupations was never addressed, for the men who were socially mobile and reached positions at level 3 and above, this would have been something that would have provided insights into the association between class and careers. The few direct comments that were made regarding class in field B occupations came from men from MCOs, for whom the assumption was that they were mainly middle-class spaces. The fact the working-class men in the sample were all silent on the subject of class might have been because they were never asked in their interviews, but it may also have been because a working-class background was something that remained hidden in higher positions in field B.

## 9.6 Contributions

The thesis contributes much needed historical background to the association between class origins and careers in film production. This contributes a deeper understanding of the historical sociology of work and employment in the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs), demonstrating the ways in which class origins shaped carer trajectories into and through evolving film production occupations.

The thesis builds on other research that has used Bourdieu's (1984) key concepts of habitus, capitals and fields (HCF) to understand the relationship between class origins and career destinations in the creative and cultural industries (Mcleod et al, 2009; Lee, 2011; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Randle et al, 2015; Freidman and Laurison, 2016 and Freidman and Laurison, 2019). In doing so the thesis makes a theoretical contribution to the study of class origins and careers, through a Bourdieusian inspired, historical model of the association between class origins and career destinations, based on the identification of three different and evolving occupational 'fields' (Bourdieu, 1984) during the British Studio System. The process of mapping a cross section of male careers through a Bourdieusian lens also provides a model for analysing a cross section of semi-biographical oral history interviews in order to better understand wider questions about the way the association between class and careers develops historically.

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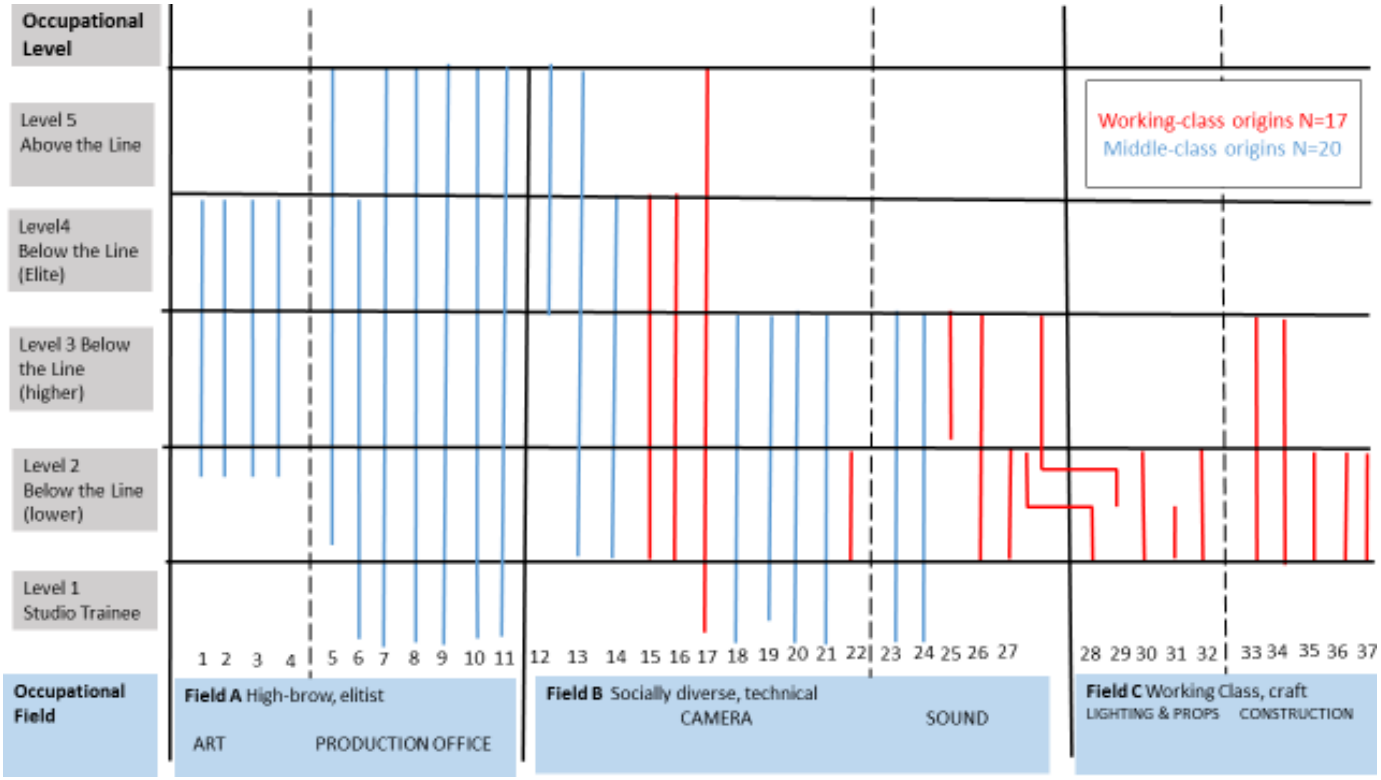
# Appendix 1:

## Diagram showing the historical associations between class origins and male career trajectories in film production occupations

The occupations in each level are explained in Chapter 5.



**Appendix 2 Table of 37 men in the research sample**

This table provides added information to the careers displayed in Figure 1. It includes: the interview numbers, names, class origins, starting positions, destination positions, access routes and length of work prior to starting in film production.

The hierarchical levels and occupational fields are explained in Chapter 5.

| LIST OF SAMPLE FOR FIGURE 1 – class origins and occupational sub-fields | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graph number | NAME | CLASS ORIGINS | Start level | Destination Level | Access route into film production | Prior work experience (years) |
| CAREERS IN FIELD A HIGH-BROW, ELITIST | | | | | | |
| 1 | Edward Carrick | MC | 2 | 4 -AD | Family contact | 1 |
| 2 | LP Williams | MC | 2 | 4- AD | AA studio | 0 |
| 3 | Cedric Dawe | MC | 2 | 4- AD | AA studio | 2 |
| 4 | Maurice Carter | MC | 2 | 4- AD | Family contact | 3+ |
| 5 | Reggie Beck | MC | 1/2 | 5 EDI/PRO | Studio<br>No contact | 3+ |
| 6 | Peter Tanner | MC | 1 | 4- Edi | Family contact | 0 |
| 7 | Sid Cole | MC | 1 | 5- Edi/Pro | School contact | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Hugh Stewart | MC | 1 | 5 – Edi/producer | Family contact | 0 |
| 9 | EM Smeadley | MC | 1 | 5- PM/producer | Family contact | 2 |
| 10 | Eddie Dryhurst | MC | 1 | 5- Writer/producer | Studio | 0 |
| 11 | Philip Leacock | MC | 1 | 5- Director | Family contact | 0 |
| CAREERS IN FIELD B – SOCIALLY DIVERSE, TECHNICAL | | | | | | |
| 12 | Pennington Richards | MC | 3 | 4<br>DOP/director | Prior work contact? | 3+ |
| 13 | Vernon Sewell | MC | 2 | 5<br>Dir/Pro | School contact | 3+ |
| 14 | Eric Cross | MC | 2 | 4- DOP | Studio<br>No contact | 3+ |
| 15 | Desmond Dickinson | WC<br>(1ST GEN) | 2<br>Pre Studio System era | 4 -DOP | Studio<br>No contact | 0 |
| 16 | Freddie Young | WC<br>(1ST GEN) | 2<br>Pre studio system era | 4 – DOP | Studio<br>No contact | 2 |
| 17 | Freddie Francis (dir) | WC | 1 | 5<br>DOP/DIR | Family contact (LEVEL 2) | 1 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Tubby Englander | MC | 1 | 3 CO<br>NOT DOP | Family contact | 0 |
| 19 | Alan Lawson | MC | 1 | 3 CO<br>NOT DOP | Family contact | 0 |
| 20 | Stan Sayer | MC | 1 | 3 -CO<br>NOT DOP | Family contact | 0 |
| 21 | Len Harris | MC | 1 | 3- CO<br>NOT DOP | College contact | 0 |
| 22 | Manny Yospa | WC | 2 | 2 – cam assistant | Prior work<br>No contact | 3+ |
| 23 | Gordon McCallum | MC | 1 | 3 -Sound mixer | Letter<br>No contact | 1 |
| 24 | John Aldred | MC | 1 | 3 – Sound mixer | Family contact | 0 |
| 25 | Peter Birch | WC (orphan school) | 3 | 3 -Sound mixer | Prior work reputation<br>No contact | 10+ |
| 26 | Cyril Crowhurst | WC<br>TECH college | 2 | 3 – Sound HOD | Prior work contact | 3+ |
| 27 | Micky Hicky | WC | 2 | 2 Sound assistant | War<br>Prior work<br>No contact | 10+ |
| CAREERS MOVED FROM FIELD C TO FIELD B | | | | | | |
| 28 | Harry Miller | WC | 2 – props | 3 Sound mixer<br>MOVED FROM FIELD C | Family contact<br>L2 | 10+ |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | Fred Tomlin | WC | 2 ELEC | 2 – Sound assistant<br>MOVED FROM C | Family contact<br>L2 | 10+ |
| CAREERS IN FIELD C – WORKING-CLASS, CRAFT | | | | | | |
| 30 | Ted Hallows | WC | 2<br>ELEC | 2 – ELEC GAFFER | Prior work<br>No contact | 3+ |
| 31 | Les Hillings | WC | 1/2 | 2 – props | Family contact<br>Level 2 | 3+ |
| 32 | Harry Holton | WC | 2 Elec | 2 – Elec | Prior work<br>No contact | 3+ |
| 33 | Gus Walker | WC<br>TECH<br>College | 2 CRA | 3 SCM | college<br>contact | 3+ |
| 34 | Ronnie Udell | WC<br>TECH<br>College | 2 CRA | 3 – SCM | Prior work<br>no contact | 3+ |
| 35 | Cyril Thawley | WC | 2 CRA | 2 – CRA<br>HOD | Prior work<br>No contact | 10+ |
| 36 | Ernie Diamond | WC | 2 CRA | 2 – CRA<br>HOD | Prior work<br>No contact | 3+ |
| 37 | Tom Peacock | WC | 2 CRA | 2 – CRA<br>HOD | Prior work<br>No contact | 10+ |

## Appendix 3 – Wage Table – comparing average UK wages in occupational classifications with film production wages in the 1930s

Estimated weekly wages from the UK national average are taken from Routh (1980) and are from 1936. Estimated wages of film production occupations are taken from the Gater (1949) and are from 1938.

The average wages of producer and directors are excluded as they were negotiated individually.

The average wages of Directors of Photography (historically Chief Cameraman), are also not included in the Gater (1949) estimates and it is unclear if these are the actual rates for 'Camera Operator'

The film production wages from the Gater report are estimates. The research sample suggests the wages film occupations comparable with 'higher professional' workers fluctuated

| **Occupational classification Wage average 1936 (Routh, 1980)** | **FILM OCCUPATION 1938 (Gater, 1949)** | **WEEKLY ESTIMATED WAGE RATE 1936 AND 1938 Pound.Shilling.Pence** |
|---|---|---|
| **UNDER-18S NATIONAL AVERAGE (FEMALE)** | | **0.18.6** |
| | FILM PRODUCTION ENTRY-LEVEL POSITION | 1.0.0 |
| **UNDER-18S National average (MALE)** | | **1.6.1** |
| **NATIONAL AVERAGE WAGE** | | **2.8.3** |
| | Camera and sound assistants | 2.10.0 |
| **7 – UNSKILLED (MALE)** | | **2.14** |
| **6 – SEMI-SKILLED MANUAL (MALE)** | | **2.18** |
| | STAGE HAND | 3.8.6.5 |
| **OVER 21 NATIONAL AVERAGE (MALE)** | | **3.9.0** |
| **3 – CLERICAL WORKER (MALE)** | | **3.14.0** |
| | STUDIO LIGHTING ELECTRICIAN | 3.17 |
| **5- SKILLED MANUAL (MALE)** | | **3.18.0** |
| | FLOOR ELECTRICIAN | 4.13.0 |
| | CARPENTER | 4.8 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | FIRST ASSISTANT EDITOR | 5.0.0 |
| **4 – Foreman or Supervisor (MALE)** | | **5.5.0** |
| | PLASTERER | 5.5.9 |
| **1B – LOWER PROFESSIONAL (MALE)** | | **5.18.0** |
| | SOUND CAMERA OPERATOR | 6.0.0 |
| | BOOM OPERATOR | 6.0.0 |
| | FOLLOW FOCUS CAMERAMAN | 6.10.0 |
| | CONTINUITY GIRL | 6.10.0 |
| | MAINTENANCE ENGINEER (SOUND) | 6.10.0 |
| | DRAUGHTSMAN | 6.10.0 |
| | FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR | 10.0.0 |
| **1A – HIGHER PROFESSIONAL (MALE)** | | **12.0.0** |
| | UNIT PRODUCTION MANAGER | 13.10.0 |
| | LITERARY EDITOR | 14.5.0 |
| | EDITOR | 15.0.0 |
| | CAMERA OPERATOR | 15.0.0 |
| | SOUND RECORDIST | 15.0.0 |
| | ART DIRECTOR | 15.0.0 |
| | | |

## Appendix 4

## INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

## The British Entertainment History Project

Ideally, an interviewer should say as little as possible once the usual opening questions have been asked

The first six of these questions are absolutely essential as they are required by the database.

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Place of Birth
- Nationality
- Awards
- Honours
- Parents – did your parents have anything to do with the 'business'? –
- Schooling
- Further education
- Formal training as film-/programme-maker

- Also worked in tv, theatre, radio… other?
- Main areas of work (crafts)
- A few or many companies?
- What attracted interviewee to film business
- Describe what their job(s) was/were
- How did you get started in the business
- Outline of career development
- Who have you worked with, where?
- What have you enjoyed about the job
- What were the difficulties
- How do they see the future of this craft/profession developing
- Respond to issues they raise

Then hopefully the interviewee will be launched into talking about his/her career as it developed, the interviewer only intervening to progress the interview.