Blue, Pink, & White: The Importance of Collars

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Introduction
- Working Class Distinctions
- Blue Collar
- White Collar
- Pink Collar
- Related Benefits

Working Class Distinctions
- Social class based on work place differences
- Defined by:
  - Nature of work: Manual labor vs. skilled
  - Level of remuneration: Wage vs. Salaried
  - Access to resources: Capital, Education, and Land
- Determinants for opportunities, promotion, & pay

Blue-Collar Workers
- Class of employees who perform manual or technical labor
-Originally referred to the dress codes of workplaces
  - "work clothes" of navy blue; durable, designed to be soiled
- Distinctive elements of blue-collar work
  - Lesser requirements for formal academic education
  - Training is often learned on the job
  - Time clock used to calculate pay - hourly rate, paid weekly
    - After "punching out" it is understood worker has no further duties
  - Generally, pay is lower than white-collar counterparts
  - Generally, pay is higher than pink-collar counterparts

Blue-Collar
- An epithet used to describe the environment of the "blue-collar worker"
  - a "blue-collar" neighborhood, job, factory, restaurant, bar, etc.
  - a situation descriptive of use of manual effort and the strength required to do such
  - Also used as a derogatory adjective to describe something crude, simple, lacking sophistication, or appealing to basic instinct: i.e., a blue-collar joke.

White-Collar Workers
- Perform tasks which are less "laborious", does not involve manual labor
- Are often expected to dress with a degree of formality
- Wearers of the traditional white, button-down shirt
- Often more highly paid than blue-collar workers
- Salaried professionals: doctors, lawyers, employees in administrative positions, some managers – dependent upon industry
- Not necessarily upper class as the term once implied
Rise of Pink-Collar Workers

- “Traditions” harkening to the first half of the 20th century: 1950’s
- 1950’s women began entering workforce in significant numbers
- Women wore bright shirts, pink was a popular color
- Women entered workforce at entry level positions
- Expectation: women quit work when they married

Pink-Collar Workers

- A woman who works for a living in a clean, safe environment, in a job considered traditionally female
  - Pink-collar jobs are secondary labor market jobs
  - Secretaries, nurses, telephone operators, florist, teachers, librarians,.. and many other lower-level/service positions
  - According to gender stereotypes pervasive in male-dominated societies, these occupations are seen as “ideally and naturally” suited to women as they echo domestic responsibilities
  - Does not require as much professional training
- Jobs low in status and pay, limited benefits or chances for advancement
- Limited opportunities for women in the workforce

Rise of Pink-Collar Workers

- Women in industrialized nations began to actively seek their own income rather than relying on men to support them
- Often kept out of traditional blue and white collar jobs by physical requirements and prejudice
- Women found ways to take their domestic skills into the world of paid work
- 1972, the New York Times stopped running separate “Help Wanted - Male” and “Help Wanted - Female” advertisements

Dress for the Job You Want

- Pink-collar
  - Dresses, pants, skirts
  - Separates
  - Comfortable/Causal
  - Easy Maintenance
  - Prêt-à-Porter/Off-the-rack
- White-collar
  - Formal
  - Suits
  - Skirt/Slacks; matching jacket
  - Stockings
  - Tailored, Sophisticated
  - Tastefully accessorized

Benefits of White-Collar

- Recognized as Professional
- Pay & Benefits
- Promotion & Advancement
- Prestige & Status
- Opportunities

Dress for the Job You Want