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Gender, Loss, and Memory:
Women's Experiences of Deindustrialisation in the
West of Scotland Textile Industry since 1970.



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Abstract

The process of deindustrialisation has been intrinsically linked to male dominated industries such as coalmining, shipbuilding, and steelworks during the 1970s and 1980s. However, women have also experienced deindustrialisation, most prominently in the one sector in which they dominated - textiles. The industry experienced an intense period of deindustrialisation in the late 1990s with 40,000 textile jobs lost in Britain in 1999 alone. In this period, Scotland experienced over 3,000 job losses with Bairdwear closing their garment factories in Glasgow, Daks Simpson closing their factory in Larkhall, and Coats Viyella closing their garment factory in Alloa. Yet it is the case that the experience of the textile industry has remained relatively absent, in a British context, from the discussions around industrial communities' experiences of deindustrialisation.

Through the use of oral history testimony from women textile workers, this thesis critically assesses their working lives in the textile industry. It explores how women's working lives were profoundly altered during the last third of the twentieth century as a result of the growth of automation and technology on the factory floor which limited their autonomy, deskilled their labour, and facilitated the downscaling of the industry in the 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, the thesis critically examines the textile industry's experience of intensive deindustrialisation during the late 1990s and early 2000s. It argues that the industry experienced trade-induced deindustrialisation, emanating from the phasing out of the protectionist Multi Fibre Arrangement which resulting in the significant offshoring of tens of thousands of textile jobs from Britain to the global South and eastern Europe. The thesis aims to move the analysis beyond a head count and contends with the deep-seated legacies of deindustrialisation, including how it is popularly conceived in the national consciousness, how it is represented in heritage institutions, and how it is reflected in cultural representations of working-class life in Scotland. Ultimately, the thesis advances the case that there remains significant work to be done to mainstream women's experiences into the dominant conceptualisation of deindustrialisation.

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LAST THREADS

*There is no more weaving between the loom and me,
The Shed is now silent, haunting, and eerie,
Dust gathers slowly while lives become warped
They took away our lives and left us without hope.*

*The looms are silent now and the shuttles cease to fly,
No more splendid colours to gleam the weaver's eye
Won't someone tell us and explain the reasons why
The weavers skilful hand is not needed in their plan.*

*The last threads lie redundant in the woven sorrow,
But our voices will be heard
When we fight for our destiny,
As the threads of gold and silver of our lives begin to weave.*

*Source: Ann Kerr, *The Last Threads: Life in a Glasgow Weaving Mill*, (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1986).*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Overview, Literature Review, and Methodology

OVERVIEW

In Scotland, and across the Britain, studies analysing deindustrialisation and its aftermath have predominantly focused on the male dominated industries which are considered to embody industrial work, such as coalmining, shipbuilding, and steelmaking. It has been posited by Tomlinson that this is logical due to the number of women employed in industrial work compared to men, when he states: ‘With the significant exception of textiles, most of the sectors making up industry were heavily male-dominated, so in a direct sense de-industrialization destroyed many more men’s jobs than women’s’.¹ In terms of numbers, this is inarguable, but the textile industry was one of the pillars of Britain’s industrial employment throughout the twentieth century and it is important the textile industry, and its workforce, is critically studied, in the context of deindustrialisation,

In 1975, Strathclyde Regional Council was established to provide a level of regional devolved administrative control to Scottish regions. The newly formed regional council covered nine local authority areas, including the major urban areas centres of Glasgow, Lanarkshire, and Renfrewshire. In the early 1980s, the Strathclyde Regional Council area provided almost half of Scotland’s textile employment, with almost two-thirds of all Scotland’s employment in the clothing sector, and almost eighty percent of Scotland’s national employment in the carpet sector being listed in

¹ Jim Tomlinson, ‘De-industrialization Not Decline: A New Meta-narrative for Post-war British History’, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.27, No.1, (2016), p.96.

the Strathclyde region.² In this respect, the performance of the textile industry in Strathclyde was indicative of the national experience in Scotland due to the region's disproportionate concentration of large textile companies providing significant levels of employment. In 1986, at the height of Margaret Thatcher's premiership, there were 137 different textile companies operating in the city of Glasgow, employing around 9,000 workers. However, it is true that whilst the textile sector experienced significant challenges in this era, losing almost 30,000 jobs in the eleven years between 1970 and 1981 in the Strathclyde region alone, it remained an important pillar of the Scottish economy. Yet, the textile sector would experience a significant job crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s which resulted in the end of mass manufacturing in the textile sector, as this work was offshored, primarily to nations in the global South.

Figure 1.1: Largest clothing and textile producers in Glasgow, April 1985.

Company	Area of City	Sector	No. of employees
Bairdwear	Polmadie	Women and Girl's Wear	1,500 – 1,600
D & H Cohen	Pollokshaws	Outerwear	1,201 - 300
F Miller Textiles	Castlemilk	Hats and Caps	601 - 700
A & J Gelfer	Dalmarnock	Knitwear	301 – 400
Campsie Knitwear	Carntyne	Outerwear	301 - 400
Glenmore	Rutherglen	Textiles	251 - 275
W m Hollins	Bridgeton	Workwear	176 - 200
Robert Elliot	Springboig	Knitwear	176 - 200
Mansfield Hosiery Mills	Springboig	Dresses, Lingerie and Infantswear	151 - 175
Exquisite Form Brassiere	Yoker	Women and Girl's Wear	126 - 150

Source: Glasgow District Council, 'A Guide to Clothing and Textile Producers in Glasgow', (Glasgow: City of Glasgow District Council Planning Department, 1986).

² Chief Executive's Department, 'Clothing and Textiles in Strathclyde and the Multi Fibre Arrangement', (Glasgow: Strathclyde Regional Council, 1985), p.4.

In popular discourse, deindustrialisation is often framed as a policy pursued by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during her Premiership between 1979 and 1990. Indeed, this period does represent an episode of deep, accelerated deindustrialisation, however deindustrialisation must be understood in a broader perspective. It is a more gradual process which has been observed since the early 1950s, with Tomlinson identifying the early 1950s as Britain's nadir in terms of industrial employment, with the nation experiencing a significant declines in coal, textiles, and railways in the following decades.³ In addition to textiles being dominated by women, the industry's experience of deindustrialisation has hitherto been overlooked due to its experience of accelerated job losses and plant closures, which contributed to the end of mass textile manufacturing in Britain, occurring later than the popularly understood experience of deindustrialisation during the 1980s. Indeed, Bairdwear were operating in sixteen factories across Britain, employing over 4,500 workers, until Marks & Spencer ended its supplier arrangement with the company in 1999, leading to the closure of all Bairdwear's factories with all their workforce facing redundancy.⁴ In just over a decade, between 1993 and 2004, Scotland suffered a deep job crisis in textiles, with a staggering 35,000 jobs lost from the sector and employment in the industry falling from 57,000 in 1993 to only 22,000 by 2004.⁵ This equates to over 60 percent of jobs in the Scottish textile sector lost in just over a decade.

For my PhD thesis, I selected four case study companies which operated in Glasgow and Renfrewshire with the aim of providing a representative and diverse sample of the Scottish textile industry since 1970. In Renfrewshire, the Coats thread mills in Paisley was an iconic, historic textile company and the company's status and size made its inclusion as a case study an obvious selection. Staying in Renfrewshire, the second case study company selected was the historic carpet manufacturer, Stoddards, who were based in the village of Elderslie, Renfrewshire. I believed it was important to include a carpet company due to such a high proportion of the industry being

³ Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization Not Decline', p.87.

⁴ Judi Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer... And How It Rose Again*, (Exmouth: Profile Books, 2007), p.214.

⁵ C MacDonald, '35,000 Textile Jobs are Lost in a Decade', *Daily Record*, (28 April 2004).

concentrated in the Strathclyde region, and Stoddard provided an interesting example as it was the dominant carpet manufacturer of the twentieth century, and the company was able to survive into the early 2000s as a competitive carpet manufacturer. In Glasgow, I chose to focus on the clothing sector, and selected the two largest textile companies operating within the city during the 1980s: Bairdwear and D&H Cohen. Despite both being successful, large clothing manufacturers, these companies provide a useful contrast as Bairdwear was operating a large manufacturing network across Britain, including in Glasgow, whilst D&H Cohen was a family-operated business which had exponentially grown to become one of Marks & Spencer's most important suppliers in Scotland.

This research is the first systematic oral history-based project which explores the impact of deindustrialisation on women workers in Scotland. It seeks to explore women's working lives, as well as analysing the impacts and legacies of deindustrialisation through forensically studying the regeneration of former industrial spaces, as well as critically analysing representations of deindustrialisation in the cultural space. This thesis builds on my Masters' research which investigated which the decline and closure of the iconic Templeton's carpet factory in the east-end of Glasgow, as it seeks to place, in the broad historic context, the decline, and subsequent deindustrialisation in Scotland's historic, diverse textile industry which thrived in working-class communities across the nation, providing meaningful employment, close to home, for millions of women. ⁶

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Deindustrialisation Studies

The field of deindustrialisation studies is multifaceted and interdisciplinary, fusing together methodological approaches and analytical frameworks from social history, sociology, gender studies and memory studies. By its nature, the literature is primarily focused on Britain, Canada, and the United States as the three major

⁶ Rory Stride, 'Women, work and deindustrialisation: The case of James Templeton & Company, Glasgow, c.1960-1981', *Scottish Labour History*, Vol.54, (2019), pp.154-180.

English speaking nations which have experienced significant industrial contraction and being faced with its enduring, residual economic, health, and social consequences. This section will focus on seminal contributions which have been critical in shaping the study of deindustrialisation and adopted a comparative, regional or national, approach, in addition to detailed, extensive case studies of individual companies. It is widely considered that the field of deindustrialisation studies emerged from Bluestone and Harrison's seminal text, *The Deindustrialization of America*, published in 1982, which used an economic lens to assess the impact on people and places.⁷ This work was influential informing MacInnes' important study on the deindustrialisation of Glasgow which revealed that the city had experienced 'a rapid and prolonged decline in its manufacturing employment', which, by 1990, had fallen to less than one-third of the level recorded in the mid-1960s.⁸

Almost two decades later, the field was reimagined with the publication of Heathcott and Cowie's seminal edited collection, *Beyond the Ruins*, which recast deindustrialisation studies, shifting the analysis and debate around the contraction of industrial production, the closure of industrial workplaces and redundancy of industrial workers, beyond a 'body count'.⁹ This resulted in deindustrialisation studies adopting a more holistic approach, analysing both the tangible and intangible long-term impacts of deindustrialisation on not only the individuals who experienced redundancy and unemployment, but also their families, their communities and their surrounding environment. The complexity and longevity of deindustrialisation has been succinctly articulated by Heathcott and Cowie who stated: 'Deindustrialization is not a story of a single emblematic place, such as Flint of Youngstown, or a specific time period such as the 1980s; it was a much broader, more fundamental, historical transformation.'¹⁰ There is an enduring, contemporary relevance to the field of deindustrialisation studies which is exemplified by the publication of the

⁷ Barry Bluestone and Bennet Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry*, (New York: Basic Books, 1982)

⁸ John MacInnes, 'The Deindustrialisation of Glasgow', *Scottish Affairs*, no.11, (Spring 1995), pp.73-95.

⁹ Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, 'The Meanings of Deindustrialization', in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (eds.), *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization*, (New York: Cornell University, 2003), p.5.

¹⁰ Cowie and Heathcott, 'The Meanings of Deindustrialization', p.2.

comprehensive edited collection, *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in PostIndustrial Places*, published in 2017.¹¹ In the introduction to the collection, High et al note the continuing pertinence and profound relevance of deindustrialisation in shaping our societies in the global West, noting that the ‘political aftershocks of deindustrialisation continue to be felt across Europe and North America, most notably with the election of Donald Trump as President of the US and the UK vote to leave the EU.’¹²

In North America, High’s seminal study of the North American Rust Belt, *Industrial Sunset*, was a critical addition to the literature, providing a comprehensive analysis of the intense deindustrialisation suffered in industrial communities across the region during the long 1970s.¹³ In deploying oral history as a primary methodology, High privileged the lived experience of workers as he explored the impact of significant economic decline and plant closures on their industrial communities. This is an impressive, comprehensive study across a vast area, providing a forensic overview of the experience of deindustrialisation across the Rust Belt region, whilst exploring the subtle diverging experience between industrial communities in Canada and the United States. This book provided a blueprint for using oral history as a primary methodology in studying the comparative, regional experience of deindustrialisation and its profound, long-lasting impact on individual lives and communities.

In theorising deindustrialisation, Linkon’s *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization* has been an important addition to the literature which has built on Heathcott and Cowie’s rallying call to move the discussion ‘beyond the headcount’.¹⁴ This book explores the enduring impacts of deindustrialisation on people and places in the years, and decades, following significant economic restructuring. In doing so, Linkon borrows

¹¹ Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon, Andrew Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Post-Industrial Places*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

¹² High, MacKinnon and Perchard, ‘Introduction, in Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon and Andrew Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), p.20.

¹³ Steven High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America’s Rust Belt, 1969-1984*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Sherry Lee Linkon, *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization: Working-Class Writing about Economic Restructuring*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018).

from the field of physics to argue that deindustrialisation, akin to nuclear waste, has a 'half-life', referring to the residual impact of deindustrialisation, which slowly reduces over time, on industrial communities and displaced workers. Linkon cites the heightened rates of alcohol dependency, substance misuse, and suicide as the physical symptoms of industrial communities grappling with the profound, lasting impacts of deindustrialisation. In her analysis, Linkon deploys popular culture to illuminate her argument, for example, highlighting US crime drama *The Wire* as a cultural representation of the half-life of deindustrialisation. Linkon persuasively articulates the importance of deindustrialisation literature in assigning value to the lived experiences of working-class lives by making them visible and offering a counter narrative to hegemonic conceptions of industrial decline. In a Scottish context, Clark has used the half-life of deindustrialisation as a theoretical framework to study the experience of a Scottish community, Tunbrooke (pseudonym), grappling with the corrosive impacts of deindustrialisation.¹⁵ He concludes that Tunbrooke is experiencing the damaging effects of the half-life of deindustrialisation with the area now classed as one of the most deprived communities in Scotland.

In Britain, from an economic perspective, Tomlinson has used deindustrialisation as a framework to understand the transformation of the British economy during the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁶ For Tomlinson, deindustrialisation is crucial to explaining Britain's shift from a 'workshop economy' in the 1970s, to morphing into an averaging manufacturing nation. He notes that Britain's industrial contraction was particularly deep between 1979 and 1982, in the formative years of the Thatcher Premiership. Tomlinson argues that deindustrialisation in Britain has had significant political consequences, including weakening the power of organised labour and a rise in support for Scottish independence, but most notably, its impact on neoliberal ideology. He notes that reducing state support in the economy, including the labour market, is a core belief for neoliberals, yet, ironically, Britain's experience of deindustrialisation led to more people reliant on state support as the growth of low

¹⁵ Andy Clark, "“People just dae wit they can tae get by”": Exploring the half-life of deindustrialisation in a Scottish community", *The Sociological Review*, Vol.71, No.2, (2023), pp.332-350.

¹⁶ Tomlinson, 'Deindustrialization Not Decline', pp.76-99.

wage jobs in the service sector led to a significant increase in the number of people receiving in-work financial support from the Government to ‘top-up’ their wages.¹⁷

In assessing deindustrialisation through a political economy lens, Phillips has used the concept of the ‘moral economy’ to explain differential responses to industrial closures.¹⁸ For example, he argues that if a company is perceived by workers, and the community, to have committed a transgression of the moral economy, this will provoke a response and resistance to closure. In this respect, Phillips argues that deindustrialisation in Scotland was mediated by moral economy arguments with workers expecting stable, secure employment and to be treated with decency, dignity, and respect. This argument has been deployed by Jenkins in her study of the closure of the Burberry factory in Treorchy, south Wales, which she argued was interpreted by workers as a transgression of the moral economy with company Burberry choosing to relocate manufacturing to China despite increasing sales by over one-fifth and a five percent increase in profit.¹⁹ Moreover, the sense of injustice was reinforced with the news of the factory closure being delivered to the workforce by anonymous London-based directors whose conduct was viewed as aloof, cold, and devoid of compassion.

More recently, Phillip’s seminal work *Scottish Coal Miners in the Twentieth Century* is a critical addition to the historiography of industrial work and deindustrialisation in Scotland.²⁰ This important study explores the central role of coalminers to Scottish society during the twentieth century, such as considering the contribution of coalminers to the establishment of a devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999. The latter chapters examine the impact of deindustrialisation on the Scottish coalfields, exploring miners’ efforts to resist individual pit closures and the broader desecration

¹⁷ Tomlinson, ‘Deindustrialization Not Decline’, p.99.

¹⁸ Jim Phillips, ‘The Moral Economy and Industrial Politics in the UK from the 1960s to the 1980s’, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, Vol.40, (2019), pp.223-232; Jim Phillips, ‘The Moral Economy of Deindustrialization in Post-1945 Scotland’, in High, MacKinnon, Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, pp.313 – 330.

¹⁹ Jean Jenkins, ‘Hands Not Wanted: Closure, and the Moral Economy of Protest, Treorchy, South Wales’, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, Vol.38, (2017), pp.1-36.

²⁰ Jim Phillips, *Scottish Coal Miners in the Twentieth Century*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

of the industry. Moreover, Gibbs' *Coal Country: The Meaning and Memory of Deindustrialization in Post-war Scotland* has examined the longevity of deindustrialisation in the Scottish coalfields and its legacy on constructions of national identity.²¹ Notably, Gibbs shines a light on the gendered nature of life in the Scottish coalfields, exploring the patriarchal culture, and women's experiences of industrial employment, including trade union activism. Moreover, Gibbs and Phillips have made important contributions to deindustrialisation studies in a Scottish context through their case studies which have focused on the politics of deindustrialisation. For example, Gibbs and Phillips' co-authored article on the Caterpillar Tractor factory in Uddingston, north Lanarkshire, was an important insight into the longevity of deindustrialisation in central Scotland and provided a notable example of organised resistance as workers fought to oppose the proposed closure of the plant.²² Moreover, Phillips' study of the closure of the Michael colliery, the largest National Coal Board unit in Scotland at the time of its closure, in 1967, illuminated the elongated nature of deindustrialisation in Scotland and explored the response to closure in the Fire coalfield through a 'moral economy' lens.²³ Furthermore, a co-authored article by Phillips, Wright and Tomlinson has used the case of the Linwood car plant in Renfrewshire, which closed in 1981, to assess how deindustrialisation contributed to an entrenched political divergence between Scotland and England leading to growing demands from the 1960s onwards for Home Rule in Scotland, eventually culminating with the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.²⁴

Staying in Scotland, Clark's study of the women-led factory occupation movement in Scotland in the early 1980s stands-out as one of the few substantial studies which

²¹ Ewan Gibbs, *Coal Country: The Meaning and Memory of Deindustrialization in Postwar Scotland*, (London: University of London Press, 2021).

²² Ewan Gibbs and Jim Phillips, 'Who Owns a Factory? Caterpillar Tractors in Uddingston, 1956-1987', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, Vol.39, (2018), pp.111-137.

²³ Jim Phillips, 'The Closure of Michael Colliery in 1967 and the Politics of Deindustrialization in Scotland', Vol.26, No.4, (2015), pp.551-572.

²⁴ Jim Phillips, Valerie Wright, and Jim Tomlinson, 'Deindustrialization, the Linwood Car Plant and Scotland's Political Divergence from England in the 1960s and 1970s', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol.30, No.3, (2019), pp.399-423.

have focused on women workers experiences of deindustrialisation.²⁵ Its focus on three case study factory occupations which occurred in three textile and light manufacturing factories across west-central Scotland is an antidote to the almost exclusive focus on male workers experiences of deindustrialisation. Clark argues that this episode of women's resistance to deindustrialisation should occupy a more significant place in Scotland's popular memory and be interpreted as one of the most significant episodes in the nation's experience of deindustrialisation during second half of the twentieth century.²⁶ This is a crucial contribution to the historiography of deindustrialisation in Scotland and Britain. However, it is important to recognise that this is a study of specific episodes of industrial resistance rather than a longitudinal study of one company, one industry, or one region and therefore, it does not it capture the enduring, corrosive consequences of deindustrialisation experienced by workers and their communities.

In contrast to High's *Industrial Sunset*, there has been a more contemporary trend in deindustrialisation studies which has focused on detailed case studies of individual companies, or very small locales, which explores the profound impact of deindustrialisation on workers, and their community, in a broader context. This approach situates the experience of industrial contraction and deindustrialisation within the wider context of the company's history, including its emergence, development, and growth. For example, High's *One Job Town*, focuses on the 2002 closure of paper mill in the small town of Sturgeon Falls, Ontario, Canada, situating the closure within the town's broader history of industrial decline.²⁷ He notes that the closure of the mill was a significant rupture as it marked a clear end of industrial production in a small town where most families could trace a strong connection to the paper mill. This study provides an important insight into workers experience of seeking new employment in towns, and regions, which have experienced significant deindustrialisation. In a similar vein, another example emanating from Canada is MacKinnon's *Closing Sysco: Industrial Decline in Atlantic Canada's Steel City*,

²⁵ Andy Clark, *Fighting Deindustrialisation: Scottish Women's Factory Occupations 1981-1982*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022).

²⁶ Clark, *Fighting Deindustrialisation*, pp.215-218.

²⁷ Steven High, *One Job Town: Work, Belonging, and Betrayal in Northern Ontario*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).

which studies the history of the Sydney Steel Workers in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.²⁸ In this important study, MacKinnon explores the broader history of the steel workers, from its nationalisation in the late 1960s through to its closure in the early 2000s. There is a specific focus on the aftermath of the closure of the plant with MacKinnon examining the environmental legacy of the steelworks which had polluted the community for the duration of its existence through the dumping of transformer coolant and other hazardous toxins into the local environment.

Also in North America, Cowie's study of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), *Capital Moves*, critically explores the company's relocation through the United States to northern Mexico across a seventy year period in search of cheaper labour.²⁹ In some respect, this text could be classified as a book on labour history or political economy as it seeks to explain the story of RCA's multiple relocations, rather than explore the long-term social, economic, and health impacts of deindustrialisation on the workers, and their communities. However, it should be considered an important text in deindustrialisation studies as it reflects the trajectory of capital flight which has, in many cases, defined experiences of deindustrialisation, with manufacturing relocated by multinational companies seeking to exploit low wages and limited labour laws. The issue of capital migration is an important feature in Laframboise's exploration of the deindustrialization in Montreal's garment industry as she argues that trade liberalisation in the textile sector undermined workers fighting for increased pay and better working conditions as companies were empowered to relocate its manufacturing from Canada to the global South.³⁰

In Britain, Strangleman's *Voices of Guinness* has focused on the history of the company's Park Royal Brewery in London.³¹ In this seminal work, Strangleman's approach is rooted in an industrial sociological approach to work, as he describes in

²⁸ Lachlan MacKinnon, *Closing Sysco: Industrial Decline in Atlantic Canada's Steel City*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).

²⁹ Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labour*, (New York: The New Press, 2001).

³⁰ Lauren Laframboise, 'Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal's Garment Industry', MA (History) Thesis, (Concordia University, Montreal, 2021).

³¹ Tim Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness: An Oral History of the Park Royal Brewery*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

his own words: ‘This book is an attempt to understand work through this kaleidoscope of images – oral, written, material, and visual. As such it is an argument *for* and an example *of* a new way of thinking about work sociologically – in other words, an imaginative history of work.’³² This extensive study covers from the first discussions of establishing the Park Royal brewery in the early 1930s, to the reorganisation of work in the brewery in the 1980s with lower pay, a more casualised workforce, and outsourcing, through to the closure of the brewery in the early 2000, when the workforce had declined to less than one hundred workers. For Strangleman, Park Royal symbolises the thousands of industrial workplaces that thrived in the post-war era which are now lost as he urges for greater ambition to imagine something better than the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism.

1.2 Women’s Labour

This section will consider women’s experiences of paid employment throughout the twentieth century with a focus on the British, and specifically Scottish, experiences. Although it is important to recognise that women’s work does not only refer to women’s engagement in paid employment in the formal economy, but also their unpaid domestic labour in the home. The relationship between women’s domestic labour and their paid employment was porous: it is difficult to understand one, without consideration of women’s lived reality in the other. In relation to paid employment, the literature contends with the central question regarding whether, and to what extent, women derived meaning, a sense of purpose, and value from their work or whether they perceived their paid employment as an unenjoyable, unnecessary burden driven by financial necessity. In his overview of the Scottish labour market during the twentieth century, McIvor described women as being subject to ‘gender apartheid’ as they were predominantly concentrated in lower paid, lower status roles.³³ This reflects the conservative patriarchal nature of Scottish society during much of the twentieth century which women aimed to deconstruct. Structurally, it was these deep-rooted patriarchal structures of wider society that

³² Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, p.12.

³³ Arthur McIvor, ‘Gender Apartheid? Women in Scottish Society’, in Tom M. Devine and Richard J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp.188-209.

defined women's experiences of paid employment. The relationship between women's unpaid labour in the private sphere and their experiences of paid employment in the public sphere were inextricably linked, as women's employment opportunities were defined, and restricted, by their societally defined primary role as mothers and homemakers. It is in this context that McCarthy, in her exploration of the women's dual experience of motherhood and paid employment in Britain, argues that women's relationship with paid employment would not be emancipatory until there was a fundamental dismantling of patriarchal structures in the private domestic sphere.³⁴ In the 1970s, as more women entered the labour market, McCarthy argued this extended, and reinforced, the double burden of performing unpaid labour in the domestic sphere and engaging in paid employment in the public sphere as she stated: 'Without banishing the myth of womanly duty, and without forcing men to take their equal share in the family and household rules, wage-earning would continue to saddle mothers with a double burden rather than offer double liberation.'³⁵ The gendered division of labour in the domestic sphere remained entrenched into the late twentieth century, when attitudes started to thaw, with men and women expressing an increased support for sharing household work.³⁶

In the early 1980s there were several important texts published which have been instructive in broad understandings of women's experiences of industrial work in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century. In 1981, the publication of Pollert's *Girls, Wives and Factory Lives* adopted an ethnographic approach with Pollert immersing herself within an Imperial Tobacco factory for three months as she interviewed women workers in her efforts to better understand the culture of the factory floor and assess the value they assigned to their work.³⁷ In the following year, Cavendish published her ethnographic study, *Women on the Line*, which focused on her experience of work on an assembly line, exploring the gendered division of

³⁴ Helen McCarthy, *Double Lives: A History of Working Motherhood*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020).

³⁵ McCarthy, *Double Lives*, p.309.

³⁶ Clare Lyonette and Rosemary Crompton, 'Sharing the Load? Partners' Relative Earnings and the Division of Domestic Labour', *Work, Employment, and Society*, Vol.29, No.1, (2015), p.29.

³⁷ Anna Pollert, *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives*, (Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press, 1981).

labour within the factory.³⁸ One of numerous valuable insights provided in this ethnographic study was the way patriarchy in the private sphere was reinforced by women's lived reality in the workplace. For example, the pay in the factory was so low that it was insufficient for a single woman to live on, with Cavendish describing it as a 'married women's wage', because the rate was rooted in an assumption that the women were secondary earners in their household, and their wage would be supplementing a higher male wage, provided by their husband.³⁹

The undervaluing of women workers in their pay was rooted in the sexist notion that women's wages were considered as 'pin money' rather than making a substantial contribution to the household income. The concept of 'pin money' was defined as the notion that women engaged in paid employment were seeking to earn additional money which could be used to fund more personal, recreational items and activities (such as a decorative pin) rather having to be allotted funds by their husbands for those expenses. This is noted by Stevens in her study of women's working lives in the decades following the Second World War, as she offers a retort to this notion as she argues: 'In fact, these female workers made a very significant financial contribution towards raising their families out of post-war austerity into the relative prosperity of the 1960s and 1970s.'⁴⁰ In the clothing and garment industry in Leeds, Yorkshire, Honeyman highlighted how the concept of a 'family wage' served to entrench the gender pay gap, and status differential, for men and women who were working similar roles, with men paid the higher 'family wage' premised on the patriarchal concept that a man's wage should be sufficient to pay for all his family's needs, fulfilling his role as the primary breadwinner.⁴¹ The use of a 'family wage' to reinforce male hegemony in the labour market was captured by Land who astutely highlighted that, by definition, it seeks to entrench work and employment as a man's

³⁸ Ruth Cavendish, *Women on the Line*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1982)

³⁹ Cavendish, *Women on the Line*, p.80.

⁴⁰ Catrin Stevens, *Voices from the Factory Floor: The Experiences of Women Who Worked in the Manufacturing Industries in Wales, 1945-1975*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2017), p.57.

⁴¹ Katrina Honeyman, 'Gender Divisions and Industrial Divide: The Case of the Leeds Clothing Trade, 1850-1970', *Textile History 1850-1970*, Vol.28, No.1, (1997), p.49.

domain whilst situating women's primary responsibilities in the home, and thus restricting women's *right* to access paid employment.⁴²

Another formative example of the sociological, ethnographic approach to the study of women's work is Coyle's *Redundant Women*, which was published in 1984, and provided a deep insight into the lives of women facing redundancy from a Yorkshire clothing factory.⁴³ In many respects, the text primarily investigates the aftermath of the factory closure, exploring how women are impacted by redundancy and how they respond to unemployment. However, the nature of the topic means that it provides an important insight into women's working lives in a textile factory as well as exploring the significance that women assign to their paid employment. This was supplemented by the publication of an anthology by West, *Work, Women, and the Labour Market*, which featured nine chapters which each focused on distinct sectors of women's employment including local government, office-based work, and a contribution from Coyle on the clothing industry.⁴⁴ The collection provides an illuminating panoramic perspective of women's experiences of employment in the late twentieth century as it seeks to explain the growth of women in the labour market; the variance in their experience across different sectors; and the major challenges facing women workers, including gender segregation and the role of technology.

These ethnographic, sociological texts were followed by the publication of Walby's seminal text, *Patriarchy at Work*, which adopted a socialist-feminist critique to explore how the intersection between patriarchy and capitalism shaped women's experiences of paid employment.⁴⁵ In her work, Walby is primarily concerned with women's experiences of work in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, but her research provides a useful framework to assess how women's experiences of work were shaped by the intersecting forces of capitalism

⁴² Hilary Land, 'The Family Wage', *Feminist Review*, No.6, (1980), p.74.

⁴³ Angela Coyle, *Redundant Women*, (London: The Women's Press, 1984).

⁴⁴ Jackie West (ed.), *Work, Women and The Labour Market*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982); Angela Coyle, 'Sex and Skill in the Organisation of the Clothing Industry', in West (ed.), *Work, Women and The Labour Market*, pp.10-26.

⁴⁵ Sylvia Walby, *Patriarchy at Work: Patriarchal and Capitalist Relations in Employment*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

and patriarchy. For example, Walby argues that historically, men have sought to confine women to the lowest status, lowest paid roles in the workplace as a means of gender oppression.⁴⁶ In assessing these texts collectively, they provide a valuable insight into women's experiences of factory work in Britain during the second half of the twentieth century. They inform, and deepen, understandings of women's experiences of paid work, and explore how women's working lives were shaped by the sexist societal gender norms which defined women's primary space as the domestic sphere.

In more recent times, as the field of deindustrialisation studies has developed, there has been a growth in the sociological studies which have provided an insight into women's work. For example, Blyton and Jenkins sociological study of the Burberry factory in Treorchy, south Wales, is an important lens into women's experience on the factory floor in the twenty first century. In the early 2010s, Blyton and Jenkins produced two co-authored articles which focused on, firstly, the campaign against the closure of the Burberry factory, and, secondly, workers experiences of redundancy in the aftermath of factory closure.⁴⁷ On the continent, Clarke's study of the Moulinex factories in northern France is another seminal study which has been crucial in exploring women's attitudes to their working lives.⁴⁸ Although much of the focus of this study is a critical analysis of nostalgia and how this is deployed by workers when narrating their memories as a form of resistance to the intensive deindustrialisation which ravaged industrial communities, Clarke's work on Moulinex reflects the shifting nature of labour experienced by women who were employed in industrial factories during the second half of the twentieth century. Moreover, Frisone has started grappling with women's experiences of deindustrialisation through her exploration of two case studies of industrial disruption at Fiat in Turin, northern

⁴⁶ Walby, *Patriarchy at Work*, p.248.

⁴⁷ Paul Blyton and Jean Jenkins, 'Mobilizing Resistance: The Burberry Workers' Campaign against Factory Closure', *Sociological Review*, Vol.60, No.1, (2012), pp.25-45; Paul Blyton and Jean Jenkins, 'Life after Burberry: Shifting Experiences of Work and Non-Work Life Following Redundancy', Vol.26, No.1, (2012), pp.26-41.

⁴⁸ Jackie Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization and Nostalgia in Contemporary France', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol.79, No.1, (2015), pp.107-125; Jackie Clarke, 'Closing Moulinex: thoughts on the visibility and invisibility of industrial labour in contemporary France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, Vol.19, No.4, (2011), pp.443-458.

Italy, in 1980, and at LIP, the watchmaker, in Besançon, eastern France, in 1973.⁴⁹ Notably, Frisone challenges the hegemonic narrative, at the time of these industrial disputes, that women's income was 'pin money', as she convincingly argues her central thesis on how women's involvement in the labour market is understood through their role in the domestic sphere.⁵⁰ She argues that the deep entrenchment of the notion of the male breadwinner contributed to women being targeted for redundancies as, it was considered by male management, that women being unemployed was 'natural', allowing them to 'return' to their primary role: as a wife and a mother.⁵¹

In south-eastern Europe, Bonfiglioli has produced seminal research into women's experience of work in the Balkans during the second half of the twentieth century. This builds on her earlier work which explored women's experiences of work in a textile factory in Stip, North Macedonia, in which she concluded that textile workers' status was profoundly impacted by the nation's transition from socialist Yugoslavia to post-socialist, western aligned North Macedonia.⁵² Indeed, it is important to recognise the distinct socio-economic, geo-political, and cultural aspects of this study, with Bonfiglioli's work primarily focused on the experience in Yugoslavia which, although not formerly part of the Soviet Union, was a communist state which formed part of the Eastern bloc. It is difficult to extrapolate from Bonfiglioli's work and argue that it is relevant to the experience of women workers in Britain due to the distinct geography of the study, but, nonetheless, it remains a useful point of reference which provides a critical insight into workers experience in another European nation. Together, these articles were important in illuminating key issues around women's experiences of employment and, crucially, the significance and value they assigned to their working lives.

⁴⁹ Anna Frisone, "'We won't go back home!'" Women's Experiences with Deindustrialization and Unemployment at Fiat and LIP, a Comparative Perspective', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, (2024), pp.1-23.

⁵⁰ Frisone, "'We won't go back home!'", p.3.

⁵¹ Frisone, "'We won't go back home!'", p.8.

⁵² Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Women and Industry in the Balkans: The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Textile Sector*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing 2019); In 2019, following a dispute with Greece, the country formally changed its name from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia.

A common theme from most of the texts mentioned previously is the use of oral history as a key methodology to centre women's voices. Oral history has been popular in exploring working class women's history as it is a democratising tool which can be used to rebalance historical narratives by providing a space for hitherto 'hidden histories', the stories of oppressed and marginalised people, to be shared. It has been noted by Bartie and McIvor that from the 1970s onwards, oral history was increasingly used by social historians and sociologists, influenced by second-wave feminism, who wished to uncover, record, and preserve women's hidden histories.⁵³ One prominent example is Stephenson and Brown's study of women's memories of work in Stirling during the first half of the twentieth century. They effectively utilised oral history to explore the degree of pleasure and pride that women associated with their working lives.⁵⁴ Through using the oral testimonies of women workers, Stephenson and Brown concluded that women derived considerable value from their working lives as it provided a space to assert a degree of independence from the domestic sphere, a place to cultivate friendships, and an opportunity to enjoy socialising with women they shared a similar class and geographic background.

One recent addition to the field is Steven's *Voices from the Factory Floor*, which privileges women's voices in exploring the experiences of women who working in manufacturing industries in Wales between 1945 and 1975.⁵⁵ It is a concise book which does not provide extensive analysis, but rather, adopts an engaging, narrative style which is moulded around testimonies from oral history interviews with women workers, as she privileges the voice of narrators. Stevens captures the power and importance of oral history as a methodology when she discussing the women interviewed for the project: 'Their being female, working-class voices could have

⁵³ Angela Bartie and Arthur McIvor, 'Oral History in Scotland', *The Scottish Historical Review*, Volume XCII, Supplement: No. 234, (April 2013), pp.108-136.

⁵⁴ Callum Brown and Jayne Stephenson, 'The View from the Workplace: Women and Work in Stirling, 1900-1950', in Eleanor Gordon and Esther Breitenbach (eds.), *The World is Ill Divided: Women's Work in Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp.7-28.

⁵⁵ Stevens, *Voices from the Factory Floor*.

rendered them worthless in the eyes of many historians, and they could have remained hidden forever.⁵⁶ Throughout, the oral testimonies are complimented by accompanying archival images which help to humanise the narratives and vividly capture women's experiences of work. Its brevity makes it an accessible and valuable resource which provides a beautifully curated, snapshot of women's industrial work in Wales during the mid-twentieth century.

1.3 Modern Textile Industry

There has been some focus given to the shifts experienced in the British textile industry during the second half of the twentieth century from a macroeconomic perspective. However, there has been less focus on the experience of accelerated deindustrialisation which affected the sector in the late 1990s and early 2000s. From an economic perspective, Taplin and Winterton's edited collection, *Rethinking Global Production*, published in the late 1990s, focused specifically on the clothing industry, makes an important contribution by using national case studies to tease out some of the challenges faced by the clothing sector in its efforts to restructure and modernise.⁵⁷ Its approach was forward-looking as it sought to explore the successes of survival and better understand how clothing sectors build resilience to allow them to continue to thrive in a more technological advanced, increasingly global, economy. Moreover, due to the time of its publication, the collection did not have the necessary perspective to start critically analysing the accelerated deindustrialisation and resultant job crisis which was experienced in Britain during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Into the new millennium, the publication of Hale and Will's edited collection, *Threads of Labour*, attempted to explore the increasingly global supply chains through the perspective of women workers on the factory floor.⁵⁸ The collection does not mainstream oral testimony from textile workers throughout its analysis, but its

⁵⁶ Stevens, *Voices from the Factory Floor*, p.1.

⁵⁷ Ian M Taplin and Jonathan Winterton (eds.), *Rethinking Global Production: A Comparative Analysis of Restructuring in the Clothing Industry*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1997).

⁵⁸ Angela Hale and Jane Wills, *Threads of Labour: Garment Industry Supply Chains from the Workers' Perspective*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

approach is focused on assessing how aspects of the global supply chain directly affect workers experience on the factory floor. For example, one chapter in the collection, authored by Hale and Burns, who assess the impact on the phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement trade agreement on textile workers concludes that it will lead to significant job losses in industrialised nations in the global North whilst increasing the downward pressures on wages, working conditions, and labour rights in industrialising nations in the global South.⁵⁹ The Multi-Fibre Arrangement has received significant attention due to its importance in governing the global trade of textiles a significant period of the twentieth century. In essence, the Multi-Fibre Arrangement was a protectionist trade deal which limited the levels of textile imports into industrialised nations from countries in the global South. In the mid-1980s, Choi et al published *The Multi-Fibre Arrangement in Theory in Practice* which aimed to provide a comprehensive economic analysis of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement, assessing its purpose, analysing its impact, and exploring the potential impacts on the global textile industry if the import restrictions it imposed were removed.⁶⁰ It should be noted that this text was published on behalf of the ‘Programme of Cooperation among Developing countries, Exporters of Textiles and Clothing’, which was an inter-governmental organisation, consisting of twenty-eight countries which opposed the protectionist deal, believing it inhibited the ability to pursue economic growth.

The issue of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement featured prominently in Toms and Zhang research into the role of British retailer Marks & Spencer in the decline of the British textile industry during the second half of the twentieth century.⁶¹ The authors contend that the end of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement as the pivotal factor in the decline of the British textile industry due to its influence on Marks & Spencer strategy to end its association with some British based textile suppliers and encourage other suppliers to close their British factories and offshore their

⁵⁹ Angela Hale and Maggie Burns, ‘The Phase-Out of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement from the Perspective of Workers’, in Hale and Wills (eds.), *Threads of Labour*, pp.210-233.

⁶⁰ Ying-Pik Choi, Hwa Soo Chung and Nicolas Marian, *The Multi-Fibre Arrangement in Theory and Practice*, (London: Frances Pinter Publishers, 1985).

⁶¹ Steven Toms and Qi Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry, 1950-2000’, *Business History Review*, Vol. 90, No. 1, (2016), pp.3-30.

production to industrialising nations, like Morocco and Sri Lanka⁶². In North America, the Multi-Fibre Arrangement features prominently in Collins' text, *Threads*, which is an ethnographic, sociological study of two sites: a knitting mill in Virginia in the US and two apparel factories in Aguascalientes, Mexico, which explores the seismic structural changes being experienced in the global textile industry.⁶³ This is a seminal contribution which starts to explore the impact of increased globalisation in the textile industry for workers in both higher wage economies, such as the United States, and in lower wage economies, such as Mexico. Moreover it considers methods to promote international solidarity among textile workers who are operating in a global economy, who despite facing different issues, are connected by the same struggle for higher wages, better working conditions, and strong labour rights.

The significant role of Marks & Spencer in the British textile industry has also been assessed by Bevan in her study of the history of the retailer. Bevan is a financial journalist, rather than an academic, but her text *The Rise and Fall of Marks & Spencer... And How it Rose Again*, provides an unrivalled insight into the governance of the company, including its decision to restructure its network of suppliers, and abandon its icon 'Made in Britain' philosophy as it cited a need to stay competitive with its high street competitors.⁶⁴ For example, Bevan details how Marks & Spencer CEO, Pater Salsbury took the decision to inform William Baird that Marks & Spencer would be immediately ending its thirty year relationship with the company, leading to the closure of William Baird's sixteen British factories with 4,500 workers made redundant.⁶⁵

The changing nature of the British textile sector during the second half of the twentieth century has been considered by Higgins and Toms in their research on the

⁶²Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry, 1950-2000', *Business History Review*, Vol.90, No.1, (2016), p.20.

⁶³ Jane L. Collins, *Threads: Gender, Labor, and Power in the Global Apparel Industry*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

⁶⁴ Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer*.

⁶⁵ Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer*, p.214.

impact of David Alliance, textile businessman.⁶⁶ The authors contend that Alliance fundamentally altered the textile sector in Britain through his aggressive, pro-active strategy of acquiring established textile brands, and, importantly, key suppliers to Marks & Spencer. This policy of acquisitions led to Alliance consolidating his textile operations in Coats Viyella, established in 1986, following the Vantona Viyella's successful takeover of Coats Paton.⁶⁷ In common with the majority of the literature noted in this section, this is an important text which helps to explain the position of the British textile industry by the early 1990s. However, it is evident that there is a clear gap in the literature which explores the intense deindustrialisation experienced in the textile industry during the late 1990s and early 2000s and considers the lasting impact on the structure of the British textile sector as it seeks to compete in an increasingly globalised free-market economy.

1.4 Industrial Heritage, Memory, and Ruination

This section of the literature review is intrinsically linked to deindustrialisation studies as it is focused on the long-term trajectory of industrial spaces once they stop existing as manufacturing sites. The focus of this literature is on how industrial sites are redeveloped and in doing so, exploring how to purpose redeveloped sites in a sympathetic manner which references the past. The essence of the issue is captured by Frisch's question: 'Whose history should be remembered and memorialized, by whom, and to what ends?'⁶⁸

The issue is explored in the edited collection, *The Deindustrialized World*, which aims to contend with some of these key issues around the politics of redevelopment of industrial sites as society transitions from industrial to post-industrial. The collection features a chapter from Clarke who explored workers fight for a memory space as part of the redevelopment of their former Moulinex factory in Alencon,

⁶⁶ David Higgins and Steven Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy: David Alliance and the Transformation of British Textiles, c.1950-c.1990', *Business History*, Vol. 48, No.4, (2006), pp.453-478.

⁶⁷ Higgins and Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy', p.470.

⁶⁸ Michael Frisch, 'De-, Re-, and Post-Industrialization: Industrial Heritage as Contested Memorial Terrain', *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol.35, No.3, (1998), p.241.

France.⁶⁹ It is argued by Clarke that industrial factories are important symbols in working-class culture and therefore local people should be included in deciding on the future use of former industrial sites⁷⁰ *The Deindustrialized World* is not High's first exploration of the issue of ruination in the aftermath of plant closure. Indeed, his text, *Corporate Wasteland*, co-authored with David Lewis is an evocative study of the aftermath of industrial closure which explores the politics of industrial ruination, considering why some buildings are demolished whilst others are saved, and what role these industrial icons play in the popular memory, vividly illustrated with wonderful photography throughout the book.⁷¹ It has been posited by High that deindustrialisation is heightened in places where it is invisible, as the symbols of the industrial past have been demolished, erased, and gentrified with modern apartments as part of the transformation from industrial to post-industrial.⁷² The concept of memory has been critically examined by Strangleman in the context of deindustrialisation. He warns against 'smokestack nostalgia', the uncritical nostalgia of the industrial past, urging scholars to try to contextualise images of the industrial past.⁷³ In this respect, he praises High and Lewis's *Corporate Wasteland*, for provoking discussion and engaging in the issue with a critical eye.⁷⁴

In Britain, Mah's exploration of the redevelopment of the Walker Riverside district in Newcastle is an important case study in exploring the interaction between memory, regeneration, and civic identity.⁷⁵ This work has been developed by Mah in her book which focuses on three case studies, including Niagara Falls, and Ivanovo, Russia, in addition to the case of Walker, Newcastle.⁷⁶ The case of Ivanovo is

⁶⁹ Jackie Clarke, 'Afterlives of a Factory: Memory, Place and Space in Alençon', in High, MacKinnon and Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World*, pp.111-125.

⁷⁰ Clarke, 'Afterlives of a Factory', p.113.

⁷¹ Steven High and David W. Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialization*, (Ithaca: ILR Press, 2007).

⁷² Steven High, 'Beyond Aesthetics: Visibility and Invisibility in the Aftermath of Deindustrialization', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No.84, (Fall 2013), pp.140-153.

⁷³ Tim Strangleman, "'Smokestack Nostalgia,' 'Ruin Porn' or Working-Class Obituary: The Role and Meaning of Deindustrial Representation', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No.84, (Fall 2013), pp.23-37.

⁷⁴ Strangleman, "'Smokestack Nostalgia,' 'Ruin Porn' or Working-Class Obituary', p.29.

⁷⁵ Alice Mah, 'Memory, Uncertainty and Industrial Ruination: Walker Riverside, Newcastle upon Tyne', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol.34, no.2, (2010), pp.398-413.

⁷⁶ Alice Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community, and Place: Landscapes and Legacies of Urban Decline*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

notable because it focuses on industrial ruination in the context of the textile industry, shaped by its distinct geography, but Mah notes that there has been no redevelopment of the site since its closure with the old textile factory primarily providing shelter for people drinking alcohol and engaging in petty anti-social behaviour such as graffiti.⁷⁷

From a heritage perspective, Hodson's study of the regeneration of the former Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast as 'The Titanic Quarter' is a fascinating study on the politics of industrial regeneration.⁷⁸ Indeed, this regeneration agenda was pursued in Northern Ireland's specific political post-conflict context, with Hodson highlighting that the Titanic Quarter has no discussion or references to the Troubles or sectarianism.⁷⁹ Hodson calls for embracing a 'messy heritage': one which reflects the difficulties and complexities of the past, rather than trying to sanitise episodes of history to make them more attractive and appealing for wider audiences.⁸⁰ In this vein, closer to home, McIvor has offered a critical analysis of Glasgow's contradictory co-existing identities as a city deeply proud of its working-class roots, but which is also revered as a successful example of a post-industrial city which markets itself based on its culture, consumerism, and creative sectors.⁸¹ He highlights that Glasgow's civic museums do not serve as social history museums, or engage in any form of 'messy heritage', rather focusing on technological advances and art, with McIvor describing the city's civic institutions as 'sterile modern museums.'⁸² In response, McIvor has highlighted that alternative forms of heritage, such as oral history has emerged to challenge the authorised narrative and reflect the city's deep-rooted working-class history.⁸³ The role of public monuments has been addressed by Clark and Gibbs in their study of the erection of several public commemorations

⁷⁷ Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community and Place*, pp.124-125.

⁷⁸ Pete Hodson, 'Titanic Struggle: Memory, Heritage and Shipyard Deindustrialization in Belfast', *History Workshop Journal*, vol.87, (2019), pp.224-249.

⁷⁹ Hodson, 'Titanic Struggle', p.226.

⁸⁰ Hodson, 'Titanic Struggle', p.243.

⁸¹ Arthur McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?' *Industrial Heritage, Working-Class Culture and Memory in the Glasgow Region*, in Stefan Berger(ed.), *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Historical Culture and Identity in Regions Undergoing Structural Economic Transformation*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2020), pp.47-67.

⁸² McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?'', p.63.

⁸³ McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?'', p.63.

across communities in west-central Scotland linked to industrial work.⁸⁴ They argue that the monuments have been erected in industrial communities, such as Inverclyde, with the primary object of beautifying the local area, rather than serving as a meaningful commemoration to working-class people who were engaged in industrial labour.⁸⁵

The concept of the ‘authorised heritage discourse’ has been championed by Smith, arguing that traditional heritage is framed through the ‘authorised heritage discourse’ which she argues is an exclusionary definition, constructed by cultural elites, focused on celebrating items from the past which celebrates ‘monumentality and grand scale’, such as listed buildings.⁸⁶ She argues that there are alternative, subaltern, strands of heritage which can challenge the authorised heritage discourse such as community heritage, social history focused heritage, or women’s history heritage.⁸⁷ Indeed, Shackel et al have argued that working-class communities express autonomy and pride when discuss their heritage as they recognise that it offers a powerful counter to the elitist authorised heritage discourse.⁸⁸

METHODOLOGY

1.1 Oral History Theory

Oral history is a well-established methodology most prominently deployed by social historians, to analysis episodes in history from the perspective of those whose histories and experiences have been marginalised and under-represented within the traditional written sources in the field of historical studies. Oral history has its roots in the traditions of folklore and storytelling, predating the twenty-first century, however it emerged as a distinctive field of study in the 1960s, primarily focused on

⁸⁴ Andy Clark and Ewan Gibbs, ‘Voices of Social Dislocation, Lost Work and Economic Restructuring: Narratives from Marginalised Localities in the “New Scotland”’, *Memory Studies*, Vol.13, No.1 (2020), pp.39-59.

⁸⁵ Clark and Gibbs, ‘Voices of Social Dislocation’, p.51.

⁸⁶ Laurejane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p.11.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, pp.35-43.

⁸⁸ Paul A. Shackel, Laurajane Smith and Gary Campbell, ‘Labour’s Heritage’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol.17, No.4, (2011), p.292.

capturing, recording, and revealing history which had previously been untold. This section will provide an overview of the development of oral history methodology, justifying why it is the appropriate methodology for this study of working-class women's experiences of work and its loss in the textile industry in Glasgow and Renfrewshire since the 1970s. Furthermore, it will discuss how narrators were recruited to be interviewed for this project and explore the intersubjectivity between the researcher and narrators, considering how this impacted the interviews and how individuals composed their memories and decided which stories to share during the interview. Finally, some consideration will be given to the ethics of conducting and storing oral history interviews.

In the study of communities whose experiences have hitherto been marginalised and excluded from the dominant narrative, including the study of the working-class; black and ethnic minority history, LGBT history and women's history, oral history has been a popularly deployed methodology. The popularity of oral history among social historians has been driven by a desire to adopt a more democratic approach to history which interprets and analyses the past from a 'bottom-up' perspective, focuses on the histories of marginalised communities which are commonly excluded from traditional, written documentary sources.⁸⁹ Oral history provides the tools to unlock the rich depository of expertise and knowledge of individuals who have lived experience of the past. In the United Kingdom, oral history has been utilised by historians studying the history of work - and its loss - reflecting the nation's historic position as a nucleus of global industrial production throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the Scottish context, it has been noted by Bartie and McIvor that this focus on studying the history of work – and its loss - has resulted in the recording of oral history interviews with working-class people becoming an important act in the preservation of intangible working-class heritage.⁹⁰

It is important to recognise that oral history is distinctive from traditional, written sources in history as it is a living source, created in collaboration between the

⁸⁹ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 2nd Edition, (Basingstoke: Routledge, 2016), p.4.

⁹⁰ Bartie and McIvor, 'Oral History in Scotland', p.110.

researcher and participant.⁹¹ The outcome of an oral history interview is the result of numerous factors which shape how a narrator composes their narrative and how they choose what information to share with the interviewer, and what information to exclude. The collaborative aspect of oral history makes it a distinctive source in which, uniquely, the researcher shapes the output.⁹² The 'live' nature of oral history makes the oral history interview a performative process in which narrators compose a testimony which they are comfortable articulating as they perceive that it portrays them in a positive, favourable manner. In eluding to the performative nature of oral history, Portelli succinctly stated that 'oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.'⁹³

The impact of the researcher on shaping the oral history interview has become a key component of analysis in the field, with significant consideration given to how the relationship between a researcher and a narrator actively impacts the memories that a narrator chooses to share and those they choose to exclude. The dynamic of the relationship formed between the research and the narrator is described as intersubjectivity. The concept of intersubjectivity refers the way in which key aspects of behaviour and identity can shape the dynamic and relationship between the researcher and the narrator, including age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion and social class.⁹⁴ However, non-identity factors can impact the dynamic between the researcher and a narrator including attitude, body language and demeanour.⁹⁵ The issue of intersubjectivity will be discussed in greater detail later in this section with specific reference to the interviews conducted for this research project.

In addition, it is important that researchers are aware how dominant historical narratives and popular cultural representations of the past can shape a narrator's

⁹¹ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p.24.

⁹² Alessandro Portelli. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p.54.

⁹³ Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p.51.

⁹⁴ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, pp.55

⁹⁵ Valerie Yeo, "'Do I Like Them Too Much?': Effects of the Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa", *Oral History Association*, Vol.24, No.1, (Summer 1997), pp.55-79.

memories. The impact of cultural representations and dominant discourses in shaping oral testimonies is premised in the acceptance of oral history as a subjective – as opposed to objective – historical source. This issue was articulated by Passerini who urged oral historians to ‘not ignore that the raw material of oral history consists not just in factual statements, but is pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore includes not only narrations but also the dimensions of memory, ideology and subconscious desires.’⁹⁶ Portelli has argued the subjectivity of oral history is the defining aspect which distinguishes oral history from traditional, written historical sources.⁹⁷

1.2 Recording Women’s Histories

From the 1970s onwards, feminist scholars started to engage with oral history, recognising it as a tool which could amplify women’s voices and illuminate their experiences. In this sense, oral history was perceived by feminists as a tool which could be used by women to democratise history, challenging the entrenched narratives of the past by giving women the platform to articulate their stories and their memories on their own terms – including working class women. In the field of feminist oral history, the question of who can record women’s memories remains a pertinent question. In the late 1970s, Gluck stated that although there were several male students under her stewardship who were interested in women’s oral history, these men would never be able to conduct feminist oral history as a result of what she termed as the ‘gender difference’.⁹⁸ Specifically, Gluck argues that there are specific experiences which link all woman, including menstruation, the menopause and childbirth.

This framing of ‘womanhood’ is narrow and inherently problematic. In addition to arguing that men were unable to conduct feminist oral history for biological reasons, it also discriminates against lesbian, bisexual and trans women by excluding any experiences which deviate from Gluck’s conceptualisation of the idealised form of

⁹⁶ Passerini, ‘Work ideology and Consensus’, p.84.

⁹⁷ Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p.50.

⁹⁸ Sherna Gluck, What’s so Special about Women? Women’s Oral History’, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (Summer 1977), p.7.

‘womanhood’. However, this gender essentialist argument has been challenged by Geiger who has stated that there is nothing inherently feminist about women’s oral histories or women conducting oral history.⁹⁹ For Geiger, oral history could only be a feminist research tool if its methodology, objectives, and outcomes were explicitly feminist.¹⁰⁰

The question of who can conduct feminist oral history continues to have resonance, exemplified by Iacovetta et al who query: ‘How do we define feminist oral history, which has long been described as research by, on and for women, without being essentialist?’¹⁰¹ In Scotland, there is an expanding body of oral history literature which has exemplified the ability of men to interview women, including Brown’s co-authored publication examining women’s experiences of employment in Stirling during the first-half of the twentieth century; Neil Rafeek’s oral history of communist women in Scotland in the early twentieth century; and Andy Clark’s research on the women-led factory occupations in west-central Scotland in the early 1980s.¹⁰² These notable examples of men conducting, or analysing, oral history interviews with women narrators in Scotland is reflective of the shift in feminist oral history since the 1980s towards a more critical, analytical approach to women’s testimonies. This more critical, analytical form of feminist oral history has alleviated the emphasis on the gender of the researcher in the interview process and placed a greater focus on forensically examining the testimony to better understand a women’s actions, behaviours, emotions, and thoughts.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Susan Geiger, ‘What’s So Feminist About Women’s Oral History’, *Journal of Women’s History*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (Spring 1990), pp.169-18.

¹⁰⁰ Geiger, ‘What’s So Feminist’, p.70.

¹⁰¹ Iacovetta, Srigley and Zembrzycki, ‘Introduction’, in Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki, and France Iacovetta (eds.), *Beyond Women’s Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), p.3.

¹⁰² Jayne Stephenson and Callum Brown, ‘The View from the Workplace: Women’s Memories of Work in Stirling, c1910-1950’, in *The World is Ill-Divided: Women’s Work in Scotland in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, by Eleanor Gordon and Esther Breitenbach (eds.), (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp.7-29; Neil C. Rafeek, *Communist Women in Scotland: Red Clydeside from the Russian Revolution to the End of the Soviet Union*, (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008); Andy Clark, *Fighting Deindustrialisation: Scottish Women’s Factory Occupations, 1981-1982*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023).

¹⁰³ Kathryn Anderson, Susan Armitage, Dana Jack, and Judith Wittner, ‘Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology in Oral History’, *Oral History Review*, Vol.15, No.1, (Spring 1987), p.109.

1.3 Interview Process

Following the approval of my ethics application by the School of Humanities Ethics Committee on 7 March 2019, I started the process of trying to recruit participants to be interviewed for the project. In May 2019, on Twitter I shared a ‘Call for Participants’ poster, inviting women who worked in the textile industry between 1970 and 2000s to share their memories and stories from the factory to assist with my research. The post received a high level of positive engagement, being shared 213 times, and making over 88,000 ‘impressions’ and almost 2,000 ‘engagements’.¹⁰⁴ However, despite this high level of engagement, there was a very low conversion rate as I received very few leads from this post. Yet, the popularity of the post reflected the broader enthusiasm for the research topic, suggesting a recognition that women’s experiences of deindustrialisation have hitherto been overlooked and marginalised in the hegemonic narratives of Scotland’s industrial history. The research was covered by two important regional newspapers, with *The Renfrewshire Gazette*, running a story focused on the research and my desire to speak with women formerly employed at the textile mills in Paisley and the Stoddard carpet factory in Elderslie.¹⁰⁵ This appeal for participants was boosted by *The Glasgow Times* running a story on my research, with a specific focus placed on Bairdwear and D&H Cohen as both these factories were based in Glasgow.¹⁰⁶ To assist the appeal, *The Glasgow Times* article featured an interview with one of my interview participants, Nan McKernan, who worked in the D&H Cohen clothing factory between 1963 and 1970, describing her experience in the factory: ‘I got a job at Cohens, and started the next day. It was great, very modern, and the factory was absolutely spotless. I knew how to sew because my mother taught me, so I became a machinist, working on school uniforms for girls.’¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Impressions are defined as the time of times that a tweet is ‘seen’ on Twitter. Engagements are defined as the total number of times that a user has ‘interacted’ with a tweet, including clicking on the tweet, shares, replies, and likes.

¹⁰⁵ Gregg Kelly, ‘Student turns back clock to shine some light on history of Renfrewshire’s mills’, *Renfrewshire Gazette*, (7 June 2019). Available here: <https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/news/17692483.student-turns-back-clock-shine-light-history-renfrewshires-mills/>.

¹⁰⁶ Ann Fotheringham, ‘Student Rory Stride stitching together the stories of Scotland’s textile heritage’, *The Glasgow Times*, (23 July 2019). Available here: <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/17787667.student-rory-stride-stitching-together-stories-scotlands-textile-heritage/>

¹⁰⁷ Fotheringham, ‘Student Rory Stride stitching together the stories’, *The Glasgow Times*.

On social media, in my experience, Facebook provided a more fertile space for engaging with former textile workers. This is likely a reflection on Facebook have significantly more active members than Twitter, and being more utilised by an older cohort. Through several hours of speculative searching, I was able to identify various active former workers groups on Facebook, and this proved to be an incredible valuable resource with Bairdwear, D&H Cohen, and Stoddard Carpets all having active private former workers groups. Therefore, I contacted with the page administrators, explaining my research topic and my interest in joining the group as I wished to interview former workers. This proved a hugely successful tactic, and I was able to recruit a significant number of participants through this means. Moreover, I aimed to spread awareness of my research on social media by joining active community pages and local history pages, such as 'Johnstone History', 'Glasgow, Our History', and 'Paisley Buddies'. These are very active online communities, for example the 'Paisley Buddies' group has over 6,000 members, whilst the 'Johnstone History' group is closely behind with over 5,500 members. These groups typically embrace discussions and posts which centre on local history and civic pride. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this strategy in terms of directly recruiting participants for the project, but I do believe it helped raise awareness of the project and created indirect connections with the research project being shared by word of mouth.

In the months after receiving ethical approval, I made good progress in recruiting participants, conducting twelve detailed face-to-face interviews with women formerly employed in one of the case study companies. These participants had primarily been recruited through social media, including the former workers groups, as well as through 'snowballing', with mutual connections putting myself and the interviewee in contact with one another. It was my intention to bolster the recruitment process by starting a poster campaign, placing A4 and A3 posters in strategic community locations with high footfall near the former industrial workplaces, such as in libraries, community centres, health centres, and on community noticeboards in local supermarkets. However, in March 2020, this

progress was unfortunately impeded by the global Coronavirus pandemic which resulted in the Government implementing a societal ‘lockdown’, with people instructed to stay at home and practice physical distancing with anyone outside of their household bubble. On 19 March 2020, the University of Strathclyde, imposed a ban on face-to-face interviewing. At this stage, I had conducted twelve detailed oral history interview which had all been conducted face-to-face.

In responding to the onset of the pandemic the Scottish Oral History Centre at the University of Strathclyde organised a half-day online training workshop, ‘An Introduction to Remote Oral History Interviewing’, hosted on Zoom on 17 June 2020. The workshop, facilitated by Dr Lorna Barton who is an experienced practitioner in remote oral history, provided a critical opportunity for students, postgraduates, and academics in attendance, to gain a grounding in remote oral history, covering the theory, ethics, methodology, and the technology. Most importantly, the workshop provided a valuable opportunity for those in attendance to use different aspects of the available technology to practice remote interviewing, using Zoom, Skype, and landline telephones. Due to the University of Strathclyde’s ban on face-to-face interviewing, I adapted my ethics application form to include approval for the practice of remote oral history, reflecting the changed societal circumstances which had made face-to-face interviewing impossible. This revised ethics application received approval in January 2021. More than eleven months on from my last face-to-face interview, conducted on 7 February 2020, I recommenced the interview process conducting my first remote oral history interview, using Zoom, on 21 January 2021, interviewing former GMB regional industrial officer, Harry Donaldson, who was the union’s leading spokesperson in Scotland during the jobs crisis in the textile industry throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s.

In total, I conducted twenty comprehensive oral history interviews for this project with twelve interviews conducted face-to-face prior to March 2020 and the onset of the Covid pandemic, and a further eight interviews conducted remotely, from January 2021 onwards, following the approval of the updated ethics application. The remote interviews were conducted using a combination of methods, including Zoom

and telephone. I gave interviewees the option of conducting the interviews by telephone and Zoom with telephone interviews recorded using a H4n Pro recorder, whilst Zoom interviews were conducted by placing a Tascam recorder next to the computer's speakers to capture the audio. Across the four case study companies, there were nine interviews with former D&H Cohen workers; five interviews with former Bairdwear workers; four interviews with former Coats Viyella workers; and one interview with a former Stoddard Carpets worker. In addition, these interviews were complimented with an interview with a senior trade union official. In terms of gender, eighteen interviews were conducted with women who worked in the textile mills and garment factories with two interviews with men: one man who worked at Stoddard Carpets and one man who served as the senior trade union official for the GMB Union in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Initially, it was the intention that the interviews would be conducted with exclusively women formerly employed in the sector. However, in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, I opted to be slightly more pragmatic in my approach, particularly in the case of Stoddard Carpets as I had struggled to recruit women who worked in the factory. I concluded that it was better to gain some insight into the factory from a former worker, even if it was a male worker, rather than have no first-hand oral testimony from the factory. Furthermore, I was hopeful that this interview would serve as a gateway to gaining more direct contact with women who worked at Stoddard's, with the interviewee being able to share my details with his former colleagues, or to make a direct connection between myself and one of his former colleagues.

1.4 Intersubjectivity

In oral history theory, the relationship between the researcher and the narrator has received considerable focus as oral history practitioners have attempted to better understand the ways in which this dynamic affects the memories that a narrator does and does not share with a researcher. It has been noted by Abrams that the relationship between the researcher and narrator is cultivated from their first encounter, including communication by email, letter, telephone or face-to-face,

before the interview even takes place.¹⁰⁸ The dynamic of the relationship formed between the researcher and the narrator is described as intersubjectivity. The concept of intersubjectivity refers to how central aspects of behaviour and identity can shape the dynamic and relationship between the researcher and the narrator, including age, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and social class. However, other factors can impact the dynamic between the researcher and a narrator including attitude, body language and demeanour.¹⁰⁹ If a researcher and a narrator find strong identification in one another, believing that they have shared life experience and values, then the memories that the narrator re-tells and shares with the researcher will be those that the narrator believes the narrator will be able to personally identify. In the initial stages, I prioritised building rapport with my interviewees in an effort to break down any barriers and establish a friendly relationship through conversation.

I was acutely aware that the vast majority of participants would not have been previously involved in a doctoral research project and my status as a researcher associated with the University of Strathclyde inherently created an unequal power dynamic which I was keen to break-down at the earliest opportunity. For both face-to-face interviews and remote interviews, I started with an introductory phone call with anyone who had expressed an interest in being interviewed. This call would typically last around thirty minutes and although primarily it provided an opportunity to provide an overview of the research project, it was an important chance to establish mutual contacts or shared experience. For example, if the local hospital was referenced by the participant, I would mention that my sister works as a nurse in one of the departments, or if a certain local workplace or landmark was mentioned, I would be sure to describe if I knew its location or state if I had previously visited. This was important to establish my credentials as both local and working-class, which would help break-down barriers and establish a strong rapport with working-class participants. In her research in South Africa, Bozzoli noted that the intersubjectivity between the researcher and narrator was shaped by a more holistic

¹⁰⁸ Abrams, *Oral History*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁹ Yeo, ““Do I Like Them Too Much?””, pp.55-79.

perception of the researcher as either an ‘insider’ or an ‘outsider’ by the narrator.¹¹⁰ Notably, Bozzoli identified the following characteristics as most significant in shaping the narrators perception of the researcher as either an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’: gender, local identity, social class and spoken dialect.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Clark interviewed a cohort of twenty-seven women involved in the women-led factory occupations across west-central Scotland in the early 1980s and noted that gender was just one component which contributed to the intersubjectivity present between himself as the researcher and the women narrators.¹¹² In considering how he was able to build a strong rapport with his cohort of narrators, Clark identifies his distinctive west of Scotland accent and his working-class upbringing as being crucial to the narrators identifying him as familiar, deeming him as an ‘insider’.¹¹³ In this respect, it is important to recognise that gender is only one component that contributes to building the relationship between the researcher and the narrator and the shaping of the narrative. Similar to Clark’s experience, I found implicit understandings of class to be very important in establishing a strong rapport with narrators. I was successfully able to identify as an ‘insider’ due to growing up in Glasgow and living in Renfrewshire across all my life and being able to draw on strong working-class roots with family roots from Govan.

In the case of face-to-face interviews, most of the interviews were conducted at the narrators’ homes. On arrival, I attempted to ensure the participant was at ease, spending around fifteen minutes sharing some information about my own life, for example talking about my siblings, to help participants feel more relaxed and familiar in my company. Moreover, I would ask them general questions about their things in their home, or about their local area, as an expression of my genuine interest in their lives, and to indicate my willingness to listen to, and learn about, aspects of their life. Also, if offered, I was eager to accept offers of welcoming

¹¹⁰ Belinda Bozzoli, ‘Interviewing the Women of Phokeng: Consciousness and Gender, Insider and Outsider’ in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, 3rd Edition, (London: Routledge, 2015), p.214.

¹¹¹ Bozzoli, ‘Interviewing the Women of Phokeng’, p.218.

¹¹² Andy Clark, “‘Not Our Jobs to Sell’ – Workforce Mobilization, Deindustrialisation and Resistance to Plant Closure: Scottish Female Factory Occupations, 1981-1982’, PhD thesis, University of Strathclyde, 2017, pp.97-100.

¹¹³ Clark, “‘Not Our Jobs to Sell’”, p.100.

hospitality, such as tea and biscuits. In my experience, this helped to relax the atmosphere as it removed any sense of formality from the interview process.

The location of the interviews was an interesting facet of the intersubjectivity. I found that the four interviews I conducted at the University of Strathclyde, with two interviews conducted at the Scottish Oral History Centre and two interviews conducted in meeting rooms in the Lord Hope Building, tended to be less conversational, and more formal and stilted in their rhythm. To some extent, this is result of who was being interviewed with two interviews being with people who occupied roles which were partially detached from the factory floor, with one woman working in Human Resources whilst the other working in the fashion side of the business as a 'buyer' for Marks & Spencer. However, there was one specific interview, conducted in the Lord Hope Building, which was memorable owing to the manner in which the narrator aimed to compose their narrative. Several times throughout the interview, the narrator appeared nervous, struggled to articulate their words, and gesticulated towards the recorder to ask for the interview to be paused. Once the recorder was paused, the narrator was fully relaxed and able to chat in a comfortable, relaxed manner, taking a short break before turning the recorder back on. Once the recorder was turned back on, the narrator appeared more composed and was able to comfortably articulate their memories and cogently respond to questions. It was evident that the narrator was conscious of the presence of the recorder and preoccupied in 'saying the right thing' for the recorder as they succulently organised and composed their narrative, rather than speaking spontaneously and authentically. I believe that if the interview had been conducted in the narrator's home, in a location they were familiar and comfortable, it is more likely that their testimony would have been delivered more authentically as they would be less fixated and conscious of their participation in an academic research project.

This situation was complicated with remote interviews, and it was undoubtedly significantly more difficult to build rapport as has been noted by Waugh in her

reflections on remote interviewing during the pandemic.¹¹⁴ In my experience, I found that with interviews conducted by telephone or using Zoom, participants were keener to informally chat for a much shorter time prior to the interview, and were more eager to end the conversation, once the interview was concluded. In terms of remote interviewing, Zoom was considered the best alternative to a face-to-face interview as it allowed for that visual connection between the interviewer and the narrator despite being in different locations. However, evidently, it was not the same as a face-to-face interview. The reality of relying on internet connections contributed to the interactions being more stilted which impacted on the rhythm of the interview which inserted a degree of formality to the process as the interview was less conversational. Moreover, I was very conscious of my body language as I wanted narrators to have clear, visible symbols that I was listening and engaged in their testimony. Therefore, I focused on ensuring I was displaying positive body language with very visible, deliberate encouraging nodding of the head, smiling, laughing, whilst being careful not to interrupt the narrator and disrupt the flow of their testimony. This mirrors Waugh's experience of remote interview and its impact on the flow of the interview, as she reflected:

Yet at moments during video calls, it was more difficult to determine if individuals had paused for thought, if they were waiting for me to ask the next question, or if their connection had simply frozen. Once again, signals that might convey the purpose of the silence, such as body language, facial expressions, and eye contact, were harder to observe [...] At times I inadvertently interrupted her just as she began talking, and at others, she had to prompt me to ask the next question. Silence, therefore, often serves to highlight or heighten feelings of disconnection within remote interviews, or disrupt the fragile flows and rhythms of narration and questioning as they began to emerge. Such discomfort, or frustration at being interrupted, may be harmful for rapport and generate a more stilted interview process.¹¹⁵

However, this is not to state that the remote interviews were of a lower quality, or less valuable than the face-to-face interviews. Indeed, I would argue that two of the three telephone interviews I conducted were among the most fulsome interviews containing the richest, most vivid testimony. In some respects, I attribute this to the

¹¹⁴ Katherine Waugh, 'Failing to Connect? Methodological Reflections on Video-Call Interviewing during the Pandemic', *The Oral History Review*, Vol.50, No.1, (2023), pp.62-81.

¹¹⁵ Waugh, 'Failing to Connect? Methodological Reflections', p.70.

importance of the voice as a class signifier in building rapport. In speaking in my vernacular Glaswegian accent, this served as class indicator, which was more pronounced during telephone interviews when participants were not able to physically see me, which helped to lubricate the interview as it helped to foster a familiarity and trust with the narrators. Another important contributing factor that aided the telephone interviews was the concept that some degree of anonymity promoted more openness and honesty which enriched the interview with important testimony. I would posit that the interviewer and narrator not being able to physically see one another contributed to more expansive answers from narrators as their response was not being mediated through their interpretation of the interviewer's body language which they may view as impatient, judgemental, or generally negative.

In this research project, gendered intersubjectivity during the interview process is an important unit of analysis as I, a male researcher, conducted interviews with women narrators. In considering gender intersubjectivities in oral history, Abrams has stated: 'It is reasonable to argue that the outcome of a conversation between a young female interview and an older male respondent would differ, both in style and possibly content from the same interviewee's encounter with an older male interviewer.'¹¹⁶ This is accurate as gender is one component which impacts the intersubjectivity between a researcher and a narrator. However, this is not to suggest that a conversation between a young female researcher and an older male narrator are less insightful, valuable, and worthy of study than the conversation between an older male interviewer and an older male narrator. The testimonies of these interviews are both valid, valuable historical sources. The differential responses of narrators when asked the same questions on different occasions is one of the peculiarities of oral story. It has been noted by Portelli who argues that no two oral history interviews with the same narrator will be identical, including those conducted by the same researcher.¹¹⁷ This points to the complexity of oral history and the difficult in

¹¹⁶ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, p.62.

¹¹⁷ Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, p.51.

extracting one factor – for example, gender – when analysing an oral history interview.

I was distinctly aware that as a young male researcher in my mid-twenties, my experiences were very distinct from the women workers who were primarily aged sixty years and older, who I was asking to share their memories of their working lives. In my interviews, there was a gendered dynamic, but it is difficult to assess how the narrators would have composed and articulated their memories differently if they had been interviewed by a women of a similar age. In many respects, the dynamic between the women who were narrating their memories and myself was like that between a grandparent and a grandchild. Overwhelmingly, particularly among older participants, there was a generosity in their spirit, expressed by their enthusiasm to participate and to provide detailed descriptions when I asked for more information around their specific job roles or memories of the factory. It was reminiscent of a grandparent responding with clear, yet detailed, explanations to questions posed by their curious, persistent grandchild. There seemed to be an appreciation that someone was taking an interest in their lives and providing a platform to allow them to share their memories, in their own words. This reflected the reality that, although gendered intersubjectivities was an important aspect of the interview process, gender was only one aspect, such as age and social class, which shaped the dynamic between the interviewer and narrators. The nature of the study was focused on working lives and did not address any particularly challenging, or potentially taboo, issues which may have been more likely to have been impacted by the gendered intersubjectivity between the interviewer and narrator. For example, it is reasonable to conclude that the narrator's response would have more likely to have been impacted by the gender of the interviewer if the questions centred around women's health, discussing gynaecological health, pregnancy, and menopause.

However, despite being an insider, perhaps the biggest challenge faced in building rapport with women workers was overcoming their entrenched scepticism about why I wanted to interview them about their working lives. It is the case that most women I interviewed were confused, and slightly sceptical about why I wanted to speak with

them about their work in the textile industry. This reflected an entrenched, unconscious perception that their working lives were not significant, were not interesting, and were not valuable. It is indicative of why this research is so desperately needed. This was captured by Nan McKernan, who worked at D&H Cohen, in the final line of her interview, in responding to my thanking her for her time and participating in the interview, when she stated: ‘Oh well, Rory, I hope you got what you wanted.’¹¹⁸ For Nan, she couldn’t comprehend why anyone wanted to listen to her memories of her working life in D&H Cohen as a sewing machinist and she viewed the interview as being a favour which would help my research but she couldn’t process how her words, her experiences, would be valuable. This sentiment was reiterated by Maureen Taggart, who worked in the Anchor Mills in Paisley, when she concluded our interview by stating: ‘I hope I’ve helped you in some kind of way!’¹¹⁹ There is an expression of uncertainty and lack of confidence in this statement, as Maureen is not quite sure how, or why, her memories, her words, her life, would be considered informative and significant.

1.5 Ethics, Transcription, and Archiving

Throughout the recruitment and interviewing process, I adhered to the Scottish Oral History Centre’s (SOHC) rigorous ethics guidelines ensuring that the research was ethical and legal. Once I had initiated contact with potential participants by telephone or email, I provided them with a copy of the Participant Information Sheet, outlining the details of the research project and what their participation would require. Once the interview was finalised, I provided participants with a Recording Agreement form with the purpose of adding the interview to the Scottish Oral History Centre’s collection stored at the University of Strathclyde’s archive. The Recording Agreement form provided all participants with clear information explaining how their data would be retained, stored, and utilised. Furthermore, the form informed participants of their rights in relation to the processing of personal data and provided them with the contact details of the University of Strathclyde’s Data Protection Officer and the Information Commissioner’s Office. This enables narrators to decide

¹¹⁸ Nan McKernan, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 9 June 2019.

¹¹⁹ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 29 July 2019.

how they wanted their interviews to be stored and accessed, and whether they wanted to preserve their anonymity.

Following the interview, the interviews were transcribed, to varying degrees, as the oral testimony was translated into the written word. I was pleased, and extremely grateful, to receive funding from the transnational Deindustrialisation and the Politics of Our Time (DePOT) project supporting the transcription of around ten oral history interviews. I recruited an experienced freelancer transcriber, Veronica Whytman, to transcribe thirteen interviews in full. In addition, I have personally transcribed several interviews in full, with the remainder of the interviews being partially transcribed. I choose to transcribe the interviews in the vernacular, reflecting the distinct nature of working-class Glaswegian dialect. I believe it is important that the written transcription is as authentic as possible to privilege the words of the participants. I do not believe it is the job of academics, interviewers, or transcribers to ‘clean’ transcripts or make a judgement on why they thought a participant might have used the wrong word, for example. It has rightly been argued by Portelli that ‘each comma is an act of interpretation’ by the transcriber, and in this spirit, I advocate that when transcribing interviews, the transcriber should seek to limit their interpretation to a minimum and focus on producing an accurate, authentic written record of the spoken word. I am conscious that for those who are not from the West of Scotland, this adds an additional layer of difficulty in reading, or pronouncing certain words or phrases. I do not subscribe to the British Library transcription guide which encourages replacing colloquial, dialectic phrases with ‘proper English’, for example, replacing ‘gonna’ with ‘going to’. Indeed, it would be considered classist and offensive to ask someone to alter how they speak in order to pronounce what would be considered as ‘proper’ English. This is persuasively argued by Clark, citing Scots linguist Ally Heather, who highlights that: ‘[...] words such as cannae, wilnae, dinnae, didnae, saying “I’m no daein that” as the equivalent of the standard English “I’m not doing that”.’¹²⁰ It is important to reflect the distinct regionality and class of those who were interviewed. We should embrace greater diversity in oral history

¹²⁰ Andy Clark, ““People just dae wit they can tae get by”’: Exploring the half-life of deindustrialization in a Scottish community’, *The Sociological Review*, Vol.71, No.2, (2023), p.335.

transcripts as people voices are expressive and the use of the vernacular helps bring an additional layer of depth and personality to the written word.

In accordance with the Recording Agreement form, the original oral recordings of the interviews will be archived with the University of Strathclyde, stored as part of the Scottish Oral History Centre collection, which is an extensive archive comprised of material from a variety of projects across the last thirty years. This collection of interviews will be an important addition to the archive collection, providing future academics, historians, and students, with access to these interviews to inform their understandings of women's experiences of work in the textile industry during the second half of the twentieth century and their distinct experience of deindustrialisation. This will be a complementary addition to the collection which has significant focus on male industrial workers experiences of deindustrialisation with important projects focused on coal miners, shipbuilders, and asbestos-related diseases in industrial workplaces.

1.6 Documentary Sources

This thesis draws on the archival sources of the Scottish Business Archive, based at the University of Glasgow, including their Stoddard-Templeton Collection and the Coats Viyella collection. These are extensive collections which contain an abundance of material relating to corporate history of both Stoddard Carpets and Coats Viyella. Unfortunately, the corporate archives of Bairdwear and D&H Cohen are not available to be accessed by the public. One of the most insightful and interesting components of the archive collection are the extensive collection of in-house publications, such as Stoddard Carpet's *The Glenpatrick News*. This publication provides a fascinating, and illuminating, insight into the company culture as well as its business performance. Stoddard Carpet in-house publication was later reinvented in Spring 1999 as *The Illoominator* with the company facing new challenges moving into the new millennium.

The Coats Viyella collection provides an informative insight into the company's corporate culture and business operation with the collection containing minutes from

its Industrial Relations Committee meetings. Moreover, the Coats Viyella collection contained a significant collection of local and national newspaper clippings relating to the company's decline. This was hugely informative in helping to reconstruct, and understand, some of the key contemporary arguments around Coats Viyella's decision to, in the first instance, demolish the Ferguslie Mills site despite its listed status, and secondly, cease production at Anchor Mill, which finally ended its manufacturing heritage in Paisley.

In addition, I was able to access copies of Marks & Spencer's in-house publication *The St Michael News* which is archived in the Marks & Spencer Archive at the University of Leeds. Although Marks & Spencer were not a case study in this research project, they were critical to the British textile sector as they had a significant influence over their sprawling network of suppliers, which included Bairdwear and D&H Cohen, two of the case study companies which are central to the focus of this project. There were only a handful of examples which referred explicitly to Bairdwear or D&H Cohen but they were useful, and revealed the degree of influence Marks & Spencer exerted over the small companies which comprised their supply chain. For example, one feature included Sadie Rennie, a Marks & Spencer Deputy Store Manager in East Kilbride visiting a Bairdwear factory to learn about the company's quality control standards.¹²¹

The archival material was complemented by contemporary newspaper reports from a plethora of sources, including from national publications like *The Independent* and *The Guardian*, as well as more localised publications such as west of Scotland titles, *The Daily Record* and *The Evening Times*. These newspaper articles were complemented by the archive news stories from the earliest incarnations of the BBC News website which are still fully available online. I was able to access a vast array of newspaper sources through the University of Strathclyde's subscription to Gale OneFile, Gale Business, and Factivia which provides access to an extensive database of newspaper resources. These were invaluable sources which were crucial in piecing

¹²¹ 'How the other half works', *St Michael News*, (March 1996), p.2. Marks & Spencer Archive, University of Leeds.

together the textile industry in Scotland, and explaining how, and why, it experienced such a deep jobs crisis in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The importance of the newspaper resources was emphasised due to there being no available archival material to study for Bairdwear or D&H Cohen. Therefore, the BBC News coverage and newspaper articles serve as the existing, first-hand, authoritative account of both companies decline and closure.

Another valuable resource for accessing documentary material was the UK Parliament 'Hansard' service which provides an accurate, and powerful search function which allowed me to explore how the experiencing of deindustrialisation was being addressed by the UK Government, and local Members of Parliament. This was particularly helpful in informing my understanding of the key fault lines in the national debate regarding the purpose and impact of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement trade agreement which, as noted, was critical to governing the trade of global textiles until the last decade of the twentieth century. In the context of the study, the Scottish Parliament was not reconvened until 1999, but the archive of its Official Report was a critical resource in providing context into how the young Parliament and the newly formed coalition Executive tried to respond to the jobs crisis in the textile sector which engulfed the manufacturing sector in Scotland during the late 1990s and early 2000s.¹²²

Moreover, I was grateful to research participants who were willing to provide documentary material to help inform, and shape, the research process. For example, Margaret Kilpatrick, formerly a Human Resources Manager at Bairdwear, shared with me an extensive folder from a Bairdwear conference she attended in February 1983 which contained a range of information outlining the company's structure, philosophy, and economic strategy. Moreover, Margaret shared a pamphlet on 'Company Rules and Conditions of Employment' which she had kept from her time working at D&H Cohen, prior to her employment at Bairdwear, which provides a snippet into the Pollokshaws factory, with workers prohibited from wearing curlers

¹²² Official Report, Scottish Parliament. Available here: <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/official-report/search-what-was-said-in-parliament>.

or headscarves and instructed to tie back their long hair. Both documents are hugely valuable resources due to the company records of Bairdwear and D&H Cohen not being properly catalogued in an archive and therefore, they are not publicly accessible. These documents provide an incredibly valuable, and unique, insight into the culture within these garment factories. In relation to Paisley, Maureen Taggart generously shared two photographs with me from her working in the Anchor Mills, with one photo from circa 1967 and the other photo from circa 1973, depicting women mill workers being presented with flowers in a small celebratory gathering in mill. Moreover, Barbara Anderson also kindly shared copies of photographs with me which depicted her time working in the Ferguslie Mills in Paisley during the early 1970s. Similar to the images shared by Maureen Taggart, the photographs depicted women workers enjoying a small celebration in the mill to mark the retirement of an older worker.

THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis is comprised of four substantial research driven chapters exploring women's experiences of work in the textile industry and the profound, and lasting, impact of deindustrialisation on their lives, and on their communities. The next chapter, Chapter Two, explores women's experiences of work on the factory floor. It explores the changing nature of the labour process on the factory floor, considering the impact of the increased automation, mechanisation increased into the garment sector throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Moreover, it will examine the impact of work on the body of the women workers, interrogating the inherent dangers of working in the textile industry, linked to the intensive rate of work which was incentivised by the piecework pay system which was commonly used in the industry prior to the introduction of the national minimum wage in the late 1990s. This chapter relies significantly on the oral history testimonies of women workers who narrate their own experiences from the factory floor. In addition, archival sources, such as in-house magazine publications, such *The Glenpatrick News* and *The Illuminator* which were published by Stoddard Carpets, are deployed to complement the oral testimony and provide a lens into the company's corporate culture, and the general values that it aimed to instil among their workforces.

Chapter Three adopts a more economic focus in trying to explain how deindustrialisation was experienced in the textile industry, and aims to explain how, and why, the sector experienced such an acute jobs crisis in the late 1990s and 2000s. It is structured as four case studies, which are divided into their three subcategories of carpets, clothing, and thread, as a means to accurately explore the distinct experiences of deindustrialisation experienced by each of the four case study companies which comprise this research: Bairdwear, Coats Viyella, D&H Cohen, and Stoddard Carpets. It blends workers testimony with contemporary newspaper reports, as well as analysing the political response, to offer fresh insight and perspective of the relative collapse of the Scottish, and British textile industry during the late 1990s and early 2000s. There will be an exploration of the perceived gendered nature of the UK Government's response to the job crisis in the textile sector, with trade union officials and textile workers offering a critical assessment of the manner in which the Labour Government responded to the jobs crisis in the male dominated car industry and the women dominated textile industry. Moreover, it will also consider the impact of international trade agreements, specifically the Multi Fibre Arrangement and the strong influence of Marks & Spencer, who helped to create fertile conditions for textile companies to justify closing their factories in Britain and offshoring their production.

In Chapter Four, there is a shift to analyse the impact of deindustrialisation on worker's identities in the aftermath of a factory closure, and the decline of the textile industry. It considers the support that was provided by the State, in the form of the Scottish Government and UK Government, to help displaced textile workers to retrain, reskill and transition into another form of employment. Through oral testimony, it explores workers experiences of seeking re-employment following their redundancy from the textile industry, assessing their success in finding suitable employment of comparable skill and remuneration. Moreover, the chapter heeds the advice of Heathcott and Cowie to shift the discussion 'beyond the headcount' by critically exploring the deep, long-term impact of deindustrialisation on redundant workers. It will use Linkon's concept of the 'half-life of deindustrialisation' to assess

the prevalence of the deep-seated societal symptoms of deindustrialisation including alcohol dependency, elevated cases of suicide, and violence. Moreover, it will consider if, and how, former textile workers, particularly the most skilled machinists, express their enduring identity as textile workers in the years and decades after stopping working in the industry. In doing so, it aims to develop a deeper understanding of the significance and value that working-class women assign to their working lives.

Finally, Chapter Five offers a rich exploration of the legacies of deindustrialisation in four distinct areas. Firstly, the chapter explores the politics of redevelopment in relation to physical, tangible heritage of the textile sectors, critically assessing the differential experience of Anchor Mill and Ferguslie Mill in Paisley. Secondly, it uses the case studies of Glasgow European City of Culture 1990 and Paisley's bid to serve as UK City of Culture 2024, providing a critical assessment of the cultural-led regeneration agenda as a means to accelerate the transition from industrial to post-industrial. Furthermore, the chapter offers a detailed assessment of the role of heritage institutions in helping to forge local identities, considering how women worker's narratives are included in exhibitions on industrial work and deindustrialisation. It considers how the different approaches used by authorised civic institutions, such as Paisley Museum and the People's Palace, and community-led grassroots institutions, such as Paisley Thread Mill Museum and Johnstone Museum, to mainstream workers perspectives in seeking to present the past. Lastly, the chapter explores how women textile workers have been represented in popular cultural depictions of working-class life in west-central Scotland, in stage productions, such *The Slab Boys*, *The Steamie*, *The Ship*, and *The Last Threads* and television series, including *River City* and *Still Game*. Ultimately, the chapter seeks to understand why dominant conceptualisation of industrial work, and deindustrialisation, in Scotland continue to be dominated by men's histories, and consider what needs to be done to ensure the authorised narrative of deindustrialisation is more gender-sensitive and inclusive, reflecting the diversity of experiences, across a range of industries, including women's work in the textile sector.

CHAPTER TWO

Women's Working Lives in the Clydeside

Textile Trade

INTRODUCTION

In 1996, when Maureen Kyle was made redundant by Claremont Garments, she may have worked in the same factory for forty years since starting in D&H Cohen in 1956, but the factory she was leaving had transformed in this period.¹ The textile industry has changed markedly since the mid-twentieth century, transformed by the increased use of automation and technology, as companies engaged in an arms race to be the most efficient, the most productive, and the most profitable as they competed in an increasingly globalised industry. It is critical to recognise that the textile industry is not a monolith, but rather a diverse industry comprised of several sub-sectors, including carpet-making, the garment industry, and thread manufacturing, which have their distinct methods of productions. This chapter draws heavily on the oral history testimony of female textile workers to provide an insight into their working lives in the textile sector in west-central Scotland and explore the changing nature of work during the last-third of the twentieth century. It will critically assess the labour process in the textile industry and consider how the design of a factory or a mill defined worker's experiences such as the degree of autonomy that they held over their work. More specifically, it will examine the garment industry and assess how it changed from the late 1960s through to the late 1990s in a period marked by the growing use of automation and technology which resulted in clothing factories being transformed as they moved from their manual bundle production line system to the automated, overhead conveyor belt. It will assess how this increased automation impacted on the intensification of work and workers autonomy on the factory floor. Also, it will consider how the 'race to modernise' in

¹ Maureen Kyle, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 8 July 2019.

the textile industry facilitated the intense deindustrialisation that the sector experienced in the late 1990s as the industry became less reliant on the intellectual property of experienced, skilled textile workers.

Furthermore, it assesses the dangers and hazards experienced by textile workers, considering the impact of work on the body. On Clydeside, there is a deep, intrinsic link between masculinity, industrial work, and ‘toughness’ with Johnston and McIvor arguing that ‘masculinity was cemented in enduring filth, brutality and risk-taking at work’.² This chapter will centre the voices of women textile workers on Clydeside to illuminate their experiences of operating heavy, industrial machinery, which could cause serious injury, working in garment factories and thread mills. It will illuminate some cases of industrial injuries experienced by women in the textile industry which serves to counter the narratives that women’s work was ‘light work’ which did not require intensive physical labour. It will also examine how textile companies operated an informal social contract with their workers to ensure they were provided with a comfortable working environment, granting concessions, and enacting ameliorative measures to improve the working conditions and stave off any threats of industrial action.

Finally, this chapter will explore workplace cultures in the textile sector in an effort to better understand the everyday working lives of textile workers. It will explore the extensive use of the piecework system in the garment industry and examine how this shaped the workplace culture on the factory floor. The use of piecework fosters an individualist culture as it encourages workers to operate as quickly and efficiently as possible to maximise their wage. It will consider how this system impacted on worker’s autonomy over the labour process and cultures of solidarity. Moreover, inspired by Strangleman’s work on *Guinness Time* in his study of the Park Royal Brewery, this chapter will analyse copies of *The Illoominator* and *The Glenpatrick News*, exploring how companies such as Stoddard Carpets utilised in-house magazine publications to communicate with their workforce and instil collective

² Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydeside Heavy Industries, c.1930-1970s’, *Labour History Review*, Vol.69, No.2, (2004), p.148.

ideals, values, and loyalty to the company.³ In the case of Stoddard's, the company magazines reveal notable insight into their culture such as how company affiliated sporting success was celebrated as an expression of the company's soft power.

THE LABOUR PROCESS

In the 1970s, the clothing factories and textile mills continued to operate with a similar labour process and machinery that had been installed in the 1950s. The labour process was a form of manual flow production which was highly fragmented with worker's expected to perform highly specific, specialised, skilled roles. In D&H Cohen, the main product being produced was women's trousers and skirts. The Cohens factory was comprised of several outbuildings which were split into several production lines. It was a substantial site, with one former worker estimating that it covered nine acres which is equivalent to an area greater than four football pitches. The structure of the factory was captured by former time-study engineer, Lisa Lamont, as she described:

The way Cohen's was laid out, if you walked into Coustonholm Road, the first factory on the left was number 44 factory, just like a big, big shed, with rows and rows of machinists, production lines. And then next to that, number 2 factory. Once again like a big shed with rows and rows of production lines. Then there was number 8 factory. There was also one called 'Horns' [...] And then, next to that again, there was the cutting room. There was some machinists in there - not so many - that was mainly the great, big, enormous, long tables where the fabric was all laid out and then the pattern cutters would cut the pattern of the trouser leg, the plaited skirts, whatever it was.⁴

Lisa continued, describing the flow production system which was used in D&H Cohen:

Each operator would have their job to do, whether it feeling a hem, and then once they've done that, there's about twelve garments on a rail, that got rolled along to the next person. And, then they'd do their bit, for example, putting the belt loops on. And then, that would get rolled on again to the next person again, putting in the zip in etcetera. And that would go all the way along the production line. It would get to the end of the line, where the cleaner would be, and the cleaner would be the person to tidy-up any loose threads, and put

³ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*.

⁴ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 June 2019.

on their special stickers and labels, and they would fold the garment properly and put it into bags.⁵

Lisa's memories of a traditional assembly line in D&H Cohen were corroborated by the testimony of Margaret Kilpatrick who joined the company as Personnel Manager in 1984. She described how the company only started transitioning to more automated, technological methods of production towards the end of her time with the company, around 1989/1990:

They were starting to bring in, now, this is probably at the point where I was coming towards leaving, they were starting to bring in new, like, automatic systems that, instead of bundles of things going down the line and it all being very manual, it was like racks, rails that went round and people hung stuff up and pulled stuff off, it was much more automated.⁶

This system of machine operatives working with bundles of garments was commonplace prior to the widespread introduction of advanced technology onto the factory floor, across the world. In the Confitek factory in Aguascalientes, Mexico, Collins described how the factory operated using the 'progressive bundle system' in which workers took a bundle of twelve garments and once finished, their bundle was passed to another operative to work on the next specific task, with workers receiving a ticket every time they satisfactorily completed a bundle.⁷ In Confitek, workers who completed nine out of ten bundles without any defects – equating to a 90 percent quality rate – received a bonus payment.⁸

The factory floor contained a variety of different roles with the bulk of the manufacturing performed by machinists. The garments would begin at the first station and would gradually be passed down to the fifth station with each stage being completed at the intermediate stations. This flow production was manual with garments being physically passed between each of the sewing stations with each station having a basket for placing garments which they had finished working on. At the end of the flow production line, the garment would be passed on to the finishing

⁵ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 June 2019.

⁶ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

⁷ Jane L. Collins, *Threads: Gender, Labor, and Power in the Global Apparel Industry*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p.135.

⁸ Collins, *Threads: Gender, Labor and Power*, P.135.

department where it would be inspected before being completed. The ubiquity of the bundle system in garment factories across Britain is demonstrated in the BBC's 'Back In Time for the Factory' series.⁹ This is an immersive historical education documentary style programme which provides a group of working-age people the opportunity to experience working in a reconstructed garment factory, with each episode based on a specific year between 1968 and present day, providing a snapshot of the changing nature of the industry through the second half of the twentieth century. In the early episodes, set in 1968, 1973, and 1976, prior the widespread introduction of technology, the factory layout included large baskets for machinists to place their finished garments from the bundle on which they were working, and on completion, this would then be replenished with another bundle of unfinished garments. Nan McKernan, who started her working life as a machinist in D&H Cohen in 1963, described the traditional production system:

It was massive, as I told you! And there were sections and each section had, like, three machines next to each other and there would be a big row of machines. And it started fae the top, at the, you know, when the garment first started right through to the garment finished so everybody had their wee bit tae dae. It was called piecework. And you done your set job to do so everybody had their set job. And they always took it fae the person behind them because they had cages in front of their machines. And that's where you put your work when it was finished. Then they would just turn roon and take their work fae there. [...] Uhu, they done what they had tae dae and put theirs in front of them. And that's the way it went through the whole, the whole section.¹⁰

The rudimentary factory layout allowed for constant, close oversight of the labour process from the management hierarchy. As previously mentioned in the chapter, D&H Cohen was a family enterprise, and members of the family took an active role in every facet of the production process. Margaret Kilpatrick described how the location of Dennis Cohen's office provided the ideal vantage for maintaining an omnipresent supervision of the factory floor:

Mr Cohen took great interest in what was going on in his factory. His office was located on the first floor. All the production line was ground floor but his was located on the first floor and you could look out the window onto Factory 2 and see everything that was going on. And he would wander round the

⁹ BBC Two, 'Back in Time for the Factory', (Wall to Wall Productions, 2018). Available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bj7b84>. Accessed on 18 October 2022.

¹⁰ Nan McKernan, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 9 June 2019.

factory, he was very visible. You know, he would wander round and people knew him and he knew, well, the older members of staff, he knew.¹¹

In his study of three small clothing factories in the West Midlands, Ram argues that small firms were less likely to adopt a strict authoritarian approach to enforcing control and discipline over the labour process, instead they adopted a more compassionate and understanding approach to workplace discipline as their relationship with their staff was built on trust, kinship, and loyalty.¹² To illustrate his argument, Ram highlighted the example of one worker who would leave the factory at 11:55 to collect their children from nursery, returning to the factory at 12:05, and the case of another machinist who left the factory for between half an hour and one hour every day to assist at her family's newsagents during the busiest rush periods of the day.¹³ Ram defined a small company as having fewer than thirty-five workers. D&H Cohen exhibited similar traits likely as the company had expanded from a small family firm to being one of Glasgow – and Scotland's - most notable clothing manufacturers with over one thousand employees at its peak. Yet, during their expansion, the company stayed in family ownership and therefore was able to retain the identity as a small, family-run company.

In smaller firms, there are fewer stages of dislocation between a worker and management. This means that requests for dispensation involve direct dialogue between the worker and factory manager or owner as there are far fewer stages of hierarchy. This can result, as is the case in Ram's study, greater flexibility and autonomy between management and worker as the relationship is built on trust, kinship, and loyalty. However, it should also be considered that direct interactions between a company owner and worker are rooted in a deeply unequal power dynamic, which could leave a worker more susceptible to explicit, targeted exploitation by the owner of a small company. Ram argues that in larger textile firms, workers' autonomy is more severely limited with control enforced through

¹¹ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

¹² Monder Ram, 'Control and Autonomy in Small Firms: The Case of the West Midlands Clothing Industry', *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol.5, No.4, (1991), p.608.

¹³ Ram, 'Control and Autonomy in Small Firms', p.608.

imposing more formal, standardised corporate structures and practices.¹⁴ In this respect, each level of mid-level management, to which a worker would make a request, such as being able to finish their shift earlier than usual for childcare purposes, have much less flexibility to be able to approve a request which is not explicitly stipulated in company policy, regardless of their personal relationship with that worker, and their sympathy for the situation.

In Bairdwear, the labour process also operated as a manual flow production, however, the process was split between the ‘front factory’ which housed the main production process and the ‘back factory’, which housed the finishing department. The garments would be transferred in laundry carts between the front factory and back factory throughout the day. The factory layout was described by Karen Green who worked as a presser in Bairdwear’s Polmadie factory:

You’d come to another set o’ doors, that was the full ‘front factory’ where all the machineries were, the cutting table, so you had your twin machinists, overlocker, plain machinist and your finisher. And that was just a line, maybe ten, from the top, to right down the bottom [...] So, there could be about maybe fifty to sixty, seventy maybe, machinists in the ‘front factory’ and then, in the ‘back factory’, you had, obviously your presser. You’d the seam presser, your top presser, your examiner and your finisher and your packing, so you could maybe I reckon about thirty to fifty people in the back, maybe a wee bit more. You know, it all depends on the needs of the garment.¹⁵

Automation

The use of technology and automation was introduced to clothing and textile factories incrementally from the 1960s onwards as manufacturers tried to remaining competitive in an increasingly global market through increasing the efficiency and scale of production. In the decade between 1963 and 1973, Toms and Zhang have calculated that the British clothing and textile industry experienced, in tandem, a 72 percent increase in productivity and a 29 percent decline in employment.¹⁶ In part, they attribute these notable changes to technology: firstly, the introduction of labour-saving technology to the factory floor which decreased the need for workers to perform certain tasks and secondly, the growing use of synthetic fibres which made

¹⁴ Ram, ‘Control and Autonomy in Small Firms’, p.617.

¹⁵ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

¹⁶ Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.4.

production cheaper and quicker.¹⁷ However, from the early 1980s onwards, there would be a further stage of significant automation in the clothing and textile industry. This labour-saving technology provided management with a perceived justification for significantly reducing the size of the workforce, whilst simultaneously deskilling those who remained employed as a machine would now perform their role. It is with prescient foresight that, writing in the early 1980s, Angela Coyle observed that much of the technological equipment was ‘too great a capital investment for an average-sized [textile] firm’, but that this creeping growth of technology in the garment industry would ‘lay the basis of future amalgamations and concentration of capital’, which she concluded as being ‘inevitable for future development.’¹⁸

Figure 2.1: A clothing factory bundle system assembly line manufacturing raincoats, Manchester, c.1980.

[THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Source: Sefton Samuels, ‘Raincoat Manufacturing in Manchester’, (1 January 1980).
Licence: Getty Images. Collection: ‘Popperfoto’ SSA_0417. Image #123839646

¹⁷ Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.4.

¹⁸ Coyle, ‘Sex and Skill in the Organisation of the Clothing Industry’, p15.

In Bairdwear, the introduction of the overhead conveyor belt system streamlined the production process, with the number of employees required to produce the garments gradually reduced. Alison Anderson, who served as a ‘floater’ covering a multitude of roles on the factory floor, vividly recalled the introduction of mechanisation to the factory floor:

And then they brought in big, big changes. A lot of money was spent in it [the factory]. And they brought in what's called the big Macbay lines which wis like conveyor belts. We worked on individual machines, from your under-presser, to your top-presser, tae yer legger machine, which pressed every garment individually, to working off a three Macbay lines they were called and it was a conveyor belt. Yer legger machine started it and then you had your topping machine which topped all the trousers, pressing it aww, right down to wit we called yer trim and tongue which would check aww the threads. And then it would be taken off, just ready to get bagged. So, these lines actually did the start of the garment tae the end of it on these Macbay lines.¹⁹

In pure economic terms, this increased the efficiency and productivity of the production process. For the workforce, this meant a more intensive working day with workers moving from being specialists to generalists with an increased responsibility covering a range of tasks. Those who had previously worked as pressers, under-pressers, seamstresses and machine operatives were now expected to execute numerous roles which previously had been performed by several workers. In this respect, the workforce was retrained, losing the craft skills that they had honed for years, whilst gaining a range of other more general skills and knowledge which were required to safely operate the mechanised conveyor belt system. The introduction of the new mechanised conveyor belt further stripped workers of their autonomy, as Alison Anderson described:

Everything was all conveyor belts so there was no time for somebody to go away or have a chat or go for a break. Anybody wanted a break, yer legger was in charge of the full-line, the girl that pressed the legs. If you wanted a break, the full line had to stop at the one time because you couldn't go for a lunch break, a smoke break [...] But every line had to individually go in, stop at the one time. You couldn't have the machines operating with noo the right amount of operators on them. It just widnae work.²⁰

¹⁹ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 16 July 2019.

²⁰ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 16 July 2019.

The overhead mechanised conveyor belt production system that was introduced is categorised as a ‘unit production system’ (a UPS). It was noted by Winterton and Winterton that a study of the UK textile and garment industry in 1995 revealed that less than one-fifth (17 percent) of the 128 garment factories in the study had introduced a UPS.²¹ In this respect, Bairdwear was at the forefront of driving technological automation in the garment manufacturing industry as they aimed to remain competitive whilst facing greater competition from overseas. However, the growth of the mechanised conveyor belt was having detrimental impacts on textile workers as it intensified the labour process and reduced workers’ autonomy on the factory floor. This was described by Alison Anderson who noted that the mechanised system made it more difficult for workers to take short breaks to reset their energy levels, to smoke a cigarette, or to use the toilet, as if one worker stopped, the whole production line had to stop. In her study of two garment factories in south Wales in the early 2000, Jenkins observed the impact of the increased automation as she noted: ‘In this environment workers have to maintain their presence on the line and old traditions like machinists taking a few minutes away from the line every hour or for a toilet break or a cigarette is too disruptive for the smooth running of the system.’²² The removal of these small moments of transition in the labour process which occurred several times during the working day, allowing for workers to engage in small acts of social solidarity, was a fundamental shift in the labour process which represented the withering of workers’ autonomy.

In D&H Cohen, the shift towards automation and labour-saving technology occurred after the company was taken over by Claremont Garments in 1987. This takeover would have profound effects on the production process on the southside of Glasgow as the business model shifted from a traditional, family-run, paternalist company in the form of D&H Cohen to a growing, medium-sized company which, by 1990, was producing 4 percent of Marks & Spencer’s clothing range from its sole factory in

²¹ Winterton and Winterton, ‘Deregulation, division and decline’, p.22.

²² Jean Jenkins, “‘On the Shopfloor’ with clothing workers in the 1990s”, *Employee Relations*, Vol.25, Issue 2, (2003), p.174.

Glasgow.²³ In *Management Today*, a feature on Claremont Garment's noted the strategies used by the company to defend against the worst aspects of the early 1990s recession, stating: 'In an industry slow to introduce automation, Claremont has consciously led the way [...] Claremont's investment in new technology has been no piecemeal process.' Later in the article, David McGarvey, Managing Director of Claremont's operating subsidiary and a PLC director, explained the rationale for the company's early shift to greater automation in their factories:

We went through every aspect of manufacturing, from raw materials to distribution. The aim was to get new technology in as early as possible. Few in the industry have integrated as we have. But we've only been able to do it because we had the management team. Anybody can install new technology but not everybody can manage it [...] We have tried to keep a longer term view. Our payback criteria demand that at worst the item concerned can be seen to be paid back within a two-year time frame. The capital expenditure programme is driven by cost considerations: we are always looking for new angles and ways of containing or reducing unit costs year on year. We must always be confident that what we are spending money on is contributing to profitability.²⁴

From McGarvey's comments, it is evident that Claremont Garments aimed to be at the forefront of automation, mechanisation, and modernisation in the UK textile sector. In the five years after Claremont Garment's takeover of D&H Cohen, the number employed at the factory on the southside of Glasgow reduced by 40 percent, from 1,350 in 1987 down to 800 by 1992.²⁵ By September 1996, the number of workers employed at Claremont Garments reduced by a further 10 percent, falling to 720 workers.²⁶ The profit motive discussed by McGarvey in relation to the growing introduction of technology and automation at Claremont Garments is crucial to understanding the protracted decline and subsequent closure of the Pollokshaws factory. The rationalisation which resulted in the workforce being reduced by 40 percent between 1987 and 1992 was only one stage in the process of downscaling the company's operations. Margaret Kilpatrick, who served as the Personnel Manager in

²³ Annabelle Gabb, 'Making it with Marks and Spencer – Claremont Garments', *Management Today*, 1st February 1992.

²⁴ Gabb, 'Making it with Marks and Spencer', *Management Today*, 1st Feb 1992.

²⁵ Gabb, 'Making it with Marks and Spencer', *Management Today*, 1st Feb 1992.

²⁶ 'Angry Staff Down Tools', *Daily Record*, 20 September 1996.

Cohens (Claremont), articulated her perspective on the widespread introduction of technological innovation to the factory floor:

I mean, the technology was expensive to install but they were thinking, at that time they must have been thinking there was a long-term future! And also, it was just to keep pace with the demands of, because Marks & Spencer might say, “Oh, well, we want so much of this” or “We want so much of that” so it may be for more flexibility. I mean, they didn’t just decide to spend a lot of money on machinery for the sake of it! It was obviously, there was a purpose to it.²⁷

This testimony from Margaret helps to explain the rationale for Claremont Garments decision to invest significantly in new technology. In the 1990s, clothing trends were becoming more varied, and demand shifted from more standardised garments to more-seasonal, trend-based fashion items. The former Marks & Spencer Chief Executive, Richard Greenbury, was very reluctant to offshore the company’s garment production as he wished to retain the maximum flexibility and short turnaround times to allow the company to make orders at short notice depending on micro-shifts in high street fashion trends.²⁸ In her study of the history of Marks & Spencer, Bevan quotes Greensbury explaining his preference for British based suppliers with flexibility to respond to sales demand on the high street: ‘If you have got a problem with a contract in the UK, you get on the phone to the suppliers and say: “Look, these are not selling as well as we thought, can we come up and talk to you about it next week?”’²⁹ In this context, Claremont’s significant investment in technology was partially motivated to satisfy the needs of Marks & Spencer by enhancing their ability to more quickly respond to Marks & Spencer shifting demand for fashion and trend products, as they sought to retain the lucrative contract on which the Glasgow-based factory relied for the overwhelming amount of its production.

More broadly, the introduction of new technology into textile and garment factories was motivated by multiple factors which were, ultimately, dictated by the bottom line. Technology could speed-up production and in doing so, increase the

²⁷ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

²⁸ Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer*, p.115.

²⁹ Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer*, p.115.

productivity of the factory: this meant an increased capacity for producing more garments every day. Moreover, the new technology reduced workers autonomy over the labour process and empowered management who could better control the flow of product through the factory as more processes become automated and less reliant on the individual skill of a worker. Furthermore, technology made workers less powerful and more expendable to management. One of the workers key assets which provides strong leverage in industrial disputes is the intellectual property that they possess over the labour process. The creeping domination of automated technology on the factory floor disempowered workers as it made the threat of strike action less potent for management. Of course, the technology could not operate without an operative who was trained to use the machinery, but it was easier, and quicker, to recruit and train a worker to follow instructions for operating a piece of equipment, rather than training them to hone their craft skills as a machinist to operate with the intensity and precision required in a busy factory. Although, ironically, the shift towards automation and work intensification resulted in sewing machinists becoming more skilled, and therefore less replaceable, as Coyle, explained in her personal experience working on the shopfloor, explained: ‘The ability to work at high speed is a skill inadvertently created by deskilling. It is informally recognised as such through the particularly long training period for some operations, yet is not explicitly acknowledged through gradings or wages.’³⁰ In other sectors of the textile industry, there remained a notable number of jobs that companies recognised could not be executed to the same consistent precision than when performed by a human being, with Stoddard Carpet’s description of the role of a ‘Picker’ explaining ‘Every square inch of the thousands of miles of carpet that emerge from Stoddard looms is minutely inspected for faults by the picket. No machine yet invented can substitute for her keen eye. With scissors and needle she snips and corrects any small imperfections.’³¹

Furthermore, the use of machinery provided management with a guise to justify reducing the workforce through episodes of redundancy. This was a downscaling of workers without a proportionate downscaling of production. In doing so,

³⁰ Coyle, ‘Sex and Skill in the Organisation of the Clothing Industry’, p15.

³¹ Job Descriptions, ‘The Picker’, A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. – STOD/200/2/9/3/2

management aimed to frame redundancies as an inevitable and necessary measure as part of a wider suite of measures aimed towards ‘modernisation’ to remain competitive in the global economy. In assessing the impact of the introduction to automation and technology to Claremont Garments into the old Cohen’s factory, Margaret Kilpatrick, former Personnel Manager, pondered:

So, there were chances for people to learn new skills. Mr Cohen had been very traditional, and things were done a certain way and probably had been done that way for years so the technology was a double edged sword. It maybe lost some people jobs but it helped other people develop.³²

In this extract, Margaret offers a balanced perspective which seeks to place a greater emphasis on how technology helped some workers develop new skills. It is important to recognise Margaret’s position within the factory hierarchy as her role as Personnel Manager placed her on the side of management in facilitating the issuing of redundancy notices. In this context, it could be argued that Margaret is attempting to downplay her involvement in the unsavoury experience of issuing redundancy notices to Cohen’s workers. Yet, it is true to highlight that technology did offer an opportunity for workers to gain new skills, which were arguably more relevant to the twenty-first century British economy as the clothing and garment sector was decimated, and tens of thousands of textile jobs moved offshore to the global South.

The one thread running through the motivation for the growing use of technology in the textile industry was the profit motive. The fundamental objective of private companies operating in a capitalist free-market economy is for their business to be profitable: if it is not making profit, it is deemed unviable. Therefore, logically, once automated technology was introduced to the textile and garment industry, it became an arms race among companies to be the most technologically advanced, the most productive, and the most profitable textile manufacturer. Yet, what impact did the race to ‘modernise’ have on the factory floor? In their study of restructuring of the British clothing industry during the 1990s, Winterton and Winterton have argued that ‘[...] the domestic response to overseas competition has been more the replication of the employment conditions of NIC’s [newly industrialized countries] in the inner-

³² Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

city areas of the UK.³³ In contemporary times, it is possible to reflect on this assessment and argue that Winterton and Winterton were accurate in their statement. In 2017, a Dispatches investigation by Channel 4 revealed that textile factories in England supplying garments for British high street fashion chains, including New Look and River Island, were paying their workers around £3 per hour – less than half of the contemporary national living wage rate of £7.20.³⁴ The research revealed that some workers were walking around twenty miles per day to-and-from work, whilst workers were faced with a hostile working environment with a strict authoritarian discipline regime strictly enforced. For example, workers were punished with a fifteen-minute deduction in their wage if they clocked-in one minute late; they were thoroughly searched by security staff on a regular basis when entering and leaving the factory, in addition to less regular searches when going to the toilet; and sacked after three minor infringements.³⁵

IMPACT ON THE BODY

The women who worked in the thread mills and garment factories faced an array of hazards which were commonly not identified as health and safety dangers, including by former factory workers, with potential dangers framed as inherent, inevitable realities of the workplace environment. It is notable that in the study of the history of work, the literature on health and safety rarely covers the experience of women working in industrial, manufacturing settings in Britain during the twentieth century. In recent years, Stevens' seminal oral history based research into women's experiences of manufacturing industries in Wales between 1945 and 1975, which privileges the voice of the women who worked in the factories, provides an necessary insight into the factory floor from the perspective of working-class women, including a focus on health and safety.³⁶ At the outset of her chapter on health and safety, Stevens' notes that 75 percent of the women factory workers

³³ Winterton and Winterton, 'Deregulation, division and decline', p.35.

³⁴ Russell Myers, 'Sweatshop Britain: £3 an hour scandal behind high street clothes', *Daily Record*, 23 January 2017, p.16.

³⁵ Channel 4, 'Undercover: Britain's Cheap Clothes', 30 January 2017. Available here: <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/undercover-britains-cheap-clothes-channel-4-dispatches-mon-30th-jan>. Accessed on 29 October 2022.

³⁶ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*.

whose interviews were included in her study had stories relating to poor working conditions, dangerous practices and occupational injuries, as she states: ‘The following reads as a catalogue of factory woes.’³⁷

In design, Bairdwear and D&H Cohen were perfunctory, utilitarian industrial factories. They were not preeminent workplaces which were celebrated for their design and innovation. In the purpose-built factories, the design was rudimentary with most having concrete floors, a ceiling comprised of large glass windows, little air ventilation, or temperature-control mechanisms. This design of concrete and glass made garment factories, like Bairdwear and D&H Cohen, susceptible to temperature extremes with factories being uncomfortably warm in the summer but no warmer than working outdoors in the winter.³⁸ The factories were organised in the most efficient way to help the production flow and maximise the use of the available space. A pertinent design issue with these factories was that they did not have the crucial mechanisms to prioritise air quality, such as temperature control and suitable ventilation, which are accepted as essential to maintain a safe, healthy working environment in the garment industry.

However, the garment factories in Glasgow compared favourably with Paisley’s Victorian thread mills which were ingrained with decades worth of grime. Andrea Anderson described the unhygienic and inhospitable working conditions that she encountered when she started working in Number 7 Mill at Ferguslie as a cheese-winder, in 1972:

I mean, there were windows there but you couldn’t see outside, they were so dirty [...] He [the engineer] was doing something and we found a nest...of dozens of baby rats so that’s the kind of thing, that’s what you were working with, you know I’m sure at night time they were running rife but during the day because of the loudness of the machines, you wouldn’t see them. Yeah, the windows were like metal, massive, big, metal frame ones but they were so dirty you couldn’t see out of them.³⁹

³⁷ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.75.

³⁸ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.75.

³⁹ Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2022.

In addition to the windows being ‘so dirty you couldn’t see out of them’, it was noted on several occasions by Maureen Taggart, who started working in the embroidery department in the Number One Mill at Anchor Mill, that none of the windows opened to allow for any fresh air into the mill, and allow for some natural purification of the ooze-filled atmosphere.⁴⁰ In the mid-1970s, Andrea returned to work in the Ferguslie Mill, working the ‘twilight shift’ which involved processing the raw product before it was manufactured into sellable commercial thread. She recalled returning to the crumbling buildings, which were nearing the end of their lifespan as a space of industrial production:

Number 7 Mill was shut down because it was ...derelict. It was horrible! It was just falling to bits, so we got moved out of there and everything was moved to Mill 3 and then I think when I went back and did the twilight shift, I was in Mill 12. Well, I would make money on that, but it was not nice. It was horrible. I mean, even back in the 1970s, the buildings were falling to bits! You could smell the mouldiness. And, yeah, it probably wasn’t a very healthy place to be working for sure!⁴¹

In the clothing factories, the nature of the work caused regular plumes of steam to be emitted into the factory’s microclimate continually, throughout the working day, as garments were being pressed. Once a garment had been sewn by a machinist, it was passed to the pressers who would use steam irons to rectify any creases on the material to ensure it met the expected standard to be displayed in Marks & Spencer’s high street stores. This process was described by Karen Green who worked as a presser at Bairdwear’s factory in Polmadie:

The clothes, obviously they got made from scratch, so it came from the cutting table to whatever machine is first, if it was an overlocker or a plain machinist, to start putting out the material together. The garment was then made. It was then brought through into the back factory and it was then passed to the pressing machine so all depended got pressed, sort of, a press it needed.⁴²

However, there was not only one way to press a garment and not only one piece of equipment. There was a range of different methods depending on the garment, as Karen described:

⁴⁰ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 29 July 2019.

⁴¹ Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2022.

⁴² Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

We had a top presser, a Hoffmann and a steamer and then, obviously, your hand-held irons. So, if it was going for a, if it was a top press, which meant it was a big, industrial machine and your feet worked the machine. So, you had a button for the machine to come, for the lid to come down, another one to steam the garment and then another one to lift the machine up then you just, you're placing, obviously you're placing the garment on a machine, the machine would come down and press it and then you just hanged it up and sent it over if it was to get top-pressed, which means if the top half of the trouser was to get pressed, if it needed certain pleats then that would go into another machine. If there was, on the Hoffmann, if, a trouser, if it didn't have any pleats in it or any lines or any seams to be in it, it used to go into a big, massive, industrial thing that we would just stick it onto a round, like a wooden bowl and it would just clamp it. And then, this big machine, it would just blow, blow the garment out to take all the creases off.⁴³

This array of pressing activity contributed to the factory's unique microclimate which was very humid. It has been noted by Stevens that the temperature in garment factories could regularly reach 90 Fahrenheit (32 degrees Celsius), with one worker she interviewed remarking on her experience of working in a garment factory, described: 'you were cooked alive.'⁴⁴ Alison Mitchell entered the Cohens factory as a summer job, aged 16, in the late 1970s, and she vividly recalled her short stint working as a presser: 'I just remember wee windows, kind of at the top, but they were clearly... I don't remember extractor fans. I don't remember the steam making its way out as quick as it was coming in. I remember I was sweating. I was soaking, and I wanted to wipe ma brow.'⁴⁵ This intense heat and humidity was also discussed by Betty McKee, who worked as a presser at Bairdwear's factory in Inchinnan when she described the uncomfortable working conditions:

It was sweatin', I mean, you went tae your work in probably just your tabard, it's just like a wee thin overall over your head an' a wee t-shirt on an' that was in the winter because, well, you'd have your heavy jumper an' all that on going there [the factory]. But, aye, you could nae wear big, heavy jumpers or anything all day but in the summer, it was really, really hot.⁴⁶

Alison Irvine, who worked as a computer grader in the factory cutting room at Cohen's recounted a similar experience of a very warm, poorly ventilated factory:

⁴³ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁴⁴ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.75.

⁴⁵ Alison Mitchell, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 8 July 2019.

⁴⁶ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021.

I think, it was all brick and there was, you know, 'cause it was an older place. You know, you, you get the windows up the top [...] But it didn't bring in air. I mean, it did get very warm! I mean these factories were big and there was machine after machine! Like, when you went into the sewing factory, you know, plus if you're sitting on a big Hoffman [pressing machine] ... A big iron, can you imagine the heat that's coming off that?!⁴⁷

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 was the principal piece of legislation which was introduced to outline employers' legal duty of care for their employees when they are in the workplace. However, it was almost two decades later, in 1992, when new workplace health and safety regulations were introduced, including a legal minimum temperature of 16 degrees Celsius for light work in factories.⁴⁸ Therefore, in the intervening period, in lieu of formal legislation, supervisors and factory management used their discretion to use temporary measures to reduce the temperature and keep the workers comfortable. In Bairdwear's Polmadie factory, Karen Green recalled 'We'd big blowers. We used to have big, industrial, if it was too hot...more so in the summer, you would have a big fan, you know, where the fan would constantly try and keep the place cool.'⁴⁹ In contrast, at Bairdwear's Inchinnan factory, Betty McKee recalled a more rudimentary method of fresh air and fluids being utilised to keep workers cool and lower the factory temperature: 'They had the warehouse doors open tae try an' get air in [...] Of course, you get drinks, cold drinks. I suppose it was every hour or something like that, they gave you cold drinks or every half hour, you got a drink.'⁵⁰ The factory management was aware of the issue of heat in the factories, but they were equally aware that there was no legal requirement to provide workers with additional 'heat breaks'. This was reflected in Margaret Kilpatrick's testimony, as she reflected her years working in the personnel department at Bairdwear:

I think the biggest thing, problem we had was the temperatures. When it was excessively warm, you know, you would open the doors and you would have what they called 'heat breaks'. There's no maximum temperature, legally, you know, if it goes above that, you shouldn't be working.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Alison Irvine, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 July 2019.

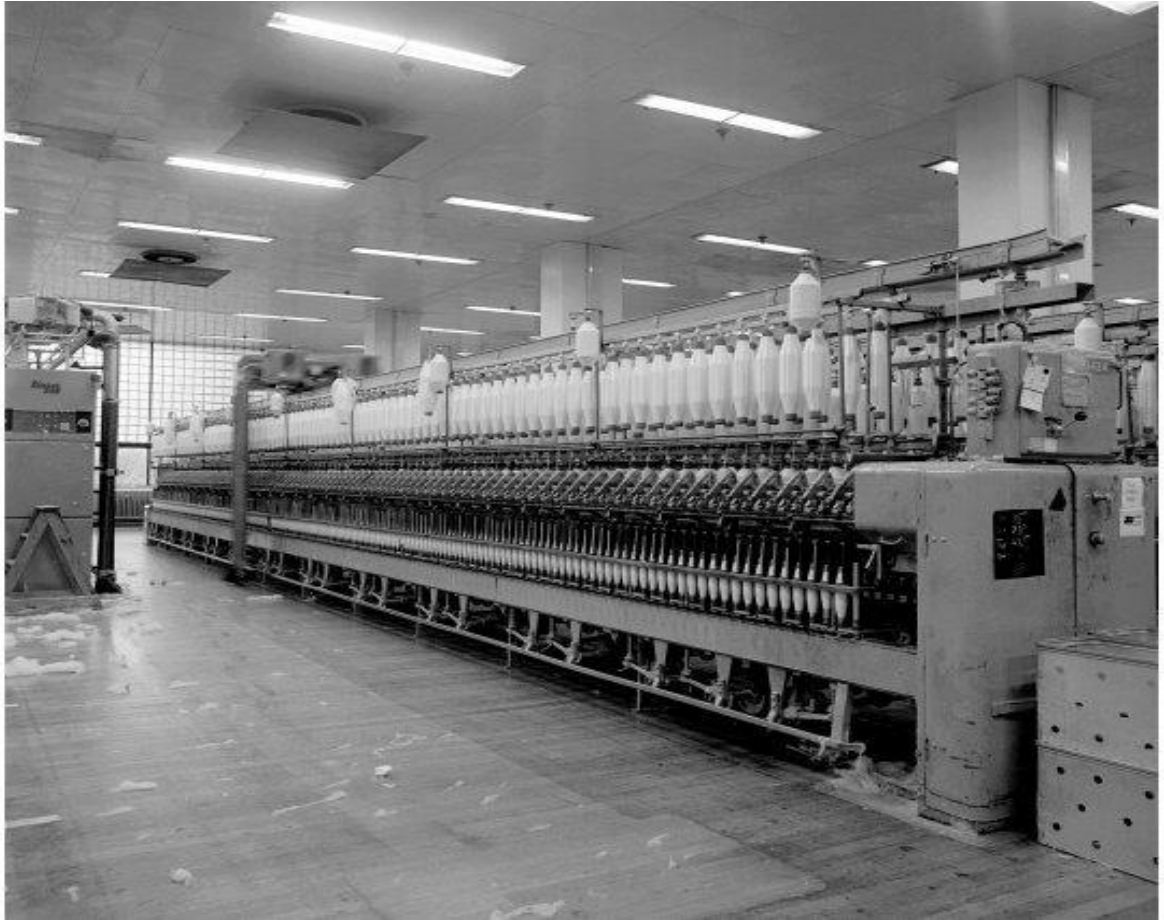
⁴⁸ The Trades Union Congress has advocated for a legal maximum temperature of 30 degree Celsius, with a lower limit of 27 degrees Celsius for more strenuous manual labour.

⁴⁹ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁵⁰ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021.

⁵¹ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

Figure 2.2: Spinning Machine in No.3 Spinning Mill, 2nd Flat, Ferguslie Thread Mills, Paisley, 1984.



Source: John R Hume, 'Paisley, Ferguslie Thread Mills, No.3 Spinning Mill', (1 October 1984). SC574349. H84/4/1. Licence: Canmore. Royal Commission of Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland contribution to SCRAN.

In lieu of formal policy on maximum temperatures, there was a social contract between workers and management that when the temperatures rose to an uncomfortable level, special measures would be introduced, such as increased ventilation, regular breaks, and more fluids available. For management, these concessions were important in subduing a collective action, but their decision-making was underpinned by the profit motive. There was a recognition that workers who were refreshed and hydrated were more productive than those who were exhausted due to the excess temperature and humidity. In the Mettoy factory in Fforestfach in south Wales, management gave workers access to free diluted juice

throughout the warm summer days.⁵² In a more extreme case, women working at the British Nylon Spinners factory in Pontypool were given salt tablets to help them to rehydrate the vital electrolytes and minerals lost through excessive perspiration.⁵³ The social contract was implicitly understood by workers as Alison Irvine stated: ‘Obviously they [management] must know that if they keep them working when it’s too warm, they’re not going to get the right production out of them [machinists].’⁵⁴

Figure 2.3: Donald Parr, William Baird Chairman, visits Dannimac raincoats’ factory in Middlesbrough, 1988.

[THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR
COPYRIGHT REASONS]

Source: Trinity Mirror, ‘An £800,000 extension at the Dannimac raincoats’ factory has been opened in Middlesbrough – with the workers earning more’, (24 November 1988). Licence: Alamy Images. Image ID: ETNWF.

One summer a transgression of this social contract led to informal collective industrial action, as Karen Green recalled: ‘We downed tools. The early nineties.

⁵² Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.75.

⁵³ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.75.

⁵⁴ Alison Irvine, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 July 2019.

Because it was a very hot summer. A very, very hot summer and the heat, everything, and it was the full factory.⁵⁵ In Bairdwear, the factory was split between two main sections: the front factory and the back factory. In her narrative, Karen recalled that the idea to ‘down tools’ spread by word of mouth quickly throughout the factory, and following the front factory staff refusing to work, they were joined in solidarity by the workforce from the back factory. Factory management intervened quickly as they aimed to stop the informal strike developing into a more serious industrial dispute. Karen recalled the concessions that were secured by downing tools:

So, every hour on the hour, we all get an extra five-minute break [...] And it was like, “Get yourself a drink. Chill out!” You know? When I say a five-minute break, actually a five minute break ended up as a ten minute break most times but they wurnae, you know, if it was goin’ on an’ they noticed, come on, they would tell you, “Come on, get a move on! Back into work!” You’ve only got another forty-five minutes to work to get another break, before we’re get another break, you know. But, that’s what I am saying, we only ever, ever had to make a stand once wae that!⁵⁶

This is a revealing example which illuminates the power of solidarity in workplace disputes. The ability to engage in informal strike action was a powerful tool which could be effectively deployed to give workers leverage when there was a dispute over working conditions. In this case, the workers at Bairdwear were able to use this as a tool to escalate their dispute with management, highlighting that this was more than a regular minor grievance, and were successful in forcing management to agree to necessary concessions of additional heat breaks.

A similar situation was recalled by Margaret Kilpatrick at her time working as Personnel Manager at D&H Cohen’s, as she described:

Whilst there was a permanent [shop] steward, I wasn’t aware of any strikes. The... I wouldn’t call it strikes... The most we got to the withdrawal of labour was the heat problem. But that wasn’t a strike. That was the circumstances of the weather and people just couldn’t tolerate the heat.’⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁵⁶ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁵⁷ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

Figure 2.4: A worker using a Hoffman press while manufacturing a raincoat in a textile factory in Manchester, c.1980.

[THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR
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Source: Sefton Samuels, 'Raincoat Manufacturing in Manchester', (1 January 1980).
Licence: Getty Images. Collection: Popperfoto SSA_0415. Image #1238396664.

From Margaret's perspective, there was a distinction between the 'withdrawal of labour' and a formal prolonged period of industrial action. However, D&H Cohen's company rules adopted an authoritarian approach classifying the 'withdrawal of labour or similar industrial action' as 'gross industrial misconduct for which the penalty is instant dismissal'.⁵⁸ Yet, in practice, this was not the case. No workers were sacked, and management adopted a more empathetic, considered approach which recognised that 'downing tools' was a legitimate, effective tactic for workers to use to express their disaffection and force management to address their concerns. In this case, Cohen's management agreed to bring several cold air blowers into the factory to reduce the temperature to a safer, more comfortable working environment.

⁵⁸ D&H Cohen, 'Company Rules and Conditions of Employment', (circa 1985). [personal copy of Margaret Kilpatrick].

In recalling how D&H Cohen's responded to the extreme heat during the summer, Margaret Kilpatrick continued:

You would have breaks where you would order an ice lolly and the girls could get a break but you were limited as to what you could do other than – I mean, I think there was a request for air conditioning to be put in the factory but it was deemed for the amount of really hot days that we got and the disruption and the cost of air conditioning, that wasn't going to happen!⁵⁹

It is notable that Cohen's management was less supportive when workers tried to advocate for an investment in the infrastructure in the factory which would provide a solution to maintaining a comfortable temperature and safer working environment. However, the company responded with small ameliorative measures such as giving workers, who were doing arduous work in very hot conditions, a free ice lolly during their shift. In the context of the extreme heat within the factory, workers did not complain about the additional comfort breaks or being given free ice lollies as these measures did help people recharge and refresh, but it was not the long-term strategic investment in the factory infrastructure which was needed to address the chronic overheating within the factory throughout the summer months to make the factory a more comfortable, safer workplace. Instead, management were more focused on treating the symptom, rather than investing to tackle the cause.

In the garment factories, the substantial Hoffman pressing machines were large pieces of industrial machinery which could cause significant harm if they were misused or if the machine malfunctioned. 'Hoffman' is the brand name of the manufacturer of the pressing machine. It was a freestanding piece of equipment, around three feet tall, and it was used to remove creasing from garments, particularly those made of heavier material such as trousers and jeans, to give a professional finish. In her testimony, Karen Green recalled a traumatic day in Bairdwear's Polmadie factory when a Hoffman pressing machine malfunctioned and trapped the hands of a presser:

She was an older woman. Unfortunately, she had to leave because she, her hand got caught in a machine [...] It was the most horrific scene I've ever seen in my life. Never experienced, I would never like to experience that again. Seen it happening! Knew it was going to happen! [...] An', people

⁵⁹ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

would, you would burn yourself. Right, there was, aye, stuff there to sort it. Sort your burns. So, most times in the back factory, somebody would go, “Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! Oh, I’ve burnt myself!” You know? You were used to it. But this day, she was screaming. And it was, like, when I turned round to look, and I started shouting, and I ran to get the supervisor to go and get mechanics, they were literally tied to this machine. But, they’ve got emergency buttons but the emergency button went off but the machine never came up!⁶⁰

As Karen describes, the Hoffman malfunctioned, clamping itself closed and trapping the woman’s hands into machine as it produced significant levels of heat and steam. The woman was treated for severe burns at the Royal Infirmary in Glasgow with the damage causing life altering injuries. This may have been a more severe and memorable accident which occurred in Bairdwear’s Polmadie factory, but it is not unique. In her study of women workers in Wales during the second half of the twentieth century, Stevens described a similar incident which occurred in Polikoff garment factory, where a presser suffered a severe burn as a result of their finger being trapped in the pressing machine.⁶¹ Moreover, in the thread mills in Paisley, Andrea Anderson recalled severe injuries sustained by workers, including one incident which almost resulted in one woman losing all of her hair after it became tangled in one of the large industrial spinning looms, as she described:

But there were a few accidents, you know, whereas sometimes they didn’t put the shield back on the back and if you’re running and trying to fix things, you could put your hand in and your hand would get...there was a woman who lost half a finger and another woman lost, she nearly got scalped with her hair because she hadn’t put it all in her hat [*sic*: hair net]!⁶²

These types of severe industrial accidents in the factory were rare and due to the severity of the injuries suffered, it would result in management investigating the circumstances leading to the accident and implementing enhanced safety procedures to prevent similar accidents occurring again in the future. Yet, workers were exposed to less severe injuries regularly when using smaller pieces of machinery, as Betty McKee noted: ‘Quite a few times I had been burnt wi’ the steam fae the iron but it wasnae anything serious [...] I mean, it wasnae serious, a serious enough burn

⁶⁰ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁶¹ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.76.

⁶² Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2022.

tae go tae the hospital or that, you know, just a, like a wee burn off your oven or something!’⁶³ This is a revealing comment which points to the porous relationship between women’s unpaid domestic labour and their experiences of paid employment, which will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The experience of getting small burns was also noted by Karen Green when she stated:

Most times it was yourself being careless, you know! When I use the big, industrial machines, it was very rare that you would get burnt. Most of the burning came from the top pressing machines because steam was coming everywhere! And the hand iron. Ye know, you’re steaming, and you forget.⁶⁴

It is revealing that in these extracts that these episodes of being burned were so regular and normalised in the factory that workers downplayed the severity of the burn which, initially, may mirror expressions of working-class masculinity. However, working-class masculinity expressed a pride in their body being recast and altered through industrial injuries, as they were perceived as overt symbols of toughness, reliance, and strength⁶⁵. For women, their effort to normalise these episodes as an inherent aspect of working in a garment factory are an expression of working-class respectability: it was showing solidarity with colleagues. The women were not inclined to complain about their injuries as they knew that many of their colleagues were working having suffered similar injuries. It was a protocol not to complain about your situation as there was an awareness that the people around you – friends and colleagues – were in a similar situation to you, or often in a worse situation. And, ultimately, in a labour process where pay was defined by productivity, in the form of piecework, if women were not working, then they were not earning.

In Karen Green’s testimony, it is notable that she clearly places the responsibility for the burns with the individual, rather than the employer failing to provide the necessary personal protective equipment. This is likely the result of workers internalising the narrative of management that would have been embedded into workers subconscious through the constant repetition that health and safety is the

⁶³ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021.

⁶⁴ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁶⁵ Johnston and McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies’, pp.135-151.

responsibility of individual workers and not the employer. Management deployed this powerful rhetorical tool deployed to distance the company from any responsibility for an accident and placing the liability on individual workers. It was used across industrial workplaces that employed women across Britain, as exemplified by Stevens who, in her study of women's experience of manufacturing industries in Wales, stated: 'If a minor accident occurred, the usual response was that it was their own fault; they weren't concentrating properly, or had been negligent.'⁶⁶ Moreover, Stevens' notes that women commonly blamed themselves for industrial accidents, with one respondent describing herself as a 'clumsy cow' and another referring to herself as 'dopey'.⁶⁷

In one respect, these testimonies are evocative of how textile workers internalised the belief that health and safety was an individual responsibility rather than the social responsibility of the company to use their resources to eliminate potential hazards and risks to ensure the workplace was a safe environment. However, they also speak to the interconnectedness of women's unpaid domestic work and paid employment. McIvor has noted how the growing use of technology among professional works led to increased blurring of boundaries between work and home from the late 1990s onwards due to the ability to connect to work-related tasks in the home through mobile phones and laptops.⁶⁸ Yet, in a different manner, the boundaries between the domestic sphere and paid employment have always been blurred, as Laframboise has noted, as she observed that 'work at a sewing machine has been constructed as a natural extension of women's work within the home'.⁶⁹ In the early twentieth century, and before, sewing, and other textile works, was considered within the remit of women's domestic labour as they made clothes for their children, repaired garments for their family, and produced items to furnish and decorate the home. It speaks to the intensity of women's double burden that they so readily minimised injuries sustained in the workplace. Incidents such as minor burns, cuts, trips, and exhaustion could be sustained by women every day when performing housework in

⁶⁶ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.76.

⁶⁷ Stevens, *Voices From the Factory Floor*, p.76.

⁶⁸ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.18.

⁶⁹ Laframboise, 'Gendered Labour, Immigration and Deindustrialization in Montreal's Garment Industry', p.15.

the domestic sphere. These small injuries were part of women's everyday lives rather than a distinct aspect of women's working lives in the textile industry. The scars gained from injuries suffered in the home doing domestic labour, or in the workplace, in their paid employment, represented the porous nature of these two separates, but deeply connected, spheres which governed women's lives.

WORKPLACE CULTURES

To understand the culture within the garment factory it is critical to understand the relationship between the factories and their contractors. For Bairdwear, Coats Viyella, and D&H Cohen, their main customer was British multinational high-street retailer, Marks & Spencer. Specifically, Bairdwear and Coats Viyella were two of Marks & Spencer's four key suppliers, along with Courtaulds and Dewhirst with the retailer favouring British-based garment manufacturers which aligned with their 'Made in Britain' brand identity.⁷⁰ However, it is important to note that Coats Viyella group was a multi-national company with clothing, furnishing, and thread divisions which derived its assets from successive mergers since the 1960s and included: Carrington Viyella, Frank Miller, NMC, Coats Paton, Tootal, and all of their respective subsidiary brands. In assessing the influence of Marks & Spencer on the British clothing and textile industry, Toms and Zhang have concluded: 'So important was M&S that by the 1980s it could claim that without it, significant sectors of UK textile manufacture would not exist.'⁷¹

In Glasgow's southside, D&H Cohen's was a family-owned enterprise which, by the last quarter of the century, had expanded to operate a medium size garment factory in Pollokshaws. The Cohen family were visible and active in the management of the company with cousins Dennis Cohen and David Dantzie serving as joint managing directors. The company was a welfarist employer and derived significant pride in their reputation for taking care of its workforce. This engendered a sense of loyalty with workers commonly staying with the company for long periods, sometimes several decades. In the era when the city boasted a vibrant garment trade sector, there

⁷⁰ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.18.

⁷¹ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.6.

was a sense that although workers may earn more money in the short-term if they moved to another garment factory, they would not be guaranteed the same level of welfare and consistency of work (owing to the company's very close relationship with Marks & Spencer) that was provided at Cohens. Their welfarist ideals were captured with their significant investment in the construction of a new, modern, staff canteen in 1972, as shown in figure 2.5, which could serve up to 700 meals in less than ten minutes. The quality of the facilities was attested to by former workers, including Kathleen Wisner, who worked in the factory for twenty-five years until its closure in 1995, as she described: 'Now, this factory had all the modern equipment! It had a canteen that was wonderful, and it was supplemented by Mr Cohen!'⁷²

The coverage of the opening of the new staff canteen in D&H Cohen's is revealing because the news article is from Marks & Spencer's in-house corporate magazine, *St Michael News*, highlighting the deeply integrated relationship between Marks & Spencer and its subcontracted manufacturers. This is reinforced by the revelation that the planning of the canteen was aided by two members of Marks & Spencer's 'Welfare and Productivity' team and 'Miss Radley' from Marks & Spencer's Argyle Street store in Glasgow city centre.⁷³ Notably, the article celebrates D&H's Cohen's welfarist values, describing how the Glasgow factory employs a staff nurse, employs women as managers ('staff manageress'), and notes that there has been significant investment in the factory's cloakroom and toilet facilities. The article concludes by stating: 'Joint managing directors Dennis Cohen and David Dantzic have always been interested in improving staff and have worked closely with the team [Marks & Spencer] to achieve the present standard.'⁷⁴

The relationship between D&H Cohen and Marks & Spencer emerged in the 1950s. The Glasgow based firm produced a majority of their goods for the high street retailer and this relationship continued after D&H Cohen was taken over by Claremont Garments. In addition to Glasgow, Claremont Garments managed factories across County Durham in the north-east of England with their business-

⁷² Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

⁷³ *St. Michael News*, 'Productivity Issues', (1972), p.3.

⁷⁴ *St. Michael News*, 'Productivity Issues', (1972), p.3.

model being extremely reliant on their relationship with Marks & Spencer with 97 percent of garments produced by Claremont in 1991 being supplied to Marks & Spencer.⁷⁵ Winterton and Winterton described the consequences of this relationship between retailer and the subcontracted manufacturer, as they explained: ‘Clothing manufacturers which developed such close relationships benefited from the long-term investment, monitoring of quality standards and specialist technical support provided by the large retailers, but the retailers also extended their monopolistic purchasing power into control over production.’⁷⁶

Throughout the oral history narratives, workers recalled the stringent quality checks enforced by Marks & Spencer. If a garment was deemed to not meet the expected quality standard by the finishing department, it would be returned to the operative to repair. Maureen Kyle who worked at D&H Cohen for forty years, starting in 1956 and working in the factory until she was made redundant when the plant closed in 1996, recalled the quality expected by the company:

And when it wis D&H Cohen, if you were a stitch over and Marks & Spencer came in tae dae an audit, you got the full order back. You definitely didn't get a chance to make a mistake. They just... The whole lot came back. No matter if it there was only two in the whole hundred-dozen, you got the whole hundred-dozen back and they had to be aww re-examined and aww that and then sent back.⁷⁷

These thorough quality checks were also recalled by Michelle Nairn, a grade one machinist in D&H Cohen during the 1980s, as she described: ‘Marks & Spencer’s were really strict about the quality assurance processes. And at that stage, they had the logo about being fully British, so they had people in the factory all the time checking things.’⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.18.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Winterton and Ruth Winterton, ‘Deregulation, division and decline: the UK clothing industry in transition’, in, *Rethinking Global Production: A Comparative Analysis of Restructuring in the Clothing Industry*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), by Ian M Taplin and Jonathan Winterton (eds.), p.27.

⁷⁷ Maureen Kyle, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 8 July 2019.

⁷⁸ Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

Figure 2.5: Coverage of D&H Cohen's new factory kitchen and dining facilities for workers



700 meals served in 9 minutes

D. & H. Cohen of Glasgow, suppliers to M & S for nearly 40 years, now have a brand new kitchen and dining room for their 1,500-strong staff. The splendid new facility, which replaces three canteens in different parts of the works, can serve lunches to 700 people in just nine minutes.

Cohen's executive director Bob Rennie organized the purchase of completely new equipment throughout, and the layout of the kitchen and dining room. He was advised by Gus Dilnot and Ted Shneerson of the Welfare and Productivity team, and Miss Radley who came to help from Glasgow Argyle Street store.

The factory also employs a full-time nurse and staff manageress. Over the years cloakrooms and toilets have been modernized and are maintained to a very high standard.

Joint managing directors, Dennis Cohen and David Dantzic have always been interested in improving staff conditions and have worked closely with the team to achieve their present standard.

Source: St. Michael News, 'Productivity Issues', (1972), p.3.

For Bairdwear, their link with Marks & Spencer was established in the 1960s. This was a new venture for the company which was trying to diversify its manufacturing base with the company tracing its lineage to North Lanarkshire's coal, iron, and steel sectors in the early nineteenth century. In to the late 1990s, Bairdwear were continuing to operate sixteen factories across Britain with an estimated 4,360 employees, almost exclusively producing garments for Marks & Spencer.⁷⁹ In Scotland, the company operated five factories, located across Glasgow, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire, and Fife: Inchinnan, East Kilbride, Grangemouth, Springburn, and Polmadie.

Piecework and Time-and-Motion

⁷⁹ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.26.

The piecework wage system used extensively in the textile and garment industry incentivised the workforce to maintain the high-quality standards which were expected by Marks & Spencer. This would stall the production line and on a factory floor governed by time-and-motion studies and piecework pay rates, every second the production line was stopped was an opportunity lost to earn money. The factory was fragmented with workers responsible for executing one small piece of the production process with a high level of precision, rather than one machinist being responsible for the production of a single garment from start-to-finish. Kathleen Wisner described the production line in D&H Cohen when she started in the factory in 1965:

I was never... No one, no one in a factory by that time made a full garment. They, only the people who made the full garment were the, were the people who made the kilts. By the time I would get to Cohen's, it was all...do, you know, someone did the side seams, someone did the zips, someone did the buttons, someone did the buttonholes...⁸⁰

The piecework system incentivised work intensification as operatives aimed to maximise their income. In her study of the garment industry in Montreal, Laframboise quotes Katie Quan, former worker and trade union organiser during the 1982 garment workers' strike in Chinatown, New York, vividly captured the pervasive nature of piecework when she stated: 'I call the piece rate system the system of being both the slave and the slave driver. You're the slave cause you're the one doing the work. But you're the slave driver too, because you force yourself to work faster and faster, believing that the more pieces you sew, the more money you earn.'⁸¹ In D&H Cohen's, Kathleen Wisner described that, in one day, she would put buttonholes in around 'a hundred dozen pairs of trousers'.⁸² This meant that every day, 1,200 pairs of trousers were being produced in D&H Cohen's each day: the equivalent of a pair of trousers being produced every thirty seconds across a ten-hour day in the factory. Taking shortcuts and rushing the process was not incentivised as workers did not wish to be inhibited from earning money by having to rectify an

⁸⁰ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

⁸¹ Katie Quan, 'Memories of the 1982 ILGWU Strike in New York Chinatown', *Amerasia Journal*, Vol.35, No.1, (2009), p.79; Laframboise, 'Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal's Garment Industry', p.30.

⁸² Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

error or poor quality craft on a garment. To maintain the high intensity and high quality, the women operatives on the production line exhibited an impressive level of skill in executing their task with meticulous precision. Former operative in D&H Cohen, Michelle Nairn articulated the practical and psychological impacts of the piecework pay system:

It was in everybody's interest to, number one, get the quality right because if anything, if the finishers at the end were quality checking your stuff, you would get them back to you. So, you would need to stop what you were doing to unpick it and re-do it in your time. So, this was affecting your income. Everything was driven by piecework. From a management perspective, everything was, it's almost like all the systems were already in place to self-drive. And, most people knew what their capacity was in relation to their own speed, technical ability, and people, when you first started weren't given targets but after a while were given targets.⁸³

The textile companies openly admitted that piecework was beneficial as it extracted maximise productivity from workers by incentivised higher productivity. In papers from a Bairdwear company away day in 1983, a section on pay notes that 'financial incentives are a means of rewarding an employee or group of employees through increased payment and should be directly related to each person's contribution to production. The Incentive Scheme should be based on firm principles and rational procedures.'⁸⁴ There was a duality to the piecework system as, despite being inherently exploitative, and forcing workers to operate under increased stress, it did provide an opportunity for women to significantly increase their wages, as there was no ceiling on the money that a worker could earn in one day as their pay was defined by their outcome.⁸⁵ The ability to work relentlessly to maximise their wage was most appealing to married women with children who were making a sizable contribution to the family household income, or single mothers who were the sole source of income. In this respect, this was societal gender norms, which defined women as the primary carers and homemakers, subtly impacted women's attitudes to paid employment and their behaviour in the workplace. In her ethnographic study of

⁸³ Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

⁸⁴ Bairdwear, 'The Samuel Collins Seminar', (26 February 1983), [personal copy of Margaret Kilpatrick].

⁸⁵ Laframboise, 'Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal's Garment Industry', p.48.

working on an assembly line in the early 1980s, Cavendish noted that the wages received by single women were often insufficient to meet their basic needs, leading many single women, including single mothers, to find additional work in a second job, to be able to provide for themselves, and their children.⁸⁶ Although, as Cavendish also notes, it was often the case for single mothers that their low pay was reinforced by gendered division of labour in the domestic sphere, as these women, as the primary carers, were restricted in what additional jobs they could work as their primary responsibility was looking after their children.⁸⁷

From the management perspective, the working day was not dissected by hours but rather by minutes, as Margaret Kilpatrick, former personnel officer in Bairdwear before becoming the Personnel Manager at D&H Cohen, described:

The majority of your workforce are working a 510-minute time-studied, timed day linked to production and piecework so it's a more pressurised environment [...] Because, when you're working on a production line, you're not, everything that you do is timed. It's piecework so the timing study guy's been round and said, "Right, if you're hemming that garment, that takes so long" so, say it was two minutes to do that operation, well, you would be expected to do a thousand a day. Because, roughly, not exact maths but it was minutes. People thought in minutes.⁸⁸

The use of time-and-motion studies, as referenced by Margaret in the above extract, was another defining aspect of the labour process in the British textile industry. Time-and-motion studies in industrial workspaces has a contentious legacy on Clydeside, deriving from the historic strike at the Singer factory in Clydebank when, in 1911, 10,000 workers went on strike, in part due to the company's aggressive implementation of scientific management techniques, including time-and-motion studies, to boost efficiency and productivity. In the clothing factories, time-study engineers would study operatives, recording with forensic precision the length of time that it would take them to complete their assigned task. A former time-study engineer in D&H Cohen in the 1980s, Lisa Lamont, described the process of studying an operative performing their assigned task:

⁸⁶ Cavendish, *Women on the Line*, p.80.

⁸⁷ Cavendish, *Women on the Line*, p.80.

⁸⁸ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

They have to be efficient. They have to be able to pick up the garment, place the ends together, put the buttons on the right place, really efficiently. I rated them. So, if somebody was slacking off, you could tell, and you could rate them maybe about 70 percent. If they were working really hard, you could rate them up to about 130, 140, maybe ridiculously, it's possible to go higher than that. But, in the main, you just wanted somebody to be doing it properly, efficiently and accurately [...] I would work out the value. We call it 'the value' which means how long it should take to produce a dozen garments. And, if they're not performing satisfactorily, it may be brought to the attention of the line manager.⁸⁹

The daily targets assigned to machinists were based on the rating given to them by the time-study engineer. The piece-work wage system empowered the time-study engineer to dictate the operative's ability to earn. The more garments a woman could complete, the more that they could earn. In this respect, operatives were incentivised to perform at a slower speed than their maximum capability when their job was being assessed by a time-study engineer. However, this was a difficult balancing act because if women performed significantly slower than their capability when they were being studied by the engineer, it would in fact inhibit their ability to earn a high wage because if they were constantly exceeding their target by a significant margin, their performance would be re-studied and their target reassessed. Therefore, to maximise their earnings, and to ensure that they would constantly meet their targets, it was advantageous for operatives to work at a level moderately below their normal speed. In Bairdwear, Karen Green recalled how time-study engineers operated in the Polmadie factory:

You could press up to something between 300 to 500 a day. It all depended on the garment. To gee ye a wee scenario, when it was the school trousers, you could put about six pairs of trousers in one of the machines [laughter] So that's the cheat's way [...] And you used to get timed. Used to get a woman would come round with a clipboard and they would time ye to do a garment, right. So, when they came round, you would have that garment in the machine for longer than wit it should be. So, you knew the machine. So, say for instance a garment should have took me something like four minutes. If yer experienced, you could a done that in two minutes because you knew yer machine, you knew wit your machine was capable of doing, you know.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 June 2019.

⁹⁰ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

The recollection by Karen that it was possible to press up to six pairs of children's trousers at once reveals the differential performance levels of operatives depending on whether they were being observed by a time-study engineer, or not. The machine operatives understood the maximum working capacity of their machine but choose to work at a more balanced, standard intensity whilst under observation to ensure they would be set a lower daily target and, in doing so, maximising their income. This was a means of workers asserting autonomy over the labour process in a highly disciplined, tightly managed industrial workplace. It allowed workers to subtly assert control over the intensity of their work and more efficiently maximise their wages through trying to 'game' the system. However, any attempts to 'fix' the piecework system was fraught with danger with the offence of 'falsifying piecework tickets or bons sheets' was an offence which Claremont Garment's classified as constituting 'gross industrial misconduct' punishable by 'instant dismissal'.⁹¹

The level of intense scrutiny created friction between machine operatives and the time-study engineers who, despite appearing to have the same objective of ensuring that the operatives were accurately remunerated for their labour, there was a sense that the time-study engineers were a limb of the management which populated the factory floor. Michelle Nairn discussed the perception of time-study engineers in D&H Cohen during the 1980s:

Everybody hated them [time-study engineers]. Everybody hated them. And even things like, you would get them out to re-price jobs and it just felt like, I suppose it just feels like they were trying to take something away rather than give something to you. But, I don't think the reality of that because it was technical, was like that. It was very much, particularly when I started, them and us. It was the people in the offices against the people who were on the floor. There was definitely. There is no doubt about it. When I was promoted into the personnel office, I took an eighty pounds per week wage drop but everybody seen that as a promotion.⁹²

In Michelle's narrative, the perception that time-study engineers were 'trying to take something away rather than give something to you' encapsulates this conflict with the operatives. The level of scrutiny resulted in workers feeling like suspects who

⁹¹ Claremont Garments (Scotland), 'Company Rules and Conditions of Employment', (circa 1990), [personal copy of Margaret Kilpatrick].

⁹² Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

had done wrong. Although the time-and-motion study was an accurate, objective, and scientific mechanism for assessing a machine operative's efficiency, it was perceived as being prejudiced: it was a tool to reduce, rather than boost, worker's wages. Moreover, the antagonistic relationship between management and workers is captured when Michelle highlights her own experience of moving from being a machine operative on the factory floor to working in the personnel department. Despite her new role in the personnel department meaning that Michelle was taking a £300 per month reduction in pay, she was perceived to have achieved a promotion. For Michelle's colleagues, her new role was about status, not income. She was now part of the management: she was no longer part of the factory.

A time-study engineer in D&H Cohen, Lisa Lamont, when asked about any tension between the machinists and time-study engineers, recalled her experience of the dynamic between machinists and the time-and-study engineers:

I didn't do any machining. I did try machining once because latterly, I had to go out and study the girls when I became a work study engineer. Study the people in the production lines and they would laugh at me and say, "Lisa, I bet you can't even machine!" Yea, but it was more jokey though. There was never any nastiness or animosity or anything. It was just, it was fun but, I'm there to do my job, they're there to do their job. They couldn't do mine. They could with training, of course. As I could theirs with training, but you know, we all had our place and responsibilities.⁹³

It is evident that this type of gentle humour through mocking was used by machinists as a tool to communicate their tension with time-study engineers in a non-confrontational manner. In numerous situations, humour is a commonly deployed emotional tool to diffuse tension or communicate frustration in a non-confrontational manner. This example reflects the reality that the machinists did not personally dislike the time-study engineer on a personal level, but rather they disliked the role they performed, and the power they executed, on the factory floor. Margaret Kilpatrick captured the essence of the relationship between time-study engineers and machinists, when she pointedly remarked: 'They tolerated each other.' When probed further, Margaret added: 'Well, I think it was always viewed as, "Oh, this is going to

⁹³ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 June 2019.

disrupt production!’ Production was king!’⁹⁴ The sense that ‘production was king’ was central to the tension: for machinists, time-study engineers were agents of management who served to maximise production at the expense of machinist operatives’ autonomy and control over their own labour. The perception of time-study engineers being a tool used to reduce workers’ wages was reinforced by Alison Anderson who moved from the factory floor to serving as a team leader in Bairdwear’s Polmadie factory:

Everybody had to have a timing on their job so they could try and work out how long it would take. They were probably the most hated... Apart from managers, they were the most hated people in the business because they would try every trick in the book to work slowly, to try and put extra work in to it because every garment that was pressed fae start to finish was timed on. I mean, that's great, we all had to have they jobs done for them tae produce a time. But, you think, going to the toilet. You wurnae timed for going to the toilet, you wurnae timed for stopping to even get work, to bring work back. You wurnae timed if there a mistake in your garment and you got work back. Some people had to get work back because it wasn't pressed properly. So, none of that was ever added in so you had to work really, really hard [...] When I became a team-leader and time-study was coming out and they would go away back in and come out with you with a team. I mean, sometimes you were like “There’s no way I’m going out to tell they girls that’s their timing”! Because it never, ever, done anything rather than timed you on like, maybe ten garments getting pressed. But, where's the toilet time? Where's their time to maybe go and collect work? Where's their time if you're waiting work, and you're maybe just now, as I say, you're maybe just extending time on work just to wait for other work coming through. But, if you're going to talk tae yer pal for a minute - I mean we all done that - so there's no time. So, it was hard, hard work, factory work wae that.⁹⁵

Alison’s assessment of the popularity of time-study engineers is scathing and unequivocal as she described them as ‘probably the most hated... Apart from managers, they were the most hated people in the business.’⁹⁶ This challenges the romanticised perception that women’s industrial work was devoid of tension, politics, and fundamental debates over worker’s autonomy. It offers a robust counter narrative to the focus on the more convivial, social aspects of women’s experience in industrial workplaces which has been fuelled by oversimplistic interpretations of working-class women’s engagement with paid employment.

⁹⁴ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

⁹⁵ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 16 July 2019.

⁹⁶ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 16 July 2019.

In stark contrast to the directness of her assessment of the popularity of time-study engineers, Alison's analysis of the accuracy and usefulness of the time-and-motion studies deployed in Bairdwear is nuanced, resulting from her own experience working on the factory floor before becoming a team leader. Even in her management role, she continued to view time-and-motion as a management tool to reduce expenditure by reducing workers' wages. The use of time-study engineers was advocated as a means of applying an objective, rational, and scientific approach to manage the factory floor but, as Alison describes, it was not rooted in the reality of factory work. Time-and-motion studies were conducted on the premise that when performing their role, operatives performed their work shielded from all external factors which could affect their performance and that workers would consistently perform at their maximum capacity all day, every day. However, the operatives were human beings, not machines. They were working in active, busy factories. And, ultimately, the operators behaved like people, not machines: they would interact with their colleagues, taking a couple of minutes to chat during lulls in the production, or they would take a short toilet break. As Alison notes, the time-and-motion studies gave no consideration given to the natural breaks in production that would occur throughout the day, including going to collect more garments, waiting for more garments to arrive, or repairing substandard garments. This method of calculating accuracy, speed and output was more suited to the study of inanimate objects such as automated machines, but not human beings.

The 'Illoominator'

The four companies which comprise this study had distinct workplace identities. In the case of Stoddard's, the company's inhouse publication, *The Illoominator*, provides an invaluable and unique insight into the culture of work. It was a slick publication which was launched as part of a broader rebrand of the company's identity, replacing its predecessor, *The Glenpatrick News*, in the late 1990s. The publication of an inhouse magazine was not necessarily an innovative concept but it was an effective strategy which was widely used by large companies to help foster their corporate culture, with Strangleman describing corporate staff magazines as a

key component of ‘welfare capitalism’, highlighting that as early as 1915, some of the largest corporations in the United States including Ford, General Electric, Goodyear, and US Steel were producing their own inhouse magazines.⁹⁷

The Illoominator provided space to highlight the achievements and milestones of workers as well as publicising social events or charity fundraising initiatives. However, a significant proportion of the magazine was allotted to corporate management who used *The Illoominator* to communicate updates to all employees on the company’s financial performance. The management were able to control the content of the magazine and in doing so, shape the internal corporate news agenda as they were empowered to decide which stories were suitable for inclusion. In this respect, *The Illoominator* provided a means to forge the company’s corporate identity and instil the company’s ethos and values into an engaging, digestible, and informative publication which employees would choose to read. In discussing the Guinness inhouse publication, *Guinness Time*, Strangleman captured the essence of their purpose:

While company magazines were by their nature hierarchical and essentially top-down forms of communication, their tone was usually indirect; workers were not told directly what to think. They communicated “general values” rather than “direct orders”. Their simple role was to impart basic information about the workplace, but they had a secondary deeper and more complex role in shaping workplace identity and meanings.⁹⁸

For example, the front page of *The Illoominator* published in Autumn 2000 included an update from the new Stoddard Chairman, Alan Scott; an announcement that Louis De Poortere, a trading partner of Stoddard’s based in Belgium, had declared bankruptcy; and a feature story which focused on a former employee, Jessie Withers, who worked for Templeton’s for 46 years between 1924 and 1970, whose family had decided to donate her MBE medal and other Templetons related ephemera to the company, following her death.⁹⁹ The inside pages included a diary-style feature, titled ‘A Day in the Life of a Territory Manager’; an update on the company’s

⁹⁷ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, pp.38-39.

⁹⁸ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, p.40.

⁹⁹ *The Illoominator*, (Issue 6, Autumn), p.1. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/3

finances; an update on the company's 'Project 2000' which was a comprehensive review of the company's existing IT and technology infrastructure; a note celebrating the wedding of two workers from the Twisting Department, based in Kilmarnock, and confirmation of Matthew Fleming's retirement from the Winding Department at Stoddard's Kilmarnock factory where he worked for thirty-eight years.¹⁰⁰

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, sport was central to the embodiment of Stoddard's corporate identity. It acted as an expression of the company's soft power as it provided the opportunity to showcase the ability and skill of their workforce. This was characterised by *The Glenpatrick News* including a 'Stoddard Sport' supplement which covered the sporting successes of company affiliated teams, company sponsored tournaments, and individual employees. This is captured in figure 2.3 which includes a match report of Stoddard AFC's victory over US Navy Varsity Soccer team; an update on the planned inter-departmental five-a-side football tournament; and coverage of Stoddard's sponsorship of the Scottish Country Cricket Board, discussing Aberdeen's victory over Ayrshire in the Stoddards Carpet Challenge Cup 1989 final.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, a few years later, in 1993, Stoddards hosted an intercompany golf tournament, 'The Buchanan Trophy', at the Westwood Hotel and Country Club in Cumbernauld which was won by the Douglas Reyburn team, with BMK in second place, and Lyle Carpets beating Stoddards by one point into third position.¹⁰² In this respect, sport was important in the construction of company identity as its magnetic attraction brought workers from disparate departments together to serve as representatives of Stoddards on the football pitch, on the golf course, or on the cricket field. The legacy of Stoddard's sporting identity endures in Elderslie where the local authority operated football pitches, situated on Glenpatrick Road opposite the site of the former carpet factory, officially called 'Glenpatrick Playing Fields', continue to be known as 'Stoddard's Park' by local villagers.

¹⁰⁰ *The Illuminator*, (Issue 6, Autumn), pp.2-3.

¹⁰¹ *The Glenpatrick News*, (Summer 1989), p.15. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/2

¹⁰² *The Glenpatrick News*, Issue No.14, (Summer 1993), p.12. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/2

Figure 2.6: 'Stoddard Sport', *The Glenpatrick News*, Summer 1989

THE GLENPATRICK NEWS PAGE 15

STODDARD SPORT

CRICKETING SUCCESS STORY



Rod Turnbull, Joint Managing Director, presents David Johnston, Captain of Aberdeenshire C.C. with the Stoddard Carpets Challenge Cup as winners of the final match against Ayrshire C.C.



Close Call: Aberdeenshire's leading batsman cuts it fine on his way to a century as Ayrshire's wicket keeper breaks the stumps.

STODDARDS BOWLED OVER BY GOOD PUBLICITY

Stoddard's three year sponsorship of the Scottish County Cricket Board comes to an end at the close of this season. It has resulted in extensive publicity throughout the Scottish press which reports each week on the Stoddard Carpets County Championship.

The final of the Challenge Cup was played at Williamfield, Stirling on 24th June, an exciting match that was given headlines on the sports page of Scotland on Sunday and featured throughout the sporting reviews of many other newspapers. Described as the most exciting finish in recent memory it was a close run challenge as Ayrshire scored 233 runs for eight wickets with the victorious Aberdeenshire making 245 runs for nine wickets.

After the match, presentations were made to both teams by Rod Turnbull, joint Managing Director of the company, giving prizes inscribed with "Stoddards Carpet Challenge Cup 1989," the cup itself, of course, going to Aberdeenshire.

The next event, a program competition between all the counties within the Scottish County Cricket Board is to be held at Linlithgow in the near future.



International football relations was the winner on the day as Stoddard Carpets took on the might of the U.S. Navy at Elderslie. The Americans are wearing the striped shirts.

STODDARD SINK NAVY

The April friendly match, played between Stoddard's A.F.C. and the U.S. Navy Varsity Soccer Team was a resounding success!

The match, played at Glenpatrick Road, resulted in a six-nil victory for Stoddards.

However, that has in no way dampened the resolve of the Navy team according to their player/coach, Chief Petty Officer Bill Marosek.

"We look forward to a rematch in the future," he said. That sentiment was echoed by Stoddard's coach, Ian Shiels who also suggested a return game, possibly in Dunoon.

Although the match finished with a comfortable victory for Stoddards, the real winner was scored off the park with the success of the post match hospitality.

In an exchange of mementoes, Stoddards presented Bill Marosek with a tartan rug crafted in the factory.

The American side also received pens and mugs.

In return, Stoddards were presented with a plaque from the Navy team.

Coach Marosek said, "We thoroughly enjoyed the excellent after-match hospitality and were made very welcome by all concerned."

If the enthusiasm of Bill Marosek and his players is anything to go by, it will not be long before a rematch is organised.

The scoreline may not be quite as flattering for Stoddards this time!

AMATEUR FOOTBALL

After hauling themselves up through four divisions, Stoddards AFG have suffered considerable disappointment this season.

After spending two seasons in the Paisley and District league division two, they have now been relegated.

The footballers are still determined to do well next season and interested parties should note that they will be training on Wednesday nights at Johnstone Burgh's Keanie Park.



Soccer organiser Ian Shiels receives a plaque from the U.S. Naval Chief Petty Officer Bill Marosek.

FIVE - A - SIDE

"We can get back on the rails later this year!"

That's the message coming across loud and clear from organiser Ian Shiels who is determined to ensure that the inter-departmental five-a-side tournament goes ahead as it has done for the last two years.

"The tournament runs into a whole factory day out. The competition involves everyone - from the top management to factory level workers.

"Everybody can participate and enjoy a unique opportunity to socialise with staff they would not normally meet. It really is an excellent public relations exercise."

off the park with the success of the post match hospitality.

In an exchange of mementoes, Stoddards presented Bill Marosek with a tartan rug crafted in the factory.

The American side also received pens and mugs.

In return, Stoddards were presented with a plaque from the Navy team.

Coach Marosek said, "We thoroughly enjoyed the excellent after-match hospitality and were made very welcome by all concerned."

If the enthusiasm of Bill Marosek and his players is anything to go by, it will not be long before a rematch is organised.

The scoreline may not be quite as flattering for Stoddards this time!

Source: *The Glenpatrick News*, (Summer 1989), p.15. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/2.

Figure 2.7: *The Illuminator*, Issue 2, Summer 1999



Source: *The Illuminator*, (Issue 2, Summer 1999), p.1. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/3.

As a top-down publication, *The Illoominator* served the purposes of management, providing the space for them to shape the discourse around the company's financial performance, subtly distil the company's core values, and to celebrate the company's achievements and the success of their employees. This was the case when the magazine featured a story on the fundraising efforts of Stoddards workers who, amid the Kosovo War, raised £1,500, and collected clothes and other essential goods, which they donated to the Kosovo Relief Appeal (see figure 2.4). In a display of gratitude for their donation, Stoddard's Carpetfield plant in Elderslie was visited by Renfrewshire Provost John McDowell, who was accompanied by three Kosovan guests: Uke Gashi, Bashkim Uka, and Bajram Mehmetaj.¹⁰³

In early 2000s, less than five years before the company would be declared bankrupt, Stoddard management commissioned a team of consultants, 'Changemasters', to conduct a review of the business operations, including the attitudes of staff. In this process, all employees were invited to participate in answering forty-five questions focused on their experience of Stoddard as an employer.¹⁰⁴ The results of the survey illuminated the simmering discontent and tension between workers on the factory floor and corporate managers with workers stating that they did not feel that they could make a difference to the company performance, whilst also expressing a frustration that management did not listen to suggestions for improvement if they emanated from the shopfloor.¹⁰⁵ These views were being expressed in the context of sporadic layoffs which helped to foster an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty with management noting that a feeling of "am I next" had spread throughout the company.¹⁰⁶ In total, less than one-third of workers completed and returned their survey. This low uptake led management to conclude 'either a lack of interest, a lack of trust in the confidentiality of it [the survey] or a feeling that it is a waste of time so why bother.'¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *The Illoominator*, (Issue 2, Summer 1999), p.1. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/3.

¹⁰⁴ *The Illoominator*, (Issue 5, Spring 2000), p.2. A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. STOD/200/2/15/1/3.

¹⁰⁵ *The Illoominator*, (Issue 5, Spring 2000), p.2

¹⁰⁶ *The Illoominator*, (Issue 5, Spring 2000), p.2

¹⁰⁷ *The Illoominator*, (Issue 5, Spring 2000), p.2.

CONCLUSION

Women's working lives in the textile industry on Clydeside altered significantly throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The increased use of automation and technology on the factory floor transformed the labour process in the garment industry as the old manual bundle production line was replaced with a mechanised overhead conveyor belt system. This led to an intensification of the labour process as companies invested in new technology and new machinery to boost productivity, and in doing so, maximise profits. The increased use of automation effectively deskilled workers as it removed the need for their most valuable attribute, their knowledge, as textile workers transitioned from being specialists to generalists with the added responsibility of performing a more diverse range of tasks. Technology empowered companies to operate production lines without relying on the experience, knowledge, and insights of skilled textile workers. Moreover, automation provided a justification for companies to reduce their workforce. This was witnessed at Claremont Garments where the workforce at their Glasgow factory was reduced by 40 percent following a significant investment in new technology. The desire to modernise the factory developed into an arms race in the textile industry as, due to the competitiveness of the sector, companies wanted to secure their status as the most technologically advanced, most productive, most efficient, most profitable textile manufacturer. It is arguably the case that this created a fertile ground which made it easier for companies to offshore their production to the global South as the textile companies became increasingly less reliant on the experience, expertise, and skills of their workforce. This point will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

Throughout this period of transformation, the piecework pay system endured until the introduction of the national minimum wage in April 1999. This system was pervasive as it exerted control over their work through incentivising women to work hard in order to earn more money. This contributed to an individualistic approach on the factory floor and fractured bonds of solidarity with tensions between sewing

machinists and time-and-study- engineers, who workers perceived as delegates of management. This contributed to a highly disciplined workplace environment with severe punishments for any transgressions of the piecework system. For D&H Cohen, a paternalist employer, the punishment for any deliberate attempts to ‘game’ the system in relation to piecework constituted an offence worthy of instant dismissal. The introduction of the national minimum wage was a seminal moment for workers across Britain, including in the textile industry, as textile workers enjoyed ‘a beneficial impact’ of higher pay as a result of this legislation.¹⁰⁸ The scrapping of piecework ended the link between performance and pay in the textile sector which empowered workers with greater autonomy in the factory as they did not have to operate at their maximum levels of efficiency and productivity in order to earn a reasonable wage. However, its introduction was too late as by 1999, the textile sector was in the grips of an intense period of deindustrialisation, with tens of thousands of textile jobs being offshored to the global South as companies relocated in search of reducing costs and maximising profits. The examples of *The Glenpatrick News* and *The Illuminator* provide a fascinating insight into how textile companies attempted to foster a cohesive corporate identity through distilling the company’s core values through their in-house publications.

On the factory floor, women’s work in the textile industry was labour-intensive and fraught with hazards. In the thread mills, women operated the large industrial spinning looms which was an exhausting shift. In the garment factories, even for workers who were performing less labour-intensive tasks, such as pressers, faced danger in operating machinery which produced large plumes of steam which often left workers with burns. Heat was one of the most prevalent issues recalled by workers in their oral testimonies with company’s adopting ameliorative approaches to address the issue, such as additional heat breaks or providing ice lollies, rather than dealing with the root cause and investing in proper ventilation and cooling systems to the factory. It was the case that companies were willing to invest significantly to improve the factory’s productivity, but they were not willing to invest the necessary

¹⁰⁸ Heyes and Gray, ‘The Impact of the National Minimum Wage on the Textiles and Clothing Industry’, p.95.

resources in technology, such as air conditioning, to make the factory a more comfortable, safer working environment. The oral history testimonies in this chapter have illuminated some more serious industrial injuries sustained in the textile industry. In addition to these more severe cases, smaller incidents such as a sewing needle being embedded in a sewing machinist's finger was considered a regular occurrence. It was common for workers to internalise the company's laissez-faire approach to health and safety and blame their own actions and behaviours for accidents and injuries in the workplace, citing their own negligence or lack of intelligence as an explanation, rather than placing the blame on the companies who had a responsibility to provide a safe working environment.

Moreover, the discussion regarding occupational injuries explored the impact of the double-burden of women's domestic unpaid labour and their paid employment, with the porous relationship between these aspects of women's lives shaping their understandings and reflections of one another. In the domestic sphere, women's labour was tiring, exhausting, and would have many hazards, as Betty McKee highlighted the burns suffered in the garment factory where akin to burns she suffered when using the oven in the domestic setting. The potential accidents and injuries experienced in the textile factory were not new or unique to women as they were considered equitable to the inherent dangers they faced in the domestic sphere when performing housework. In this sense, the last quarter of the century in the textile sector may have been marked by technological innovation, factory reorganisation, and work intensification as the industry strived to be more efficient and more productive, the lives of the women in the factories remained relatively stable as they continued to be defined, by hegemonic societal gender norms, as both the primary carer and homemaker in the domestic sphere, as well as an industrial worker.

CHAPTER THREE

Unravelling Yarn: Mergers, Downscaling, and Closure

INTRODUCTION

In the last quarter of the twentieth century the British textile industry experienced a significant transformation which was embodied by the erosion of smaller, independent textile companies who were either squeezed out of business by larger competitors or bought over by industry leading companies who were seeking to eliminate rivals and consolidate their grip on major, valuable contracts. For example, in the carpet sector, Stoddard's secured its status as the preeminent British manufacturer of quality carpets and floor coverings by acquiring rivals Templeton Carpets and Kingsmead Carpets from the Guthrie Corporation in 1980, followed by the purchase of Belgian company Louis de Poortere in 1991. The general trend in the textile industry was shifting away from family operated enterprises like D&H Cohen and shifting towards multi-national conglomerates like Coats Viyella. If a company did not have the ambition and financial resources to expand and complete takeovers of its competitors then it would likely be vulnerable to a takeover by a larger company, or it would be faced with the prospect of going out of business.

There were distinct experiences across the diverse sectors within the textile industry, but this was an era marked by the growth of large conglomerates, the elimination of smaller, independent, companies, and the offshoring of production in nations with lower wages and limited labour regulations. This reflected the increased globalisation of the textile trade, aided by the end of the protectionist Multi Fibre Arrangement trade deal, which facilitated the mass transfer of manufacturing capacity from more advanced economies, such as Britain, to less economically advanced nations primarily located in the global South. In west-central Scotland, thousands of workers were made redundant as textile companies were liquidated or engaged in capital

flight and moved their production overseas during the long 1990s. In 1993, Coats Viyella announced the closure of the Anchor Mills in Paisley as they shifted their operations overseas. This was followed by Claremont Garments who closed their factory in Pollokshaws in 1996 with 700 workers made redundant and then the news that Bairdwear would close its factory in Inchinnan in March 1999, its East Kilbride factory in May 1999, and its two factories in Glasgow, at Polmadie and Springburn, in early 2000. Finally, in early 2005, it was announced that Stoddard Carpets had ceased to exist after a buyer could not be found to save the company, with the final 120 employees made redundant.

This chapter aims to explain why the UK experienced such a pronounced and acute jobs crisis in the textile sector in the late 1990s, leading to tens of thousands of women being made redundant. It was not the case that we stopped needing clothes, thread, or carpets. Therefore, the chapter will address the key factors which resulted in textile jobs being removed from the British economy and relocated in Morocco, Romania, and Sri Lanka. In doing so, the chapter will adopt a case study approach, assessing the experience of each of the four companies: Bairdwear, Claremont Garments (D&H Cohen), Coats Viyella, and Stoddard Carpets. Furthermore, the chapter will be divided by industry sectors with Bairdwear and Claremont Garments as examples of clothing manufacturing, Coats Viyella as a thread manufacturer, and Stoddard's as a carpet manufacturer. It is important to mention Coats Viyella's status as a hybrid company with half of its business being in thread manufacturing and half of the business being garment manufacturing. Therefore, the experience of Coats Viyella as a thread manufacturer is intrinsically linked to its performance as a garment manufacturer, specifically as one of Marks & Spencer's largest suppliers. In this sense, Stoddard Carpets is distinct from the other three case studies as its experience of decline, contraction, and closure is not inexorably connected with Marks & Spencer.

This chapter will critically analyse the influence of Marks & Spencer's on its suppliers in the clothing sector, including Bairdwear and Claremont Garments, to close their factories or offshore their production to countries in the global South. It

will explore the Multi Fibre Arrangement and the political context which led to the Conservative Government supporting the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement as it ideologically aligned with their support for removing any trade protections as means to promote the free market and increased globalisation. It will then assess how the phasing out of the Multi Fibre Arrangement in the decade following 1995 provided fertile terrain for companies to explore the possibility of offshoring their production in nations in the global South where they could exploit the significantly lower wages and limited labour regulations.

Moreover, this chapter will assess workers responses to these closures, considering their attempts to oppose the closures with coordinated action through their trade unions, most prominently the GMB, and the framing of closure decisions as being immoral and unjust. Also, the gendered nature of the closures will be examined, focusing on accusations made by textile workers and trade union officials that the UK Government's response to the job crisis in the textile industry was dictated by sexist attitudes. These sentiments emerged from the diverging approach from the UK Labour Government in the late 1990s and early 2000s to the women being made redundant from the textile sector and their response to potential closures of the Rover car plant in the Midlands and job losses at the Kvaerner shipyard on the River Clyde.

Finally, the chapter will explore the specific circumstances which contributed to the decline of Stoddard Carpets. This will consider how shifting consumer preferences created a more competitive marketplace for Stoddard's as customers' expectations and demands increasingly prioritised style over quality. Moreover, the chapter will consider how corporate governance and executive management contributed to arguably the most famous British carpet manufacturer, Stoddard's Carpets, having to declare bankruptcy.

CLOTHING

Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA)

To understand the seismic shifts in the clothing and garment industry in Britain during the late 1990s and early 2000s, it is crucial to examine how its trajectory was shaped by the Multi-Fibre Arrangement trade deal. The Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) was a protectionist trade agreement which placed restrictions on the number of garments that could be exported from nations in the global South, where garments could be produced for a significant lower cost, in part as a result of exploitative labour practices including extremely low wages. In essence, the MFA facilitated ‘importing states to impose quantitative restrictions on imports of particular sources, i.e. developing exporting countries or, in some cases, East European countries.’¹ In assessing the impact of the MFA on British textile industry, Toms and Zhang have argued that the trade agreement was broadly beneficial, outlining: ‘The MFA protected markets in developed countries from cheaper labour sources through quotas, Bangladesh being one exception.’² The scheme was introduced in 1974, initially as a temporary proposal to better manage the levels of textile exports from nations in the global South to more industrialised nations in Europe and North America. In 1977, the MFA was renegotiated and extended for a further four years, and was renewed again in 1981, effective until 1986. During the trade negotiations, known as the ‘Uruguay Round’ which were conducted between 1986 and 1993, the issue grew in prominence due to a tangible sense that the Conservative Government were supportive of a European Community proposal to end the MFA and create the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to regulate international trade. In trade negotiations, as a constituent member-nation of the European Community, the responsibility was delegated to negotiators representing the European Community, to reach an agreement on behalf of the twelve European nations affected by the Multi-Fibre Arrangement.³ An agreement was reached at the Munich summit in 1994 that

¹ Ying-Pik Choi, Hwa Soo Chung, and Nicolas Marian, *The Multi-Fibre Arrangement in Theory and Practice*, (London: Frances Pinter, 1985), p.13.

² Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.14.

³ Choi, Chung and Marian, *The Multi-Fibre*, pp.13-20.

the Multi-Fibre Arrangement quota protections would be scrapped through a ten-year phaseout period, commencing in 1995.⁴

In theory, the MFA was beneficial to the textile industry in Britain as the trade protections allowed garments to be produced in Britain without the market being submerged by garments produced overseas for a significantly lower cost. The MFA became a salient issue in UK politics, partly resulting from the number of people directly employed in the textile sector, as well as the associated supply chain employment, leading it to have a strong influence on the performance British economy. In a broad sense, the British Government were supportive of the proposal to scrap the MFA as it aligned with one of the core economic principles of Margaret Thatcher's Premiership between 1979 and 1990 and John Major's Government from 1990 until 1997: reducing barriers to trade across the globe. Moreover, the concept of liberalising trade and promoting free markets was also a cornerstone of the European Community: the formation of the European Economic Community in 1957 was motivated by the objective to create a common integrated market to trade without tariffs. In the wider European context, the debate regarding whether to extend or end the Multi-Fibre Arrangement was occurring in the context of growing democratisation in Europe and the expansion of the European Community. In 1990, German was reunified after the fall of the Berlin Wall, marking the end of the Cold War and the fall of authoritarian regimes as nations of the Eastern bloc emerged to assert their national sovereignty. This was followed by the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 which formed the European Union by the then twelve member states, including the United Kingdom, and the creation of the European 'single market' in 1993 which ensured the right of the freedom of movement of goods, services, people, and money across the member states of the European Union. On the example of Russia, John Redwood MP, Minister for Corporate Affairs, spoke in the House of Commons and outlined the shared mission of the European Economic Community and the UK Government to support democracy and economic growth through removing tariffs and quotas to liberalise economic trade:

⁴ Toms and Zhang, Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.15.

I must refer to the European Community textiles and clothing agreement with Russia, which has been tagged to the debate. It is not part of the MFA but is a response by the European Community to the dramatic changes that are taking place in Russia and eastern Europe. It is part of the policy of the British Government and the European Economic Community to encourage moves to democracy and liberalisation in eastern Europe and Russia by making some changes in the restrictive trade arrangements that currently apply.⁵

The Conservative Government in London faced opposition from the other major political parties. And they failed to command unanimous support among Members of their own party with many Conservative MPs vocally criticising the Government over their tacit support for ending the MFA. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the cross-party support for retaining the MFA, John Redwood MP was keen to distance the UK Government from direct responsibility in renegotiating the MFA emphasising that Britain's involvement in the MFA was interwoven with its membership of the European Community and was eager to downplay the influence that the UK Government would be able to exert on the European negotiators. However, he did outline what the European Community was seeking to achieve through the MFA negotiations:

The European Community has set out a number of objectives on textiles. It is seeking a more efficient safeguard mechanism, better disciplines on unfair trade, the sensible protection of intellectual property, equitable access to raw materials and much more market opening by all countries, including the lesser developed countries. If those countries wish us to remove our protection, it is only fair that we should expect them to reciprocate and allow access to their markets.⁶

In a debate on the Multi-Fibre Arrangement in the House of Commons in July 1990, John Farr, Conservative MP for Harborough, accused the Government of appearing 'to be committed to the dismantling of the MFA, despite warnings from all sides', predicting that scrapping the MFA would risk 480,000 textile jobs across the UK, including 2,800 in his own constituency.⁷ It was his assessment that the Government was failing to grasp the magnitude of the issue, stating: 'We are still not convinced

⁵ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 1206-08, 12 January 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

⁶ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 1205-06, 12 January 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

⁷ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.177, column 660-61, 26 July 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

that the Government are aware of the critical importance, if there is to be an apparel manufacturing industry in Britain, of not throwing out the window what we have in the MFA.’⁸ The ‘warnings’ referenced by Farr were not only the worries of anxious Members of Parliament concerned about rising unemployment in their own constituencies but also from industry representatives and independent experts. For example, in 1989, the UK Government commissioned Professor Aubrey Silberston to produce a report on the implications on any potential changes to the MFA. In assessing the report’s conclusions, Archy Kirkwood, Liberal Democrat MP for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, describing the report’s estimate of between 16,000 and 32,000 job losses in the textile industry if the MFA was scrapped, to be ‘wildly optimistic’, highlighting that in his own constituency in the Scottish Borders, there were almost 7,500 job losses in the knitted garments sector in the first six months of 1989.⁹ This analysis was supported by George Foulkes, Labour MP for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley, who offered a stark warning on the impact on textile communities across Scotland arising from scrapping the MFA:

I would argue that the threat of abandonment of the MFA in Scotland is an even greater danger to employment in Scotland than the closure of Ravenscraig [Steelworks]. That point is not fully appreciated because of the spread of employers throughout Britain and the lower profile of this sector. The hardship, the economic effect and the other problems would be just as severe. The industry has told me that it reckons that the 30,000 jobs which Silberston talks would be lost in Scotland alone, not just in the United Kingdom.¹⁰

The assessment that 30,000 job losses would more accurately describe the situation just in Scotland rather than the whole UK was reinforced by Margaret Ewing, SNP MP for Moray, who stated: ‘I re-emphasise the point made by the Scottish Knitwear Council that if the multi-fibre arrangement is abolished, the upper projected figure of unemployment in the report – 33,000 – will apply in Scotland alone.’¹¹

⁸ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.177, column 660-61, 26 July 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

⁹ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 1222-24, 12 January 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

¹⁰ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 1231-32, 12 January 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

¹¹ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 1211-12, 12 January 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

The assertion that the Multi-Fibre Arrangement protected employment in the British textile industry was contestable and this appeared to be the position of the Conservative Government, with John Redwood MP, portraying the MFA as an outdated and ineffective when he stated: ‘We have been living with the Multi-Fibre Arrangements since 1974. I know that some honourable Members will think that only the MFA provides any protection against job losses; yet since 1974, employment in the industry has halved. There is no evidence, therefore, from the current figures that the MFA of itself has successfully protected employment.’¹² The statistics are clear that employment in the textile sector in Britain declined from 780,000 in 1979, down to 480,000 in 1990, a 61 percent decline in only eleven years under the regulatory framework of the MFA.¹³ Moreover, John Redwood MP argued that the Silberston report concluded that there would be net benefits to the British economy resulting from a phased withdrawal from the MFA.

The decision to end the MFA in Europe in 1994 has clear parallels with the introduction of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States and Mexico which became effective in the same year. The objective of the ending of the MFA and the implementation of NAFTA was the same: to liberalise markets by removing barriers to trade. The implementation of NAFTA synchronised the economies of Canada, the United States and Mexico by removing all barriers to trade such as tariffs and taxes. In his study of the relocations of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) through North America, Jefferson Cowie noted that although NAFTA was perceived as being the catalyst for the company’s decision to move jobs from the United States to Mexico, long before the term NAFTA had entered the lexicon, around 7,000 RCA jobs had been relocated to Mexico with an estimated 75 percent of jobs being lost at RCA’s factory in Bloomington, Indiana.¹⁴

¹² *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 1202-03, 12 January 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

¹³ *Hansard*, HC Debate vol.164, column 662-63, 26 July 1990. Accessed 10 January 2021. Available from: <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons>.

¹⁴ Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labour*, (The New Press: New York, 1999), p.147.

Marks & Spencer

In the clothing and garment industry, Marks & Spencer were the most influential high-street-retailer in Britain and played a central role in determining the fortunes of the sector from 1970 onwards. Throughout their history, Marks & Spencer developed strong relationships with UK based suppliers. From the 1910s onwards, Tom Spencer – one of the company’s founding partners – implemented a policy of buying directly from the manufacturer.¹⁵ This innovative decision cut-out the wholesaler from the supply chain, and in doing so, allowed Marks & Spencer to exert significant influence over the development and production of the garments. The company celebrated being at the forefront of innovation and technology. For example, in 1935, the company established their own Textile Laboratory to perform tests on fabrics which allowed them to dictate to manufacturers the quality and standard they expected, with Worth quoting former Marks & Spencer Chair, Israel Sieff, who described the process: “We test for colour fastness and shrinkage, the character of yarns and dyeing process, and probed into the problems of the production of textiles by modern mass production methods.”¹⁶ In 1947, Worth notes that the company established a ‘Factory Organisation Section’, later renamed as the ‘Production Engineering Department’ which served to assist their network of manufacturers in modernising their factories through the introduction of new technological innovations.¹⁷ In to the 1950s, the company introduced colour standardisation to ensure all Marks & Spencer approved suppliers were producing garments to the exact, detailed specification, providing consistency in quality in Marks & Spencer stores from Dundee to Exeter.¹⁸

Marks & Spencer were proud of their identity as a quintessentially British company. In commemorating their centenary in 1984, Asa Briggs commented, ‘[...] M&S has always tried to buy British wherever it can.’ Moreover, he highlighted the consistency in the company’s ‘Made in Britain’ ethos, recalling the symmetry of the

¹⁵ Rachel Worth, “Fashioning” the Clothing Product: Technology and Design at Marks & Spencer’, *Textile History*, vol. 30, no.2, (1999), p.237.

¹⁶ Worth, “Fashioning” the Clothing Product’, p.239.

¹⁷ Worth, “Fashioning” the Clothing Product’, p.238.

¹⁸ Worth, “Fashioning” the Clothing Product’, p.239.

language and economic rationale from the late 1920s through to the early 1980s, stating: ‘As early as 1927, at M&S’s first Annual General Meeting, Simon Marks told the shareholders that M&S purchased “in this country practically 90 percent of our requirements”, and exactly the same theme was being iterated 54 years later, when Lord Sieff told the shareholders that “more than 90 percent of our clothing, household textiles and footwear were manufactured in the United Kingdom”, and that three out of four St Michael garments were made from fabric produced in this country.’¹⁹ In the post-war era, Marks & Spencer developed a vertically integrated supply chain with a range of British-based suppliers. These ranged from small independently operated companies located in one town or city, but also included larger companies which operated at several locations throughout Britain. It is estimated that by the early 1970s, Marks & Spencer had more than one-hundred different clothing suppliers.²⁰ It was a fragmented network of small and medium sized suppliers, which had expanded on an ad-hoc manner over the course of the century, and was comprised of a coalition of companies, including those who could trace their lineage with M&S back to the nineteenth century like Dewhirst and newer entrants like Bairdwear.

In the case of the companies under examination, Bairdwear established their relationship as a supplier to Marks & Spencer in the 1960s, solidifying their position as one of the ‘big four’ suppliers in the 1980s. In the case of D&H Cohen, the company established a relationship with Marks & Spencer in the 1950s and this continued after their takeover by Claremont Garments. However, the largest supplier was Coats Viyella who were the elite British textile conglomerate of the era. In the 1960s, Coats Paton were part of the ‘big four’ suppliers but their position was elevated in 1986 after the successful takeover of Coats Paton by Vantona Viyella to form Coats Viyella.²¹ In the early 1990s, the Coats Viyella group had a workforce estimated to be more than 60,000 operating in offices, factories, and mills across the world.

¹⁹ Asa Briggs, *Marks & Spencer 1884 – 1984: A Centenary History*, (London: Octopus Books, 1984), p.70.

²⁰ Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer*, p.109.

²¹ David Higgins and Steven Toms, ‘Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy: David Alliance and the Transformation of British Textiles, c.1950-1990’, *Business History*, Vo.48, No.4, (2006), p.463.

The Thatcher era reshaped British society, fundamentally altering the relationship between the State and the economy with a range of measures which aimed to facilitate free-market capitalism through greater economic liberalisation. In theory, the more competitive a marketplace, the more efficient and better quality the product manufactured. However, the burgeoning competition in the British retail sector caused difficulties for Marks & Spencer, threatening their position as Britain's high-street retail store. In the 1980s, various brands emerged, who would subsequently challenge the hegemony of Marks & Spencer on the British high street into the 1990s. In 1982, Next opened its first store, followed by Matalan in 1985, whilst the Arcadia group through its various guises, including Burton, Dorothy Perkins and Topshop, became a more visible aspect of the high-street, and Spanish firm Zara entered the British market in the late 1990s. To challenge Marks & Spencer, these companies sourced their products overseas with, for example, Burton and Next sourcing knitwear from Mauritius and denim jeans from China, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand.²² In contrast with its competitors, Marks & Spencer were failing to capitalise on the financially advantageous conditions presented by increased globalisation and free-market trading. They remained rooted in the 'made in Britain' philosophy which had been so central to the company's identity since its inception. As a result, throughout the 1980s, despite the rise of these competitor brands, Marks & Spencer remained the most important retailer for the British clothing industry, with Toms and Zhang emphatically stating: 'So important was M&S that by the 1980s it could claim that without it, significant sectors of UK textile manufacture would not exist.'²³

Claremont Garments (D&H Cohen)

Although it was a family-operated company with only one factory on the southside of Glasgow, D&H Cohen was an important manufacturer for Marks & Spencer in Scotland. In 1987, the company was purchased from the Cohen family by the Alexon

²² Bevan, *The Rise & Fall of Marks & Spencer*, p.114.

²³ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.6.

Group who paid £14.3 million to complete the takeover.²⁴ The Alexon Group wanted Cohens to operate more like one of their key subsidiaries with *The Times* reporting: ‘Alexon hopes to double margins at Cohens to match those at Claremont Garments, its subsidiary that makes clothes solely for M&S.’²⁵ Over the course of the next twenty-four months, Claremont Garments decoupled from the Alexon Group, including the assets of D&H Cohen, and established itself as a public company operating in the textile sector by 1990. However, this did not alter the plan to invest and modernise the former Cohen’s factory on Glasgow’s southside, in order to maximise productivity, and in turn, return larger profits for shareholders.

The Cohen family had operated their business since the 1950s but by the late 1980s, although making a profit, the factory was not operating at the cutting-edge of the clothing and garment sector. The Glasgow factory required significant investment in order to meet the standard of technology and productivity of Claremont’s five factories in north-east England. In 1986, a report produced by Glasgow District Council, noted D&H Cohen as the second largest textile company in Glasgow (behind only Bairdwear), with a workforce of between 1,201 and 1,300.²⁶ However, in the first five years following Claremont’s acquisition of Cohen’s, the workforce in Glasgow fell by around 40 percent, down to 800, by 1990.²⁷ In Glasgow, the aim was to implement the Claremont model - reduce labour costs, invest in technology to increase efficiency, productivity and most crucially, profit margins. The efficiency of Claremont’s production techniques at their factories in north-east England was unrivalled in the British textile sector as David McGarvey, Managing Director of Claremont Garments explained in an interview in February 1992 with *Management Today*: ‘We’re now at 7-8 days to convert raw materials into bagged stock. There’s no quicker throughput in the industry. The industry lead-time before 1980 was between

²⁴ ‘Business Summary: Alexon pays £14.3 million to buy D&H Cohen’, *The Times*, (13 October 1987).

²⁵ ‘Business Summary: Alexon pays £14.3 million to buy D&H Cohen’, *The Times*, (13 October 1987).

²⁶ City of Glasgow District Council, ‘A Guide to Clothing & Textile Producers in Glasgow’, (Glasgow: City of Glasgow District Council Planning Department, 1986).

²⁷ Annabella Gabb, ‘Making it with Marks and Spencer - Claremont Garments’, *Management Today*, 1 February 1992. Available here: <https://www.managementtoday.co.uk/uk-making-marks-spencer-claremont-garments/article/409222>.

six and eight weeks.’²⁸ The strategy of replacing the role of labour with technology was clear to see to those employed in the Pollokshaws factory as Michelle Nairn who worked in the factory’s Human Resources Department recalled:

I remember when I was in the HR department and all of a sudden they started stripping out layers of management. And what happened was, it was people who had worked there for a long time, just disappeared overnight. What I know is that they were taken home, the company car was taken off them and they just went, you know, it was just quite brutal. And then gradually we lost Number forty-four [No. 44] factory, where the Benefits Agency was [sic: is]. But there was also some investment. So, we went to barcoding. They also looked at investment in some of the production line being automated as well, and lots of automation in the warehouse. So, I suppose it was a change in environment that looked at things evolving through technology rather than a decline... Now looking back, it was definitely a decline in the manufacturing process. But I think people might have mistook the technology taking over rather than it being a decline in the actual business area.²⁹

The closure of the No.44 factory in conjunction with the introduction of the automated barcoding and a shift towards an automated warehousing system was a tangible, visible expression of Claremont’s strategy. However, as Michelle outlines, the introduction of automation and technological innovations in Claremont was framed by the company, and interpreted by the staff, as one part of their evolution as they transitioned from a small, independent family-run firm to a more advanced, modern plant operating as part of a network of factories which carried the Claremont Garment brand. In reality, this was the first stage in the managed decline of a stalwart of Glasgow’s textile industry.

For good and for ill, the company’s viability was inextricably linked with the success of Marks & Spencer. In 1991, Claremont sold 97 percent of its produce to Marks & Spencer, making their relationship almost exclusive.³⁰ This meant that when Marks & Spencer suffered a slump, Claremont felt the direct effect. In the autumn of 1996, the *Daily Mail* reported that Claremont’s profits had dropped by around 60 percent from the first six months of the year, down from £6.8 million to £2.7 million.³¹ This

²⁸ Gabb, ‘Making it with M&S’, *Management Today*.

²⁹ Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

³⁰ Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.18.

³¹ Brian O’Connor, ‘More Uplift is Needed at Sagging Claremont’, *Daily Mail*, (18 September 1996), p.55.

report raised the spectre of closure at Claremont's Glasgow factory for the first time in public, with news reports revealing that the company was in discussion with the representative trade unions regarding the future of the plant.³² In the following six weeks, the company held consultations with the GMB Union, the Scottish Office and the Glasgow Development Agency. For those employed at the factory, there were small indicators in the months preceding this consultation period which cast severe doubt on the long-term viability of the Glasgow factory. Whilst discussing the relationship between Claremont Garments and Marks & Spencer, Michelle Nairn recalled one of the more opaque and worrying changes introduced by the company in Glasgow:

Marks & Spencer were there right up until the end and there was never any incline at that stage of manufacturing for anyone else. I think what happened was... So, we had it on ID code on the labels, on the Marks & Spencer labels, for the Glasgow factory. And, what happened was, we lost it. And all of a sudden, there was different ID codes. This was just when I left because I left before... I never got any redundancy. I left before they announced the closure. And as soon as they lost the ID code, a lot of people were saying, "Oh, what's going on?" D'you know? "This isn't good." So, I think there was probably some signs before that, that people didn't really piece together but as soon as we lost that Identity (ID) Code, I think that was a big sign for people.³³

The removal of the unique ID Code for the Pollokshaws factory on the Marks & Spencer garments caused justifiable concern for staff who recognised this as another step towards the erasure of the Glasgow plant. Implicitly, the replacement of the ID Code for the Glasgow plant with different ID Codes meant that many of the garments being 'finished' in Pollokshaws, had been manufactured at another factory. This heightened the anxiety among the workforce who were being faced with the prospect of losing their jobs.

Furthermore, in the preceding weeks, there had been speculation – and even confirmation in September – that the Glasgow factory was marked for closure. However, Claremont rescinded this notice of closure and stated they would establish a taskforce to explore ways to save the factory. This caused anxiety and tension on the shopfloor by workers who felt they were not being treated with sufficient respect

³² O'Connor, 'More Uplift is Needed at Sagging Claremont', *Daily Mail*, p.55.

³³ Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

and were suspicious that the taskforce was being used as a smokescreen for the company to justify the closure. On 19 September 1996, there was a lightning strike, with workers leaving their machines and ‘downing tools’ until management offered a clear and honest statement regarding the future of the plant. One worker, who spoke anonymously to the *Daily Record*, stated: ‘We refused to work until we’d been told what was going on. One minute we were closing, then there was a rescue bid. We’ve been mucked about.’³⁴ The decision to take strike action was not taken flippantly. It was a serious escalation as the piece-work system of pay in the garment industry caused women to lose potential wages for every minute they were out on strike and not sewing garments on the factory floor. The insecurity caused by low pay, generally, served as a moderating influence among discontented workers who were often, as Cavendish describes, ‘living from week to week and day to day.’³⁵

In her study of women’s involvement in industrial disputes at FIAT in Italy and LIP in France, during the 1970s and 1980s, Frisone has argued that the sexist stereotype that women only work for pin-money – the idea that a women’s wage is only for the purchase of frivolous accessories, rather than being a meaningful contribution to a household income – was influential in shaping male perspectives of women’s role in paid employment.³⁶ In these cases, Frisone shows how sexist societal values infected the workplace as decisions on redundancy for women workers were made on the premise that a women’s primary responsibility lay in the domestic, private-sphere, as a mother and homemaker, not an industrial worker.³⁷ The reality was, most women were faced with the seemingly impossible double burden of working full-time in paid employment to earn a wage, whilst conforming to societal gender norms and being the primary homemaker and caregiver in the domestic sphere. This relentless, exhausting cycle of women’s double burden of unpaid and paid labour was vividly captured by McCarthy in her long history of married women’s experience of the double-burden in Britain, as she described:

The popular cliches of women spinning plates, juggling balls and battling against the clock struck a chord because many mothers felt that lives *were*

³⁴ ‘Angry Staff Down Tools’, *Daily Record*, (20 September 1996), p.23.

³⁵ Cavendish, *Women on the Line*, p.80.

³⁶ Frisone, “‘We won’t go back home!’”, p.3.

³⁷ Frisone, “‘We won’t go back home!’”, p.17.

defined by tension and stress: the stress of making ends meet; the stress of finding reliable childcare; the stress of competing for careers designed for men with full-time wives; the stress of looking after elderly parents, staying in touch with friends, and remembering important birthdays; the stress of keeping everyone happy.³⁸

In the context of the Claremont Garments dispute, around two decades later, in the late 1990s, residual sexist beliefs that a women's wage was pin-money may have continued to influence men's understanding of women's paid employment, but, as a thesis, it was empirically discredited by Harkness et al who unequivocally stated that it 'wrong to think of men as going out to work as breadwinners while women work for pins'.³⁹ Their research revealed that in Britain, whilst, on average, men's income remained higher, women's contribution to a household income was significant, and continuing to rise, due to fewer women living in families headed by a male breadwinner; increased participation in the labour market among working-class and middle-class women; and a notable rise in the proportion of households headed by women.⁴⁰ In this context, even if Claremont male executives decision-making regarding the proposed closure was subconsciously infused by the sexist notion of women's work being motivated by earning pin-money, for the women, their jobs were worth fighting for: it was worth the short-term sacrifice of losing pay due to strike action to try and achieve their long-term objective of saving their livelihoods.

Ultimately, on 18 October 1996, the company announced that the factory on Coustonholm Road on Glasgow's southside would close. Announcing the closure, a spokesperson for the company stated: 'Having considered all alternative options, it has not proved possible to establish any basis for a long-term future for the company in the Glasgow area. It is with regret that manufacturing in Glasgow will definitely cease.'⁴¹ The closure put the 700 workers employed in the factory at threat of redundancy. In a tokenistic attempt to lessen the damage, Claremont announced that an additional 250 jobs would be created at Peterlee in County Durham, where the

³⁸ McCarthy, *Double Lives*, p.338.

³⁹ Susan Harkness, Stephen Machin, and Jane Waldfogel, 'Evaluating the Pin Money Hypothesis: The Relationship between Women's Labour Market Activity, Family Income and Poverty in Britain', *Journal of Population Economics*, Vol.10, No.2, (1997), p156.

⁴⁰ Harkness et al, 'Evaluating the Pin Money Hypothesis', pp.154-156.

⁴¹ '700 Jobs Threatened by Claremont Closure', *The Independent*, (18 October 1996), p.27.

company was headquartered, with redundant workers from the Glasgow factory given first preference to fill these roles. However, to relocate from Glasgow in west-central Scotland to Peterlee in the north-east of England, almost 200 miles apart, was not an attractive, practical, or viable option for the majority of the workforce.

The confirmation of the closure did not, necessarily come as a surprise to the workforce. Lisa Lamont who was employed as a time-study engineer at D&H Cohen between 1987 and 1996 recalled being informed of Claremont's decision to close the Pollokshaws factory:

We were all in the canteen and, I can't remember the guy's name now, but he just told us and there was a bit of an intake, a sharp intake of breath I suppose but we all kind of knew anyway that it was going to come. He wasn't... He wasn't too pleased. He wasn't even comfortable telling us. He was trembling actually, telling us. There were a lot of people there. It could have gotten nasty but we're all human. We're all decent human beings. We knew it was going to happen. We knew pretty much that Claremont Garments from Peterlee really just wanted the Marks & Spencer's contract, and they got it, to the detriment to hundreds and hundreds of people.⁴²

The statement that 'It could have gotten nasty but we're all human. We're all decent human beings.' illuminates Lisa's effort to disassociate the closure with the management in the Glasgow factory who communicated the news of the closure, viewing a manager as merely the messenger of bad news, rather than the actor responsible for the closure. This reveals a critical understanding of the decision among the workforce who recognised that their redundancy, and the closure of the factory, was the institutional responsibility of Claremont Garments, rather than any individual member of local management. For the Glasgow workers, the primary objective of Claremont Garment's purchase of D&H Cohen was to extend and secure their relationship with Marks & Spencer as one of their key suppliers. However, this is contestable as over the four years prior to the closure of the Glasgow factory, Claremont invested millions of pounds in new technology to make the Pollokshaws factory more efficient and productive, whilst lowering labour costs. Although it is true that Claremont's strategy in Glasgow was to reduce the number of people employed in Pollokshaws, their significant investment in the factory strongly

⁴² Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 31 May 2019.

suggests that it was not always their intention to close the factory. If Claremont's primary objective was to takeover D&H Cohen's contract with Marks & Spencer to extend their own portfolio of manufacturing for Marks & Spencer, the site could have been shut down within the first twelve months, without spending millions of pounds on new technology, with the garment manufacturing transferred from Pollokshaws to Peterlee.

Significantly, logistics played a crucial role in Claremont Garments decision to relocate their production from Glasgow to Peterlee, as the company wished to streamline their manufacturing by centralising the work in County Durham. Initially, during discussions with the GMB Union, the company cited 'the difficult shape of the building' on Glasgow's southside as a driving reason behind the closure. However, this was simply not a credible justification. Although Claremont were almost wholly dependent on their relationship with Marks & Spencer, the decision to close the factory in Glasgow was not influenced or incentivised by Marks & Spencer. In fact, in the months preceding the news of closure, Claremont Garments signed off on a new five-year-deal, worth £7 million with Marks & Spencer.⁴³ In the weeks preceding the closure, the company were offered support by the Glasgow Development Agency, including proposals on workforce training and factory adaptation and redevelopment, in an effort to encourage Claremont Garments to retain a presence in Glasgow. However, the company opted to reject this support. In *The Evening Times*, a spokesperson for the Glasgow Development Agency commented: 'We did everything in our power to offer assistance to the company in order to help retain jobs in Glasgow but then the company has to decide [...] We put forward a number of proposals on training and property and we were very disappointed when they decided to move out of the city.'⁴⁴ In the five years prior to the closure, Claremont Garments received £200,000 in grants, from public funds, to help train staff.⁴⁵ Despite the assistance offered, and received, by Claremont Garments the company did not wish to maintain a presence in Glasgow. From a

⁴³ Vivienne Nicoll 'Closure Row Factory is to Become Flats: Bulldozers Make Way for New Development', *The Evening Times*, (26 September 2002), p.15.

⁴⁴ Josie Saunders, 'Stitched Up! Garment Bosses Sack 700 in Glasgow...Then Buy £23m English Firm', *The Evening Times*, (27 January 1997), p.13.

⁴⁵ Saunders, 'Stitched Up!', *The Evening Times*, p.13.

corporate standpoint, they viewed the Glasgow factory as financially unviable. They prioritised efficiency and productivity in their decision-making and this was the case for the Glasgow factory. Why employ 700 workers in Glasgow to produce the same level of output that could be achieved by recruiting an additional 250 workers at Peterlee? A Claremont Garment spokesperson, quoted in *The Independent*, was candid that the closure of the Coustonholm Road factory was motivated by a pursuit of maximised efficiency: ‘But if they were going to retain the work here it had to be more efficient and if they can make the same clothes with 250 jobs in the North-east, what option is there?’⁴⁶

In Scotland there is a strong precedent for public finances, through regional assistance packages, being awarded to private companies as an incentive for them to open and maintain manufacturing plants. For example, Gibbs and Phillips revealed that between 1956 and 1988, Caterpillar received £62.5 million in public finance from the UK Government to support their operation of their plant at Tannochside, Uddingston, which had a workforce of around 1,300.⁴⁷ Moreover, in Scotland, Moffat described Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) as the ‘largest and oldest business support scheme’ in the country. In essence, RSA provides government investment in areas with higher levels of multiple deprivation, previously designated by the European Union as ‘Assisted Areas’.⁴⁸ This investment is commonly targeted at companies looking to establish a plant in an area which suffers from multiple aspects of deprivation in relation to seven key factors: access to services, crime, employment, education, health, housing, and income. Moffat’s study concluded that ‘the RSA scheme is successful in achieving its aim of preventing employment loss’, estimating that the probability of closure is reduced by around 15-20 percent for plants in receipt of RSA support from the Scottish Government.⁴⁹ However, it was the case that Claremont Garments were in receipt of public funds to assist with maintaining its factory on the southside of Glasgow, but this was not sufficient to

⁴⁶ ‘700 Jobs Threatened’, *The Independent*, p.27.

⁴⁷ Gibbs and Phillips, ‘Who Owns a Factory?’ Caterpillar Tractors in Uddingston 1956-1987’, *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, vol.39, (2018), p.124.

⁴⁸ John Moffat, ‘Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) in Scotland: Does it Make a Difference to Plant Survival?’, *Regional Studies*, vol.49, no.4, (2015), p.569.

⁴⁹ Moffat, ‘RSA in Scotland’, p.578.

stave off plant closure. It is arguable that available funds would merely have delayed the closure for another twelve months, as for Claremont Garments, the core of the issue was around efficiency and geography. Although financial support from the then Labour-Liberal Scottish Executive would have been welcomed, it would not have resolved the issue that it was beneficial for Claremont to utilise their existing manufacturing infrastructure in Peterlee to maximum capacity and concentrate their production in-and-around the north-east of England.

The decision to close the Pollokshaws factory was in-line with Claremont's strategy to maximise efficiency, maximise productivity, and reduce labour costs. If they could achieve this, it would provide the company with an advantage over their rivals and therefore, allow Claremont to remain competitive in trying to secure lucrative Marks & Spencer contracts, despite being inferior in size to Bairdwear, Coats Viyella, Courtaulds and Dewhirst. The closure of the Glasgow factory was one part of the company's wider restructuring which aimed to secure a future for the company through remaining an attractive supplier by significantly reducing their costs and boosting their profits. And this restructuring included shifting production from the British Isles to countries with significantly low labour costs, lower standards for working conditions and lax labour laws. Notably, in the year following the closure of the Claremont factory on the southside of Glasgow, Marks & Spencer's overseas outsourcing increased by one-quarter.⁵⁰ By March 1999, Claremont Garments were involved in the operation of ten factories in Morocco where the basic wage was 61 pence per hour (£119 per month).⁵¹ Moreover, by the new millennium, Claremont had established supply networks in central and eastern European, allowing them to source coats and jackets from Lithuania and Slovakia, as well as establish a factory in Romania.⁵²

⁵⁰ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.19.

⁵¹ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.19.

⁵² Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.19.

Bairdwear (William Baird)

In the 1990s, Bairdwear was a key player in the textile sector, serving as one of the 'big four' British Mark & Spencer suppliers, following Courtaulds, Coats Viyella, and Dewhirst. They employed over 4,000 workers at sixteen different factories across the UK. Scotland was particularly important for Bairdwear, with roughly one-quarter of their UK based workforce (circa 1,000) and one-third of their factories (five) located north of the Cheviots. In addition, the company also employed 2,900 workers overseas, including a significant presence at three factories in Sri Lanka.⁵³ In total, by the mid-1990s, over 40 percent of Bairdwear's workforce was already based outside England, Scotland, and Wales, with the company having a significant presence in the global South. There were vivid memories recalled of garments which had been made in Sri Lanka arriving at Bairdwear factories in Scotland, with a small group of workers assigned to attach the labelling, including the critical 'Made in Britain', before being distributed to Marks & Spencer stores. On 10 March 1999, the *Daily Record* quoted an anonymous Bairdwear worker who had been employed in Inchinnan since 1984, on the increasing use of factories in Sri Lanka: 'We were starting off contracts because they needed our skills to see how a garment was made up, then they took the contract off us and shipped it to Sri Lanka where they get it done for pennies. The work was coming back and we were having to repair it because it was so badly done.'⁵⁴

This tactic of outsourcing production overseas, before returning the almost completed product to be 'finished' in a native factory, was not new. For example, in North America, Jefferson Cowie has recorded that as early as the 1960s, workers at a Radio Corporation of America factory in Bloomington, Indiana commonly found product parts in the warehouse which were labelled as 'Made in Taiwan'.⁵⁵ It was an example of how free-trade enabled corporations to utilise local-wage economies for manufacturing, whilst continuing to tap into an undercurrent of patriotic

⁵³ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.26; BBC News, 'M&S Down-turn Threatens 4,300 UK Jobs', (22 October 1999).

⁵⁴ Cara Page, 'Plant no.2 Closed by M&S Crisis; Anger as 200 are Thrown on Dole', *Daily Record*, (10 March 1999), p.6.

⁵⁵ Cowie, *Capital Moves*, p.127.

consumerism by marketing their brand as native ('Made in Britain'), which allowed them to charge a premium for their product.

On 19 November 1998, Bairdwear's decision to close two of its factories in England, located at Brierley Hill, West Midlands, and Fence Houses, County Durham, should have been a warning alarm to the company's Scottish employees. However, a spokesperson for Bairdwear was unequivocal in stating that there were 'no further closures planned' and blamed the closure of Brierley Hill and Fence Houses on falling sales in Marks & Spencer high-street stores.⁵⁶ However, the closures continued as redundancies accelerated, with Bairdwear announcing the closure of their factory in Inchinnan, Renfrewshire in March 1999. This was swiftly followed by an announcement on 7 May 1999, confirming the closure of Bairdwear's factory in East Kilbride, resulting in 260 redundancies.⁵⁷ Betty McKee, who worked in Bairdwear's Inchinnan factory as a machinist recalled the workforce being informed that the factory would be closing:

We had a meeting. We were all taken into the canteen and we had a meeting. The boss and all that were there, and they told us that we had lost the contract. They didn't want our work anymore and it was going to Sri Lanka. And of course, we were aww sad. I mean some of the people there had been there since they were fifteen-year-old, since they had left school. But aye, it was a sad day. And, you met a lot of people in there as well. It was happy times. In a way you feel let down. You just feel drained. You feel... You're saying to yourself, "What have we done wrong?" We couldn't have done anymore, you know.⁵⁸

Betty's comment 'We couldn't have done anymore, you know' is revealing of the workforce disassociating Bairdwear from the liability of the factory closure, which she identifies as the responsibility of Marks & Spencer. It is notable that there was clear communication from Bairdwear management that the closure of the Renfrewshire factory was a result of Marks & Spencer choosing to offshore their production to Sri Lanka. In doing so, the ire of the women made redundant was

⁵⁶ Simon Bain, 'Baird Faces the Closure of Two Factories', *The Glasgow Herald*, (19 November 1998). Available here: <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12344690.baird-faces-the-closure-of-two-factories/>. Accessed on 27 January 2022.

⁵⁷ Shaun Milne, 'Act Now or Rag Trade is in Tatters; Fears as Another 260 Jobs Are Axed', *Daily Record* (7 May 1999), p.2.

⁵⁸ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 10 February 2021.

aimed firmly at Marks & Spencer. Betty continued, discussing how her anger and disappointment towards Marks & Spencer led her, and numerous former colleagues, to engage in an informal boycott of the company's retail stores in the months following the closure:

I know quite a few of us didn't shop in Marks & Spencer for a while after that. But we did, we felt really down and aww that. Especially that they were going there [Sri Lanka]. You knew it was cheap labour and everything you heard that was going on. But aye, a lot of us boycotted going into Marks.⁵⁹

This recollection firmly placed the liability for the closure with Marks & Spencer. These smaller – although significant – tremors offered sufficient warning that Bairdwear could not survive if it continued to be overly reliant on Marks & Spencer contracts. Statistics recorded in the *Daily Record* noted that between September 1998 and May 1999, Bairdwear's production of Marks & Spencer's shirts had fallen from 20,000 per day to only 2,000 – a 90 percent reduction in eight months.⁶⁰ A team leader at Bairdwear's factory in Polmadie, Glasgow, Alison Anderson, recalled the tangible sense of apprehension among the workforce following the closure of Inchinnan and East Kilbride:

We had a wee suspicion because me, myself, working with the management, were saying, when you only had so much tae make a garment and it wisnae looking good wae other companies abroad making it so cheap. And it was always talk like, "It's gonny aww go abroad. One day it's gonny go abroad." So, it was definitely in the pipeline but work still came through for a good while but then we started tae notice like other, you know I was saying tae you on the phone, like there were other companies coming in because they tried tae get other work in tae keep us going as Marks were cutting us really neat wae doing the work. They were like nit-picking with things. Like, work coming back wae like wee silly things, so you could kind of see that things weren't going right. They were trying tae make sure, as if we were making mistakes, as if that's the reason why we're taking it away and giving it to somewhere. So, we did try and bring other wee companies in tae give us work, tae work alongside Marks and they just widnae have it. And then it got tae the stage... We did see it coming because as I say, things were going downhill. We wurnae getting a lot of orders in. Work was a lot more sparse than what it should be. We used tae dae a wee trouser called the "budget trouser" which is like the wee granny trouser which will sell non-stop in Marks - that was there. But see new styles? New styles wurnae coming in as quick as they would usually come in. And the girls were all saying: "What's happening in here? Where's the new contract?" You'd have spaces in between

⁵⁹ Betty McKee. Interviewed by Rory Stride on 10 February 2021.

⁶⁰ Milne, 'Act Now or Rag Trade is in Tatters' *Daily Record*, p.2.

contracts and you'd have girls without any work. We'd say: "We're just waiting on it coming in. We're waiting on it being passed and then it'll..." So, we did see it.⁶¹

On 22 October 1999, it was announced that Marks & Spencer had severed its contract with Bairdwear, putting at risk around 4,300 jobs in the UK.⁶² In news coverage, the BBC reported Marks & Spencer's plans to move the production of their garments overseas: 'Marks & Spencer has issued two profit warnings in recent months and has been accelerating the shift away from its traditional "Buy British" policy in favour of sourcing from lower-cost overseas suppliers'.⁶³ The report continued with a statement from a spokesperson on behalf of M&S who stated: "We've identified suppliers who can help us to deliver on both price and quality who are leaders in their field"⁶⁴ On the day that Bairdwear announced the closure of its factories at Polmadie and Springburn, Alison Anderson was on maternity leave and recalled going in factory after learning of the news:

It was a phone call out the blue on a Friday, a Friday afternoon, I got a phone call fae ma husband tae say 'I think your work is closing doon'. And I just thought, 'There's no chance of that'. Anybody find oot, I'd be one of the first ones being a team leader. And he says, 'Well I think ye better get on tae yer work because it's saying everywhere and its actually mentioning yer factories, Springburn, Polmadie... You're all going.' I mean I felt physically sick, knowing the fact I'd just bought this new house and ma wee boy. And I phoned in ma work and it was actually ma sister who came on the phone and she said: 'I'm just aboot tae phone you. We've just came in and it's been a phonecall' she says. I don't even think... The girls on the floor were just finding out because they'd let it loose. And she says, 'If you can make it in, he wants aww his team leaders in'. I was off on maternity leave, so I had tae get ready, give ma wee son tae ma mum and go in tae ma work [...] It was absolutely terrible. By the time I went in tae the factory, it was all over the place. There was hardly anybody working that day, everybody had aww downed tools. At the Union, 'What's happening?' You can imagine. They were screaming and shouting at us [team leaders] for us tae tell them what was going on and we must have known beforehand and I bet you we've got jobs lined up. I mean, they were just so angry with us and I get that. And trying tae tell them that we knew nothing like them... We ended up going in tae a meeting and we had aww said like... I don't even think we said tae the lassies 'Get by tae work'. We were like, 'Let us try tae find oot what's going

⁶¹ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15th August 2019.

⁶² BBC News, 'M&S Down-turn Threatens 4,300 UK Jobs', (22 October 1999). Accessed on 18 October 2020. Available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/482225.stm>.

⁶³ BBC News, 'M&S Down-turn Threatens 4,300 UK Jobs', (22 October 1999).

⁶⁴ BBC News, 'M&S Down-turn Threatens 4,300 UK Jobs', (22 October 1999).

on and we'll come out and tell you'. I mean there were girls crying and everything outside. It was unbelievable. Horrible. One of the most horriblest days. And we went in tae the meeting. But our manager knew absolutely nothing bar tae say that they'd just found oot that aww the contracts were away.⁶⁵

The closure elicited a shock response among all the workers at Bairdwear. Despite the indicators in the preceding months, in Polmadie, there was a sense that 'It'll not happen to us.' The response on the factory floor was visceral with palpable anger as workers accused management of concealing prior knowledge of the closure and alleging management had used this information to arrange new jobs for themselves once Bairdwear closed. However, Alison, as a team leader, recalls the announcement as being a shock to the team leaders and management. Although this appears to contradict Alison's earlier statement that she, along with other members of the management had a suspicion Marks & Spencer may offshore their work, this assessment is likely tainted by hindsight. Moreover, being aware that an event that you do not wish to occur and hope to avoid, may occur in the near future, does not negate emotions of shock and upset when that event does occur. Furthermore, the communication of the news, which was released to the press whilst simultaneously being relayed to the workforce by a faceless voice through the telephone added to frustrations felt by the workers. It was unaccountable, impersonal, and relayed the news in an incomplete and patchy manner, raising numerous unanswered questions regarding the details of the closure, causing further anxiety, stress, and tension on the factory floor.

The closure was the manifestation of the double-edged sword of being an exclusive manufacturer for Marks & Spencer. In the period from 1985 until the millennium, Toms and Zhang highlighted that there was a net benefit for manufacturers to serve as suppliers for Marks & Spencer as it protected them from the worst episodes of market volatility.⁶⁶ However, ultimately, it was Bairdwear's overreliance on this relationship that accelerated its collapse. To remain financially competitive, Marks & Spencer engaged in capital flight, shifting most of their manufacturing operations

⁶⁵ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15th August 2019.

⁶⁶ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.10.

overseas, resulting in tens of thousands of job losses for those employed by British-based suppliers. There had been a gradual shift in attitudes within the company during the second half of the 1990s, regarding overseas production. In the summer of 1999, this process was accelerated when Marks & Spencer contracted the US management consultancy firm, McKinsey & Company, to review Marks & Spencer's vast network of suppliers. The report, published in autumn-winter 1999, recommended that Marks & Spencer significantly reduce and streamline their supplier network, primarily centred around three elite firms with extensive knowledge and experience of international markets.⁶⁷ The three firms were Courtaulds, Coats Viyella and Dewhirst.⁶⁸ The small and medium British based companies whose viability was dependent on their relationship with Marks & Spencer, including Bairdwear – despite their sizable overseas operations - lost out.

In Cowie's study of the RCA Corporation's journey in the United States, which relocated from Camden, New Jersey, to Bloomington, Indiana, to Memphis, Tennessee and finally, Ciudad Juarez, on the south banks of the Rio Grande, he posits that throughout the twentieth century, corporations have been incentivised to relocate on the basis of various economic and social conditions which could be more advantageous than their current arrangement.⁶⁹ Former Technical Manager at Dewhirst, Carol Barry describes how the company were incentivised through the World Trade Organisation designation of Tangier, Morocco, as a 'special economic zone': We [Dewhirst] owned it [the factory]. It was in a Special Economic Zone. That's what I was saying about the WTO [World Trade Organization]. So, there were Special Economic Zones, so... I can't remember... I think it might have only been 2 percent tariff. So, the tariff was much reduced.⁷⁰ In the textile industry, corporate globalisation has allowed for a greater implementation of specific production methods and processes. In her study of the shift of the apparel and garment trade from North America to nations in the global South, Collins stated: 'By the turn of the twenty-first century, the vast majority of apparel firms could effectively locate, or

⁶⁷ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.25.

⁶⁸ Toms and Zhang, 'Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry', p.25.

⁶⁹ Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labour*, (New York: The New Press, 2001).

⁷⁰ Carol Barry, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 2 August 2021.

subcontract, their production in just about any part of the world.’⁷¹ Although this may appear as a broad generalisation which does not consider the nuances and unique circumstances of each company’s overseas operations, it is a strong argument that the advancement in technology made travel and communication easier, quicker and less costly, which allowed companies to have more controlled oversight of the production process overseas. In this respect, technology made overseas production a more attractive and realistic proposition.

The pursuit of profit through more efficient, lower cost production does not occur without any trade-offs. Those circumstances only exist because of a downward pressure on labour. In reality, there is a strong correlation between lower cost production and lower wages for workers, less health and safety protection on the shopfloor and heavily diluted labour rights. For example, in a garment factory operated by Claremont Garments in Casablanca, Morocco, on average, workers were paid £119 for a forty-five-hour working week – the equivalent of 61 pence per hour.⁷² In 1994, Marks & Spencer staff awarded the factory ‘Grade A’ status. However, as previously mentioned, Marks & Spencer’s approach to its manufacturing suppliers was to keep them at arms-length, independent of the Marks & Spencer brand despite the company wielding significant influence and control over their suppliers. They wanted their suppliers to be simultaneously independent of and subservient to Marks & Spencer. Toms and Zhang outline the explicit policy of Marks & Spencer’s towards its overseas suppliers in the global South: ‘It [Marks & Spencer] could also absolve itself of the criticism faced by competing retailers of encouraging labour exploitation in developing countries, whilst issuing public denials of such encouragement, combined with reiterations of its commitment to UK manufacturing.’⁷³ However, the high quality standards were not always matched on the production line. Carol Barry, who previously worked for Bairdwear, was a Technical Manager for Dewhirst, spending some time in Morocco to oversee the company’s operations in Tangier. She described her experience of the Tangier

⁷¹ Jane Collins, *Threads: Gender, Labour and Power in the Global Apparel Industry*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p.4.

⁷² Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.20.

⁷³ Toms and Zhang, ‘Marks & Spencer and the Decline of the British Textile Industry’, p.28.

factory: ‘Their production was very, very low in comparison. Productivity in a Tangier factory was tiny in comparison to what it was in a UK factory. Productivity was pretty low. Quality was dreadful. [...] You would go in and garments would have threads all hanging from them, that kind of thing.’⁷⁴

‘Marks & Sharks’ – The GMB and the Fight for Bairdwear

In September 1998 at the annual conference of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in Blackpool, GMB Union official Sheila Bearcroft took to the stage holding a Marks & Spencer branded plastic bag and a large inflatable shark and quipped that the company could more accurately be called ‘Marks and Sharks’ (figure 3.1).⁷⁵ This was in response to intensifying rumours that the company was considering ending its long association with British based suppliers and planning to move their production overseas. Addressing the conference from the rostrum, Sheila Bearcroft stated: ‘Marks and Spencer is rightly famous for selling quality British goods but it will be called “Marks and Sharks” if it sells British jobs down the river.’⁷⁶ The decision to label the company as ‘Marks & Sharks’ was a neat wordplay but it also had clear connotations which sought to portray Marks & Spencer as a predator which was damaging the British textile sector to protect their own financial interests, with no concern for the consequences of their actions.

In May 1999, the GMB Union were clear in articulating their view that the decision of Marks & Spencer was harming the Scottish textile sector. In the wake of the news of closure of Bairdwear’s factories in East Kilbride and Inchinnan, Harry Donaldson, Industrial Officer for the GMB in Scotland warned:

This industry is haemorrhaging people at the rate of 500 a week. If we don’t do something to safeguard what little is left now, then we won’t have any manufacturing base to save at all [...] Unless we have some intervention by employers, trade unions, government and the retailing sector, we’re going to watch the death of an industry. If all the work goes offshore we will be held to ransom, because those foreign companies will then be able to inflate their prices, so it’s a short-term solution which will cause a long-term problem. We

⁷⁴ Carol Barry, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 2 August 2019.

⁷⁵ BBC News, ‘TUC Ticks Off M&S’, (16 September 1998). Accessed on 12 October 2020. Available here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/172661.stm.

⁷⁶ BBC News, ‘TUC Ticks Off M&S’, (16 September 1998). Accessed on 12 October 2020. Available here: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/172661.stm.

will never compete on wages, so we need government intervention and all the parties to come together to salvage and safeguard what is left of the industry for the future.’⁷⁷

It is noteworthy that the energies of the GMB and the anger of the Bairdwear workforce were directed at Marks & Spencer, and not Bairdwear management. The workforce understood that the closure was not the result of management decision-making, but rather a decision taken by Marks & Spencer. This is evident from the banners and placards being held in Figure 3.2 by Bairdwear workers at an organised protest against Marks & Spencer in London. For example, one placard reads: ‘M&S are taking the St. Michael’, a reference to Marks & Spencer’s St. Michael clothing brand. Whilst another placard framed Bairdwear as victims who were powerless to influence or stop the decision-making of Marks & Spencer executives to end long-standing contracts with long-standing British suppliers, stating: ‘Loyal suppliers, fashion victims.’

Figure 3.1: Sheila Bearcroft addressing TUC Conference, Blackpool, 1998.



Source: Owen Humphreys, ‘INDUSTRY TUC/Bearcroft 2’, *Press Association*, (16 September 1998). Personal Licence: Alamy Images.

⁷⁷ Shaun Milne, ‘Act Now or Rag Trade is in Tatters: Fears as Another 260 Jobs are Axed’, *Daily Record*, (7 May 1999), p.2.

In Glasgow, the protest centred around Marks & Spencer's Scottish headquarters and flagship store, situated on one of main shopping thoroughfares in the city centre, Argyle Street. Alison Anderson was a GMB shop steward in Polmadie and recalls the anger among the workforce towards Marks & Spencer:

I remember us aww ootside Marks & Spencer wae our banners letting people know. Aww ma life I knew everything was made in Britain for Marks & Spencer. They carried that thing that it was all British made. So, we did aww go ootside and picket ootside and the GMB [union] told us to do it. So, we were all outside Marks & Spencer wae aww oor banners and everything, not letting people in and try tae tell them not to go in because did they know their products in there saying "British Made" were not going to be British Made. [...] It was Argyle Street, I know that. It was Argyle Street. And I actually don't actually know when... I'm tryin' tae think when we actually closed down. It was a winter time because some of the lassies were like "Uck, wits the use because we're not even bothered? It's frozen." It was something the GMB got together with us on, they says like, "Why don't we just do it, just to see?" I know it was on the news. It wisnae a wee thing. It was all over the news that we were all closing doon. It was a big thing. We aww got together and we aww says "Why no?" because it was something that really annoyed us because it was this big thing that they wanted us to know and we were saying, "Are ye gonny label it? That it's saying Sri Lanka that yer gonny be put on your clothes." And obviously, they had tae dae that. But as I say, the GMB got us all together, and one Saturday - I take it it wis - did we aww want tae go? So, we aww did. It was a good crowd of us. And, we had aww these banners and we aww picketed outside Marks & Spencers but it was bloomin' freezing but to no avail. It done absolutely nothing but we still did, we still protested. We done our bit.⁷⁸

To win public support for their campaign, the GMB Union used Marks & Spencer's historic 'Made in Britain' motif to frame their decision as hypocritical, unpatriotic, and unjust, accusing the company of 'turning its back on Britain'.⁷⁹ In launching the campaign, Des Farrell, GMB National Secretary stated: 'Marks & Spencer say that their customers don't care where their clothes are made. GMB clothing workers will be in Britain's high streets lobbying customers over the coming months to demonstrate that they do care.'⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15th August 2019.

⁷⁹ BBC News, 'M&S "turning its back on Britain"', (1 November 1999). Accessed on 18 October 2020. Available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/501306.stm>.

⁸⁰ BBC News, 'M&S "turning its back on Britain"', (1 November 1999). Accessed on 18 October 2020. Available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/501306.stm>.

One key strand of the GMB's campaign was their pointed criticism of the Labour government for its less than proactive approach to support the textile industry. The General Secretary of the GMB, John Edmonds, accused the Labour government of sexism, arguing that the lack of seriousness the government had assigned to the seismic loss of jobs in the textile sector was a result of the industry being dominated by women workers.⁸¹ In April 2000, *The Independent* stated that it was a reasonable estimation that between 75 percent and 90 percent of textile jobs in Britain were performed by women, with around 40,000 job losses in the sector in 1999.⁸² That equates to between 30,000 and 36,000 women made unemployed from the textile sector across Britain in 1999. On behalf of the GMB, John Edmonds wrote to Stephen Byers MP, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, and David Blunkett MP, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, to formally complain about the government's sexist treatment of women in the textile industry. 'If the Government is truly committed to equality in the workplace, then it must show that same commitment to fighting for women's jobs as it does for the male counterparts. There's a lot of talk about making the workplace more flexible for mothers, but in many households in textile areas, the women are the main breadwinners.'⁸³

The root of the GMB's criticism was derived from the differential responses from the Labour Government to the parallel job crisis in car manufacturing, a traditionally male dominated sector, with a £129 million rescue package for the Rover car plant in Longbridge, Birmingham unveiled in March 2000.⁸⁴ Indeed, the issues facing the Rover car plant necessitated an intervention from Prime Minister Tony Blair who offered a personal commitment to work 'night and day' to save jobs in Longbridge.⁸⁵ There was an aura of injustice emitting from the government's differential responses with Maxine Nixon, GMB North West England representative for the clothing and

⁸¹ Paul Waugh, 'Women's job losses ignored by "sexist" ministers, says union', *The Independent*, (25 April 2000), p.1.

⁸² Waugh, 'Women's job losses ignored by "sexist" ministers', *The Independent*, p.1.

⁸³ Waugh, 'Women's job losses ignored by "sexist" ministers', *The Independent*, p.1.

⁸⁴ Jo Dillon, 'Sacked M&S women's fury', *The Independent on Sunday*, (26 March 2000), p.4.

⁸⁵ Dan Atkinson and Kevin Maguire, 'Blair's promise to Rover workers', *The Guardian*, (2 May 2000), p.5.

textile section, stating: 'It doesn't matter that the job losses are scattered - 40,000 is 40,000, wherever they are. I genuinely believe this isn't being taken as seriously as Longbridge because it's a women's industry. If we were men, something would have been done about it years ago.'⁸⁶ The frustration of women in the textile industry heightened when the future of the Rover car plant was elevated to a diplomatic matter with the office of the Prime Minister seeking to pressure the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, to intervene with Rover's parent company, the German car manufacturer BMW, to keep the Longbridge plant open and operational.⁸⁷ The British Government's soft power approach to use the German Chancellor to influence the outcome of a private company's decision making symbolised how the proposed closure of the Rover car plant was treated as a critical issue of national importance.

Figure 3.2: Bairdwear Workers protest at Marks & Spencer, London, 2 November 1999.



Source: Fiona Hanson, 'CITY Marks/Protest 2', *Press Association*, (2 November 1999),
Personal License: Alamy Images.

⁸⁶ Mel Steel, 'Material Witness: Gender', *The Guardian*, (16 May 2000), p.6.

⁸⁷ Atkinson and Maguire, 'Blair's promise', *The Guardian*, p.5.

The accusation from the GMB that the Government approach to the job crisis in the textile sector was sexist was not hyperbole rhetoric engineered to garner newspaper headlines, but rather reflective of their membership's perception that the Government's response was shaped by the gender of the workforce. One worker, Ruby Murray, who was made redundant from Bairdwear's factory in Grangemouth, Falkirk, issued a withering attack on the inaction of the Labour Government, stating: 'We're looking at devastation. I'm disgusted at the way Blair has handled Rover. When our plant closed, not even our local MP turned up [...] We'll never get the industry saved in Britain without government intervention. And there has been no intervention because we're women.'⁸⁸ Her expression of being 'disgusted' at the government's response to the Rover crisis reflects Ruby's palpable sense of fury that, in her view, the government's differential approach to Bairdwear and Rover was discrimination based on the sex of the workforce. This sentiment was conveyed by Jane Norton who worked at the Bairdwear factory in Telford, Shropshire, who articulated a clear gendered analysis of the Government's approach to the textile industry, stating: 'If you look at the car industry they have been given every assistance from the Government. We haven't had anything. Many women feel that if we'd been men, it would have been different.'⁸⁹

Moreover, there was a perception that the Labour government was distant and disconnected with the concerns of textile workers. This was best captured when Stephen Byers MP, Secretary of State for Trade, launched the Government twelve point plan to support the British clothing industry whilst wearing a suit made in South Africa.⁹⁰ He attempted to justify his decision by arguing that it was difficult to now buy a British-made suit. The GMB sought to highlight this case as an example of a government that was aloof and disinterested in the plight facing workers in the British textile industry as they ridiculed Stephen Byers by sending him a £250 dark blue, two-piece suit, made by Jaeger at their factory in Campbeltown on the west

⁸⁸ Steel, 'Material Witness: Gender', *The Guardian*, p.6.

⁸⁹ Dillon, 'Sacked M&S women's fury', *The Independent on Sunday*, p.4.

⁹⁰ Michael Harrison, 'Byers in please for UK textiles, while wearing foreign suit', *The Independent*, (7 June 2000), p.2.

coast of Scotland.⁹¹ In response to the government's twelve point plan, John Edmonds, GMB General Secretary, reiterated his belief that sexism was central to understanding the state response to the job crisis in the textile sector, stating: "We have seen specific £100m support packages for the mining and car industries and cannot understand why the Government does not attach the same importance to the textile sector. The only difference would appear to be that the vast majority of textile workers are women, and this Government undervalues women's jobs as much as its predecessors." ⁹²

There was a palpable anger from textile workers who believed they were being discriminated against by their own government because of their sex. However, their response was not driven by emotion. It was not rooted in envy or jealousy of the preferential treatment of Rover. Indeed, the women did not oppose the government's proactive role in trying to secure a future for the Rover car plant, but they queried why government response to the job crisis in the textile sector did not match the urgency devoted to support the car manufacturing industry. The women textile workers argument was an incisive critique of government policy which they recognised as an injustice which needed to be challenged.

On 30 December 1999, the BBC reported a nationwide poll which highlighted that consumers did not want Marks & Spencer to manufacture its clothes abroad with the report noting that: 'The GMB union said on Thursday the opinion poll figures prove consumers do not want cheap clothes if the price is Scottish jobs.'⁹³ The GMB would utilise this same tactic in 2004 when opposing the closure of Burberry's factory in Treorchy, south Wales, as noted by Blyton and Jenkins. Similar to Marks & Spencer, Burberry portrayed itself as the quintessential British company but the GMB sought to remove that veneer, framing Burberry's decision to close the Treorchy factory and offshore the production as a conscious decision taken without any moral consideration of the company's social obligation to the communities of the Rhondda

⁹¹ 'Scottish suits you, sir', *The Glasgow Herald*, (10 June 2000), p.7.

⁹² Roy Rogers, 'Byers manufactures excellence', *The Glasgow Herald*, (7 June 2000), p.21.

⁹³ BBC News, 'Shoppers Urge M&S to Buy British', (30 December 1999).

Valley.⁹⁴ To strengthen the collective voice of anger, the GMB identified the new Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh as an appropriate location to protest. The Union brought together textile workers from across Scotland who had been made redundant through 1999, including workers formerly employed at Bairdwear in Glasgow, Daks Simpson in South Lanarkshire, and Pringle in the Scottish Borders, as they aimed to highlight the growing job crisis sector to Members of the Scottish Parliament.⁹⁵

During the first six-months of 2000, the job crisis in the Scottish textile sector continued to deepen with over 3,000 job losses reported during the thirteen months from March 1999 to May 2000, as shown below in Figure 3.3.⁹⁶ There was a clear aim from the GMB to keep the job crisis in the public consciousness through gaining media coverage and a high-profile protest outside the Scottish Parliament met this objective. The GMB was an effective campaigning union which recognised the importance of media coverage as a tool to win public support for their industrial dispute. This was highlighted by Jenkins in her study of the closure of the Treorchy Burberry clothing factory in south Wales, with a Burberry executive expressing his surprise at how effectively the GMB had engaged with the media, complaining: “[...] the degree of media coverage for the campaign was... perverse... for a polo-shirt factory.”⁹⁷

In Glasgow – unlike in Treorchy – there was a sense that no action could force Marks & Spencer to reverse their decision to cut contracts which effectively resulted in the closure of Bairdwear. The protest outside Marks & Spencer was organised and planned by the GMB as a national campaign to be mobilised across the UK. In this respect, it was a top-down campaign, rather than one which was specific to the situation in Glasgow and devised by the workers on the shopfloor. There was strong support from the workforce for the campaign and this was exemplified by the healthy

⁹⁴ Blyton and Jenkins, ‘Mobilizing Resistance: The Burberry Workers’ Campaign against Factory Closure’, *Sociological Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1, (2012), p.36.

⁹⁵ BBC News, ‘Textile Workers Plea for Help’, (17 February 2000). Accessed on 18 October 2020. Available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/646243.stm>.

⁹⁶ BBC News, ‘Cash Aid for Textiles Industry’, (6 June 2000).

⁹⁷ Jean Jenkins, ‘Hands Not Wanted: Closure, and the Moral Economy of Protest, Treorchy, South Wales’, *Historical Study in Industrial Relations*, vol.37, (2017), p.33.

numbers in attendance, but beneath the surface, as Alison Anderson’s testimony reveals, there was not an overwhelming belief that the protests would help the workers win back their jobs at Bairdwear. As Alison notes, it was the GMB that suggested the action, which was received with an indifferent response. However, the sense of futility around the protest did not deter workers from attending. The Bairdwear workers in Glasgow were keen to express their agency and contribute - ‘do their bit’ – to opposing the closure. They did not want their jobs to be lost to Sri Lanka without a unified, visible, and vocal campaign of opposition, despite the slim odds of Marks & Spencer reversing their decision.

Figure 3.3: Textile job losses in Scotland between March 1999 - May 2000.

Company	Location	Jobs Lost	Month/Year
Coats Viyella	Alloa, (Clackmannanshire)	200	March 1999
Levi Jeans	Whitburn (West Lothian)	660	September 1999
Russell Europe	Livingston (West Lothian) Bo’ness (Falkirk)	300	October 1999
Pringle	Hawick (Scottish Borders)	140	February 2000
Bairdwear	Springburn (Glasgow) Polmadie (Glasgow)	1,000	March 2000
Daks Simpson	Larkhall (South Lanarkshire)	600	March 2000
Laidlaw and Fairgrieve	Dalkeith (Midlothian) Selkirk (Scottish Borders)	290	May 2000
TOTAL		3,190	

Source: BBC News, ‘Cash Aid for Textiles Industry’, (6 June 2000).

In June 2000, the UK Government announced a £10 million package of financial support to assist the textile industry in Scotland. In announcing this package of support for the textile sector, the Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Henry McLeish MSP commented: ‘We fully acknowledge the setbacks which the

industry has experienced in recent years and are all well aware of continuing pressure from foreign competitors. I believe this package provides the foundations for the textile industry to fight back and safeguard the futures of the thousands which it still employs.⁹⁸ In total, the Scottish Executive dedicated £1.8 million to support retraining for workers made redundant at Bairdwear and Daks Simpson. In the early weeks of 2001, Wendy Alexander MSP, the new Minister for Enterprise, and Lifelong Learning, detailed the Scottish Executive's spending to support the textile industry. In total, the Scottish Executive ringfenced £2 million for spending on initiatives to support retraining for workers made unemployed at Bairdwear and DAKS Simpson; £1.2 million was invested in establishing, in conjunction with Heriot-Watt University, a Centre of Manufacturing Excellence in Galashiels; £700,000 allocated by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise to support the textile industry; and a further £300,000 in Regional Selective Assistance was awarded to areas most reliant on employment in the textile and clothing sector.⁹⁹

Despite the sense of futility expressed by Bairdwear workers about their protests outside Marks & Spencer, their tenacity, working with the GMB, kept the issue in the public mindset and secured tangible support from the Scottish Executive, and the UK Government, to assist with re-employment. The package of measures announced by the Scottish Executive was not going to reinstate their jobs, but it provided necessary support as workers embarked on the incredibly challenging process of adapting through retraining and reskilling in order to secure another job.

THREAD

Coats Viyella

Coats Viyella was a behemoth textile corporation which was formed by textile industrialist David Alliance through multiple acquisitions and mergers of a plethora of smaller, predominantly British based textile companies during the 1980s. To understand the economic environment that, ultimately, led to the end of thread

⁹⁸ BBC News, 'Extra Aid for Textiles', (12 June 2000).

⁹⁹ Debate: Borders Textile Industry, Scottish Parliament Official Report, 31 January 2001, c.797-799.

manufacturing in Paisley, it is critically important to consider the contextual background of Coats Viyella and how it became a mammoth textile conglomerate, not only in British terms, but on a global scale, as the largest textile conglomerate in Europe.¹⁰⁰ It is important to recognise that the Anchor Mill and the Ferguslie Mill in Paisley were woven into the fabric of the town's heritage, tracing their lineage back to the late eighteenth century when the Clark and Coats families competed for supremacy. From the early 1950s until 1961 the Paisley thread mills were owned and operated by the unified Coats and Clark company, until they merged with Patons and Baldwin, a leading manufacturer of knitting yarn, in 1961 to form Coats Patons. It was not until the mid-1980s that David Alliance's Coats Viyella became the custodians of Paisley's thread manufacturing industry, through its operation of the Anchor Mills site.¹⁰¹

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the British textile industry was dominated by 'the big four: Courtaulds, Coats Paton, Carrington Viyella, and Tootal.'¹⁰² In the following decade, the structure of the textile industry in Britain was significantly altered by David Alliance who used his Spirella group as the vehicle to launch ambitious takeover bids of larger textile companies which would consolidate with the creation of Coats Viyella in the mid-1980s. In 1975, Spirella completed a successful takeover of Vantona, a Marks & Spencer's supplier and Spirella was rebranded as Vantona.¹⁰³ In 1983, Vantona completed a successful takeover of one of the 'big four', Carrington Viyella, which created Vantona Viyella. It is argued by Higgins and Toms that David Alliance's ambitious takeover strategy was motivated by two key objectives: firstly, to establish his company as one of the leading textile groups in Europe and secondly, to acquire companies with lucrative supplier contracts for Marks & Spencer.¹⁰⁴ Following the creation of Vantona Viyella, Alliance pursued

¹⁰⁰ Ian Williams, 'A Textile Alliance', *The Sunday Times*, (16 February 1986). Scottish Business Archive: Records of Coats Viyella plc, thread manufacturers, 'Newspaper cuttings relating to Coats Viyella', GB 248 UGD 199/32/25/31, University of Glasgow.

¹⁰¹ The Ferguslie Thread Works had been closed in the early 1980s by Coats Paton with the thread manufacturing process consolidated at the Anchor Mill site.

¹⁰² David Higgins and Steven Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy: David Alliance and the Transformation of British Textiles, c.1950-c.1990', *Business History*, vol. 48, no.4, (2006), p.462.

¹⁰³ Higgins and Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy', p.468.

¹⁰⁴ Higgins and Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy', p.470.

this second objective by completing successful takeovers of small and medium sized British based companies who supplied Marks & Spencer, including Carrington Viyella, the Nottingham Manufacturing Company, and Glasgow based F Miller.¹⁰⁵ This period of expansion was followed by another ambitious takeover when Alliance's Vantona Viyella completed a deal for Coats Paton, valued at £730 million, in February 1986, creating Coats Viyella.¹⁰⁶ There was still more expansion to come for Coats Viyella. David Alliance's domination of the textile industry was further enhanced in the early 1990s when Coats Viyella successfully completed a takeover of another of the historic 'big four' textile companies, Tootal, in 1991. The result of Alliance's relentless expansion was securing Coats Viyella's position as the undisputed largest textile corporation in Europe.¹⁰⁷

The operations of Coats Viyella could be divided between its retail business, comprised of Jaeger and Viyella brands, and its thread manufacturing business. Therefore, the multiple acquisitions, takeovers, and mergers, resulted in Coats diversifying its business interests and in doing so, diluting the company's reliance on thread manufacturing. This is exemplified by the fact that following the successful takeover of Tootal, Coats Viyella was responsible for manufacturing over half of all Marks & Spencer's garments.¹⁰⁸ The acquisition of Tootal led to Coats Viyella pursuing a policy of reorganisation as they sought to eradicate perceived inefficiencies in their operations. In November 1991, it was announced that the Crofthead Mill in Neilston, East Renfrewshire, which had been operated by Tootal, would close in early 1993.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps most significant was Coats Viyella announcing their intention to close the historic Anchor Mill in Paisley, ending an association between Coats and Paisley

¹⁰⁵ Higgins and Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy', p.471.

¹⁰⁶ Higgins and Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy', p.468.

¹⁰⁷ Rufus Olins, 'Alliance's Tootal Commitment: Profile of Sir David Alliance', *The Sunday Times*, (10 March 1991). Scottish Business Archive: Records of Coats Viyella plc, thread manufacturers, 'Newspaper cuttings relating to Coats Viyella', GB 248 UGD 199/32/25/31, University of Glasgow.

¹⁰⁸ Higgins and Toms, 'Financial Institutions and Corporate Strategy', p.470.

¹⁰⁹ 'Coats to close last thread mill in Paisley', *The Herald*, (15 November 1991). Available here: <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12548575.coates-to-close-last-thread-mill-in-paisley/>.

Accessed on 2 October 2022.

which stretched back to the late nineteenth century. However, although the Anchor Mill site dates its origins to the late nineteenth century, it was still operating as a productive site and it was unique in the face that it was the only vertically integrated thread mill in Europe with the entire thread manufacturing process taking place on the one site from spinning, to twisting, to dyeing, and finishing.¹¹⁰ Therefore, its closure was not inevitable or easily justified by the company and provoked a strong community response. A working group formed, comprised of local Members of Parliament, trade unions, the district council, and the regional council with the aim of developing alternative proposals to Coats in an effort to keep Anchor Mill open and operational.¹¹¹ The local opposition was bolstered by the reality that the work being performed in Anchor Mill was being transferred across the Irish Sea to Northern Ireland, near the town of Enniskillen. In opposing the closure, Irene Adams, Labour Member of Parliament for Paisley North stated: “‘It’s not only the last of our mills, it’s the last link with the Coats family, and surely there must be some loyalty owed to the town and workforce?’”¹¹²

The concept of the moral economy has been advanced by Phillips who has argued, primarily, that in the coalfields, pit closures would be negotiated sympathetically between the National Coal Board and trade union representatives to ensure that closures were gradual and in a way that provided pit workers with employment opportunities of similar skill and status.¹¹³ For Phillips, from the 1970s onwards, he argues that ‘[...] the withdrawal of industry was a major transgression of communal expectations, breaching the moral economy rules that had governed the earlier phase of deindustrialization, where changes had been negotiated with labour amid widening employment opportunities and expanding social horizons.’¹¹⁴ Gibbs and Phillips have used the example of the Caterpillar Tractors factory in Uddingston, South Lanarkshire to exemplify how workers understandings of the moral economy shaped

¹¹⁰ Mary Lockhart, ‘Paisley Mill under Threat’, *The Sunday Times*, (5 January 1992), p.1.

¹¹¹ Lockhart, ‘Paisley Mill under Threat’, *The Sunday Times*.

¹¹² ‘Coats to close last thread mill in Paisley’, *The Herald*, (15 November 1991).

¹¹³ Jim Phillips, ‘The Moral Economy of Deindustrialization in Post-1945 Scotland’, in Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon, Andrew Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), pp.313-330.

¹¹⁴ Phillips, ‘The Moral Economy of Deindustrialization’, p.326.

their responses to deindustrialisation.¹¹⁵ In response to the news of the factory's closure, the workers organised to occupy the factory and Gibbs and Phillips argue that this response was informed by workers moral economy understandings of deindustrialisation because Caterpillar had benefitted significantly from public money provided by the UK Government, secured with a cast iron commitment to keep the factory open until at least 1991.¹¹⁶ Therefore, when the company announced the closure of the factory in January 1987, the workers chose to occupy the factory as, in their eyes, it was *their* factory: it belonged to the workers and their community, and therefore, the actions of Caterpillar were an unjustifiable transgression of the moral economy.¹¹⁷

In her study of the closure of the Burberry textile factory in Treorchy, South Wales, Jenkins provided an illuminating example of a transgression of this moral economy. In the case of Burberry, Jenkins argues that the decision to close the factory was perceived as a transgression of the moral economy as the company abruptly announced its closure without any consultation with trade unions or local politicians despite Burberry having enjoyed a record year with sales increased by over twenty percent and profits up by almost six percent.¹¹⁸ In the context of the Anchor Mills closure, Adams' argument is rooted in a belief that there is an obligation on Coats – one which goes beyond a crude economic calculation - to continue to provide stable, skilled, well-remunerated employment for the people of Paisley. Her comments about the company owing 'loyalty' to the 'town and workforce' imply that Coats are guilty of a moral injustice against the whole community. Despite the deep roots between Paisley and the Coats family, for the Coats Viyella corporation, Anchor Mill was just another manufacturing facility in their increasingly global network. For people in Paisley, its meaning was significantly deeper.

Arguably, the closure of Anchor Mill would have been more palatable if Coats had ceased trading and went out of business, as there would have been an acceptance that

¹¹⁵ Gibbs and Phillips, 'Who Owns a Factory?', pp.111-137.

¹¹⁶ Gibbs and Phillips, 'Who Owns a Factory?', p.124.

¹¹⁷ Gibbs and Phillips, 'Who Owns a Factory?', p.137.

¹¹⁸ Jean Jenkins, 'Hands Not Wanted: Closure, and the Moral Economy of Protest, Treorchy, South Wales', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*, Volume 37, (2017), pp.1-36.

the company was no longer viable. However, the decision to close Anchor Mill and relocate Anchor Mill's workload to Northern Ireland, provoked a visceral reaction among the workforce who perceived the decision as Coats Viyella abdicating its moral and social responsibility to Paisley. The protracted, gradual experience of deindustrialisation during the second half of the twentieth century in provincial towns like Paisley has resulted in countless closures of medium sized industrial factories as the town's industrial base has been eroded. However, the Anchor Mill must be understood as more than a place of employment: it is the intrinsic symbol of Paisley's role as world renowned textile town. Therefore, the final closure of the embodiment of not only the town's industrial heritage, but indeed its inherent identity, was a seismic moment for Paisley which was interpreted as a transgression of the moral economy as it was perceived that Coats was abandoning the town, and its' people, to whom it owed its very existence.

The spinning and twisting operations from Anchor Mill were transferred to a newer facility in Lisnaskea, near Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.¹¹⁹ This shifting of textile employment from west-central Scotland across the Irish Sea was reminiscent of Lee Jeans decision, in the early 1980s, to close its factory in Greenock, Inverclyde, and relocate the work to Newtonards, Northern Ireland which led to a successful seven month long factory occupation.¹²⁰ Coats Viyella's transfer of production to Northern Ireland was a stay of execution with closing the factory in Lisnaskea less than a decade later, in July 2001, with 140 workers made redundant.¹²¹ This was just part of a larger downscaling that saw Coats Viyella's workforce in Northern Ireland. In addition to the Lisnaskea factory, Coats Viyella made 500 workers redundant at its Saracen factory in Lurgan in 1997, and a further 250 workers were made redundant in 2000 when manufacturing was scaled back at

¹¹⁹ 'Coats to close last thread mill', *The Herald*.

¹²⁰ Andy Clark, "'Stealing Our Identity and Taking It over to Ireland": Deindustrialization, Resistance, and Gender in Scotland', in Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon, Andrew Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), pp.331-347.

¹²¹ Frances McDonnell, 'Coats Viyella shut down North plant', *The Irish Times*, (21 July 2001). Available here: <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/coats-viyella-shut-down-north-plant-1.318922>. Accessed on: 8 December 2022.

one of its shirt factories in Derry-Londonderry.¹²² In five years, the number of people employed by Coats Viyella in Northern Ireland reduced by 80 percent, down from 2,000 workers in 1996 to only 400 workers by 2001.¹²³

Following the closure of the Anchor Mill site in 1993, Coats Viyella significantly downscaled their administrative operation in Glasgow, which had been the company's headquarters for over thirty years, with senior management relocating to London with only a core staff of around fifty workers continuing to be based in Glasgow focused on intellectual property, pension funds, and insurance.¹²⁴ In 1997, it was estimated that Coats continued to employ 2,000 workers in Scotland, which was a decrease in excess of 80 percent from the mid-1980s when the company were employing around 14,000 workers in Scotland in the thread manufacturing process alone.

In 1999, Coats Viyella closed a further three factories in Clackmannanshire in just a five-month period. In March 1999, Coats closed a clothing factory in Alloa, that produced women's clothing for Marks & Spencer, resulting in 200 workers being made redundant. The company's justification for the decision cited that 'the market is difficult because competition is fierce and we've had a downturn in some of the orders for women's blouses.'¹²⁵ There was palpable anger emanating from the predominantly female workforce who were made redundant by Coats Viyella in Alloa with the GMB Union's regional industrial officer for clothing and textiles, Harry Donaldson, describing the closure as 'another nail in the coffin for the clothing and textiles industry in Scotland.'¹²⁶ The ire of the workers was extended to the Labour Government in Westminster with Donald Dewar MP, then Secretary of State for Scotland, being forced to cancel a scheduled visit to Alloa on the advice of police

¹²² McDonnell, 'Coats Viyella shut down North Plant', *The Irish Times*.

¹²³ McDonnell, 'Coats Viyella shut down North plant', *The Irish Times*.

¹²⁴ Alf Young, 'Coats to leave threadbare presence', *The Glasgow Herald*, (11 March 1993), from 'Newspaper Cuttings relating to Coats Viyella', GB 248 UGB 199/32/23/31, Records of Coats Viyella plc, thread manufacturers. Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow.

¹²⁵ Clothes factory to close with loss of 200 jobs', *The Herald*, (4 March 1999). Available here: <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/12340083.clothes-factory-to-close-with-loss-of-200-jobs/>. Accessed on: 14 November 2022.

¹²⁶ Clothes factory to close with loss of 200 jobs', *The Herald*.

who were concerned for his safety following the announcement of the closure of the Coats Viyella factory.¹²⁷ A Labour Party source stated that ‘Central Scotland Police had advised the Labour Party that there were a number of women congregated in the town centre who had been made redundant by Coats Viyella.’¹²⁸

This was followed by the closure of the Kilncraigs Mill in August of the same year. This was a wool factory which had been operating for almost 200 years in Alloa, employing more than 2,000 workers at its peak.¹²⁹ In response to the closure of the Kilncraigs Mill, the SNP Leader of Clackmannanshire council, Keith Brown, drew a clear distinction between the political and media response to the potential loss of jobs at Kvaerner shipyard in Govan and the job losses being inflicted on communities like Alloa, across Clackmannanshire, stating: ‘There was outcry at the prospect of 100 job losses at Kvaerner, yet in the last 18 month we’ve [Clackmannanshire] lost 1,000 jobs.’¹³⁰ A representative for the Transport and General Workers Union, Gerry Skelton described the workforce’s response to the closure said: ‘We wanted to try and save the plant but we were told that this was an ‘irreversible decision’. The reaction was very hostile, and the workers feel very betrayed.’¹³¹ In a discreet manner, the leader of Clackmannanshire Council, Keith Brown, is offering a subtle gendered critique of the Government and media’s response to the jobs crisis in the textile sector. His comment is laced with the insinuation that one hundred men made unemployed from a shipyard on the Clyde is considerably more important, more valuable, and more worthy of a coordinated response from Government, compared to the one thousand job losses, mainly among women, in the textile industry in Clackmannanshire. This assessment is particularly revealing as there are few public comments from politicians or trade unionists who are willing to suggest that the response to the job crisis in the textile sector is being driven by, conscious or unconscious, sexist assumptions about women’s work being low skilled and low

¹²⁷ Clothes factory to close with loss of 200 jobs’, *The Herald*.

¹²⁸ Clothes factory to close with loss of 200 jobs’, *The Herald*.

¹²⁹ ‘Blighted town hit again: Wool factory to close in community which has seen an employment exodus’, *The Herald*, (18 August 1999). Available here:

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12269939.blighted-town-hit-again-wool-factory-to-close-in-community-which-has-seen-an-employment-exodus/>. Accessed on: 14 November 2022.

¹³⁰ Blighted town hit again’, *The Herald*.

¹³¹ Blighted town hit again’, *The Herald*.

value, and in effect, of diminished importance in terms of the national industrial strategy.

In the reconvened Scottish Parliament, the Labour Member for Ochill, Dr Richard Simpson stated: ‘The company closed three plants in one town during a five-month period without a word of warning to the employees, the unions, the council, the local enterprise companies or members of the Parliament.’¹³² He continued, offering a blistering rebuke to Coats Viyella for their handling of the closures, stating: ‘I find that not just old-fashioned and out of date, but totally unacceptable and thoughtless. A previous Conservative Prime Minister said that the Rowlands companies were the unacceptable face of capitalism. To me, that is the unacceptable face of business today. It is not good practice, and it is not acceptable.’¹³³

Despite their significant contraction across the British Isles, Coats Viyella were not in a perpetual state of decline. Indeed, in 2003, a decade after closing their historic thread mill, Anchor Mill in Paisley, the company opened a new thread manufacturing plant in Transylvania, Romania.¹³⁴ The last remaining Coats production site in Scotland was Newton Mearns in East Renfrewshire, around ten miles south of Glasgow, which closed in 2004, with an estimated one hundred workers made redundant.¹³⁵ The company endeavoured to keep a tenuous link with Paisley, with a small administrative office located in the town’s Mile End Mill business centre, that formed part of the Abbey Mill plant, with a staff roll of twenty employees. However, this office was closed in 2022 with some staff made redundant and others asked to work from home on a full time basis.¹³⁶ The company’s continuing presence in Paisley was so concealed and insignificant that local historian Stephen Clancy responded to the news of Coats decision to close its Paisley office, stating: ‘It’ll be a big surprise to many people that they [Coats] even have an office here. When I was

¹³² Scottish Parliament [SP] Official Report [OR] 9 September 1999, col. 395-397

¹³³ Scottish Parliament [SP] Official Report [OR] 9 September 1999, col. 395-397

¹³⁴ Simon Bain, ‘Coats unravels 178 years of Scottish industrial history; Union blames Romania switch for death knell of traditional heartland’, *The Glasgow Herald*, (8 May 2004), p.16.

¹³⁵ Bain, ‘Coats unravels 178 years of Scottish industrial history’, p.16.

¹³⁶ Alison Rennie, ‘Paisley loses last link with Coats as office is closed’, *Daily Record*, (14 May 2022). Available here: <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/in-your-area/renfrewshire/paisley-loses-last-link-coats-26960008#>. Accessed on: 10 December 2022.

involved in the Thread Mill Museum, we were trying to contact Coats for several years to get involved. We didn't realise they had an office right above us all that time.'¹³⁷

Ultimately, Coats Viyella acted in the expected manner for a large multinational conglomerate operating in the free market: they were incentivised to perform capital flight and move their production to more economically impoverished nations in the global South to stay economically competitive with their competitors. The decision of Coats Viyella to act like the largest textile conglomerate in Europe, rather than a paternalistic Victorian family company, and close Anchor Mill caused tremors of shock that the company could seemingly 'abandon' Paisley. However, to Coats Viyella, Anchor Mill was just one manufacturing facility in their global network and there was a conscious decision to consolidate their manufacturing and reduce employment numbers in industrialised nations with high-wage economies, such as Scotland.

The decision by Coats Viyella to leave Paisley was not an indication that the company was struggling for survival, but rather it was indicative of the company's conscious decision to reorient its manufacturing in low wage economies in the global South. Today, Coats Group continues to operate globally, marketing the company as 'the world's leading industrial thread manufacturer', employing over 17,000 people across fifty countries.¹³⁸ To provide an insight into the global spread of the company's forty-two operational manufacturing facilities, Coats operate six manufacturing units in India; four units in China; two units in Mexico; and two units in Brazil.¹³⁹ In 2021, Coats Group revenue was more than \$1.5 billion, with the company recording an operating profit of \$125 million in the first half of 2022.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Rennie, 'Paisley loses last link with Coats', *Daily Record*.

¹³⁸ Coats Group, 'Coats in Summary'. Available here: <https://coats.com/en/Media/Coats-in-summary>. Accessed on 2 February 2023.

¹³⁹ Coats Group, 'Our Global Footprint'. Available here: <https://coats.com/en/About/Our-Global-Footprint>. Accessed on: 2 February 2023.

¹⁴⁰ Coats Group plc, '2022 Half Year Results'. Available here: <https://www.coats.com/en/Investors/Results/2022/2022-Half-Year-results/Result-Article>. Accessed on: 2 February 2023.

CARPET

Stoddard International

In parallel with all sectors of the textile industry in Scotland, the carpet sector experienced significant contraction, financial challenges, and job losses during the second half of the twentieth century. To stay competitive, Stoddard Carpets restructured, purchasing competitors Templeton and Kingsmead Carpets from the Guthrie Corporation in 1980, followed by the acquisition of Sekers in 1988 and the British sales operation of the Belgian carpet manufacturer Louis de Poortere in 1991. In 1992, Stoddard Carpets completed a takeover of Blackwood, Morton and Sons (BMK) Carpets, based in Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire.

The sector faced specific issues such as struggling to adapt to the changing consumer fashion trends with carpets falling out of vogue and being superseded in popularity by laminate flooring. This shift resulted in consumers being more inclined to purchase a less expensive, tufted carpet which they could change after a couple of years to reflect the changing design trends, rather than spend more money on an expensive, premium Stoddard Axminster carpet which was intended to endure several decades of service. In an effort to address the high price of the Axminster carpet, Stoddard invested in Colortec tufting technology which can help to replicate the appearance of a genuine Axminster carpet but at a far more affordable price for consumers.¹⁴¹ However, similar to the clothing and garment sector, the carpet industry also struggled to compete with cheaper imports coming from overseas. In 1978, consumer research conducted for the UK Government by Marplan revealed that ‘carpet patriotism’ did not exist with the nation of origin of a carpet only being classified as a ‘negligible influence’ in influencing consumers’ decision-making.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ ‘Carpet-maker Clears Decks’, *The Herald*, (17 April 2002), p.19. Accessed on 10th December 2020. Available here: <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/12245672.carpet-maker-clears-decks/>.

¹⁴² David Clayton and David M. Higgins, “‘Buy British’: An Analysis of UK attempts to turn a slogan into government policy in the 1970s and 1980s”, *Business History*, (2020), Vol.64, No.7, p.1266.

At the start of the new millennium, Stoddard's was employing around 800 workers across three sites: the company's historic headquarters in Elderslie, Renfrewshire and two plants in Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire. In early 2001, Stoddard's reported a strong economic performance suggesting the company was recovering and strengthening. The company had struggled during the 1990s with their share price falling from 57 pence per share in 1992 to a mere 4 pence per share in 2001.¹⁴³ However, it was reported in *The Herald* that the company was on-course to make pre-tax profits of £700,000, although as a result of an exceptional legal bills of £547,000 due to a copyright dispute with Yorkshire based carpet manufacturer William Lomas, Stoddard's profits were reduced to £130,000.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, the company recorded an increase of turnover by three percent; an increase in retail sales of Stoddard branded carpets up by thirteen percent; and an increase in exports by 39 percent, with sales to the United States doubled.¹⁴⁵ This financial performance was positively received and perceived as the seeds of a recovery for the company, who had made a loss of £900,000 in the previous nine months.¹⁴⁶

However, only thirteen months later, Stoddard announced job losses and the closure of their historic headquarters in Elderslie in a money saving exercise. A yarn manufacturing facility located on Mill Street, Kilmarnock, was closed with the site sold by Stoddard's for £3.1 million to supermarket firm Safeway.¹⁴⁷ The work from Mill Street was transferred to the company's other facility in Kilmarnock but with less than half the workforce retained. In total, 160 workers were made redundant as the workforce was reduced from 260 to 100. A further 100 workers were made redundant in Elderslie with the workforce falling by one-third, declining from 300 down to 200.¹⁴⁸ However, it was also announced that in the short-medium term, the Elderslie site was scheduled for closure with a plan to transfer the remaining 200 jobs to the Riverside plant in Kilmarnock.¹⁴⁹ The news of the immediate 260

¹⁴³ Robert Powell, 'Stoddard Recovers Against All Odds', *The Herald*, (31 March 2001), p.19.

¹⁴⁴ Powell, 'Stoddard Recovers', *The Herald*, p.19.

¹⁴⁵ Powell, 'Stoddard Recovers', *The Herald*, p.19.

¹⁴⁶ Powell, 'Stoddard Recovers', *The Herald*, p.19.

¹⁴⁷ 'Carpet-maker Clears Decks', *The Herald*, p.19.

¹⁴⁸ 'Carpet-maker Clears Decks', *The Herald*, p.19.

¹⁴⁹ 'Carpet-maker Clears Decks', *The Herald*, p.19.

redundancies compounded, and reflected, an incredibly difficult decade for the textile industry in Scotland. In eleven years, the number of people employed in the industry fell by 35,000 – equivalent of a contraction of two-thirds - down from 57,000 in 1993 to 22,000 in 2004.¹⁵⁰

Despite these redundancies, plant closures and land sales, Stoddard's financial problems multiplied. In April 2004, it revealed that its annual losses in the previous year had doubled from £3.1 million to £6.2 million.¹⁵¹ The company saw turnover fall from £32.3 million to £30 million with sales of woven carpets down by 36 percent.¹⁵² Seven months later, on Christmas Eve, *The Herald* reported: 'Stoddard International, the troubled Kilmarnock-based carpet manufacturer, was teetering on the brink last night after admitting it "cannot be certain" of securing a life-saving refinancing deal with its bankers.'¹⁵³ The company officially entered receivership on 6 January 2005 with Tom Burton and Colin Dempster of Ernst & Young appointed as joint receivers. In reporting the news, *The Herald* noted: 'Ironically, Stoddard's receivership comes at a time when there are hopes that, after a decade of decline, the future of the Scottish textile industry as a whole looks more promising.'¹⁵⁴ On entering receivership, the company had 460 employees, with 300 full-time workers and 160 employed as 'short term contract workers'. It was reported by *The Herald* that the short-term contract workers would 'not be asked back', whilst the remaining 300 full-time workers would continue to be employed by Stoddard's during the receivership.¹⁵⁵

In the Scottish Parliament, the issue of Stoddard's perilous financial situation was raised by Margaret Jamieson, Labour MSP for Kilmarnock and Loudon, who urged the First Minister, Jack McConnell, to commit to supporting any potential new buyer in order to secure employment for the workers still employed by Stoddard

¹⁵⁰ Calum MacDonald, '35,000 Textile Jobs are Lost in a Decade', *Daily Record*, (28 April 2004), p.9.

¹⁵¹ MacDonald, '35,000 Textile Jobs are Lost', *Daily Record*, p.9.

¹⁵² Ian McConnell, 'Carpet Maker Stoddard's Losses Double', *The Herald*, (30 April 2004), p.31.

¹⁵³ Karl West, 'Troubled Carpet Manufacturer Teeters on the Brink of Collapse', *The Herald*, (24 December 2004), p.18.

¹⁵⁴ 'Receiver has Doubts about Sale of Stoddard as a Going Concern', *The Herald*, (7 January 2005), p.27.

¹⁵⁵ 'Receiver has Doubts about Sale of Stoddard', *The Herald*, p.27.

International in Kilmarnock. Alex Neil, SNP MSP for Central Scotland, also raised the issue in Holyrood, urging the Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Allan Wilson MSP, to do all within the Executive's power to keep the Stoddard factory in Kilmarnock open, stating: 'It is far better for the factory to remain open with more than 200 jobs than us to lose all the 500 jobs that were there in the first place.'¹⁵⁶ Speaking on behalf of the Executive's effort to support Stoddard's, Allan Wilson MSP was robust in defending their record stating: 'I and others made strenuous efforts during the Christmas and new year period to sustain the existing workforce and to ensure that relevant assistance was made available to the receivers and to other interested parties to secure the employment of the remaining portion of the workforce.'¹⁵⁷

The news of receivership was perhaps not unsurprising considering the financial hardship experienced at the company over the course of the last five years. However, with the company selling its former headquarters and factory operations in Elderslie to Walker, the housebuilding group, for £10 million, there was a sense of hope that the company would be able to address its financial problems.¹⁵⁸ On 1 February 2005, receivers Ernst & Young announced that they had an anonymous preferred bidder. The company now only had 120 workers remaining after 266 were made redundant.¹⁵⁹ However, three weeks later, on 22 February, *The Herald* announced: 'Final Collapse for Famous Carpet Firm'. The receivers, Ernst & Young, had failed to secure a buyer for Stoddart International: the company was now defunct after 168 years. Margaret Jamieson MSP described the news as a 'devastating blow'.¹⁶⁰ Des Browne, Labour MP for Kilmarnock and Loudon urged the local community, Scottish Executive and UK Government to 'turn our attention to providing what support we can to the employees who now must be very worried about the future.'¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Question Time: Enterprise, Lifelong Learning and Transport, Scottish Parliament Official Report, 20 January 2005, column 13741-13744.

¹⁵⁷ Question Time: Enterprise, Lifelong Learning and Transport, Scottish Parliament Official Report, 20 January 2005, column 13741-13744.

¹⁵⁸ Receiver has Doubts about Sale of Stoddard', (7 January 2005), *The Herald*, p.27.

¹⁵⁹ Mark Smith, 'Life-Saving Deal Imminent for Carpetmaker', *The Herald*, (1 February 2005), p.19.

¹⁶⁰ Cameron Simpson, 'Final Collapse for Famous Carpet Firm', *The Herald*, (22 February 2005), p.8.

¹⁶¹ Simpson, 'Final Collapse', *The Herald*, p.8.

The extensive coverage of Stoddard International's economic performance is a result of the company being world-renowned with a history stretching over 140 years, back to its foundation in 1862, and the prestige of its position as the last remaining major carpet manufacturer in Scotland. Throughout its history, the company had established itself as one of – if not *the* – leading British manufacturer of bespoke, luxury carpets and rugs with Stoddard's unique designs covering the floors of buildings as varied as the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh; Gleneagles hotel, Perthshire; and Liberty's department store, London.¹⁶² In addition to their own rich history, in 1980 Stoddard Carpets acquired the business history of the other preeminent carpet manufacturer in Britain, Templeton Carpets, when the Guthrie Corporation transferred all subsidiaries of British Carpets to Stoddard Holdings. The acquisition of Templeton's added an additional layer of history and prestige to compliment Stoddard's strong international reputation. For example, prior to their acquisition, Templeton's Carpets manufactured bespoke carpets and rugs for the House of Commons, London; the White House, Washington D.C; and the United Nations Headquarters, New York City. In the news, the closure of Stoddard was treated as an event of national significance. The company was embedded within a wider narrative of Scottish social history with the leader of the 1915 Rent Strikes, Mary Barbour, working as a carpet printer in the Elderslie factory in the late 1890s. The history, reputation and quality made the contraction, decline, and eventual closure, of Stoddard's a story of national interest in Scotland. There was a resonance about the company's decline as people across Scotland knew Stoddard's. They knew family, friends and friends-of-friends who worked for Stoddard Carpets. And, they knew people whose homes were furnished with Stoddard's famous Axminster or Wilton carpets.

The carpet industry was considered a form of skilled labour as it was providing intricate, valuable carpets to prestigious clients. This was distinct from clothing factories like Bairdwear and Claremont Garments where the work in these factories, carried out by the majority women-workforce, was perceived as low-skilled,

¹⁶² A. F Stoddard & Company, *The Carpet Makers: One Hundred Years of Designing and Manufacturing Carpets of Quality*, (A. F. Stoddard: Elderslie, 1962), pp.40-70.

repetitive, and monotonous. This perception endured in the thread industry which employed thousands of women in Paisley at both Anchor and Ferguslie Mills. It is important to understand that there was a perception that women's work in the clothing factories and thread mills was predicated on the sexist notion that women were trying to earn their 'pin money'. However, the reality of women working in clothing factories and thread mills was very different. In their oral testimonies, it was revealed that they were, invariably, the main financial contributor to their household income, because they either earned more money than their husbands or were a single parent trying to raise a child with only one wage coming into the home. There seemed to be an equation that involved the quantity of the product to be manufactured, the time to manufacture the product and the retail value which contributed to calculating which products were considered to represent 'quality' and involve 'skilled labour'. This has been historically associated with a gendered 'social degradation' of skill which defined women's work as being inherently of lower status than men's, even when women were performing work of a comparable skill.¹⁶³

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the four case studies of Bairdwear, D&H Cohen, Coats Viyella and Stoddard Carpets, who all closed their factories and mills in Glasgow, Renfrewshire, and across Scotland, during the 1990s and early 2000s. These are local cases with global resonance. They reflect the free-market orthodoxy which resulted in a mass case of capital flight among large textile producers who were able to exploit the low wages and limited labour laws in nations, primarily in the global South such as Morocco and Sri Lanka, and Eastern bloc nations, most notably Romania, as they aimed to significantly reduce their production costs and markedly increase their profits. It is a pattern that was repeated in industrial towns in the global north during the latter half of the twentieth century, and into the new millennium. There are clear parallels with the case of the RCA Corporation in North America,

¹⁶³ Deirdre Busfield, 'Skill and the Sexual Division of Labour in the West Riding Textile Industry 1850-1914', in J.A. Jowitt and A.J. McIvor, *Employers and Labour in the English Textile Industries 1850-1939*, (London; Routledge, 1988), pp.153-170; Michael Savage, 'Women and Work in the Lancashire Cotton Industry, 1890-1939', in J.A. Jowitt and A.J. McIvor, *Employers and Labour in the English Textile Industries 1850-1939*, (London; Routledge, 1988), pp.203-223.

where, in 1991, the company demanded workers at their plant in Indiana accept a \$2 per hour pay cut, threatening workers with moving their jobs to Mexico, claimed that 20-inch television sets could be produced in Mexico for \$80 less per unit.¹⁶⁴

The case studies analysed in this chapter reflect the distinct factors which contributed to the experience in each of the three sub-sectors of the textile industry: carpets, clothing, and thread. The thread linking their individual experience was their vulnerability to free-market capitalism. In each example, the driving force behind downscaling and plant closures was the increasing ability to offshore production to nations in the global South, where production costs were significantly cheaper, and where labour laws were less lenient which facilitated production levels to be pushed to the maximum. It was capital flight on a seismic scale, facilitated by a UK Government which often acted like a powerless bystander, and in some cases, actively facilitated the process through their policy agenda. It is critical to understand that the demand for textile goods did not cease once factories closed. Indeed, we all still wear clothes, which are manufactured from thread, and most, if not all, households in Scotland will have carpets and rugs covering their floors. For every job lost in the textile sector in Scotland when a factory or a mill closed, another job was created in a village or town in Morocco, Romania, and Sri Lanka.

In the clothing sector, the overbearing influence of Marks & Spencer was simultaneously a blessing and a curse. The company's sprawling network of British based suppliers were intrinsically tied to the economic performance of Marks & Spencer. Therefore, in the 1990s, when the company were experiencing a challenging period, with growing competition on the high street, their decision to reassess their supplier network had significant implications when they unilaterally announced an end to their relationship with Bairdwear.

The case of D&H Cohen's was distinct as although it almost exclusively produced garments for Marks & Spencer, it was a family-owned company with only one manufacturing site on the southside of Glasgow. Once Claremont Garments

¹⁶⁴ Cowie, *RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labour*, p.147

completed their takeover of D&H Cohen, the Glasgow site was vulnerable to the threat of rationalisation with Claremont operating several factories across the north of England. Following the takeover, Claremont Garments invested heavily in the Glasgow factory, reorganising the workflow through the introduction of new technology onto the factory floor. They did make a portion of the workforce redundant, however, there appeared to be a sincere attempt to have the Glasgow factory operational. Claremont Garments were heavily reliant on their contract with Marks & Spencer, so their decision to close the Glasgow factory was influenced by its desire to remain competitive to keep its Marks & Spencer contract. Therefore, Claremont's decision to close its Glasgow factory was one aspect of its strategy to offshore a significant amount of its production to nations in the global South with the company operating in ten factories in Morocco by March 1999 and sourcing coats and jackets from Eastern bloc nations, including Lithuania and Slovakia.

In the case of Coats, the company's business was split between its thread manufacturing and its retail clothing production. Therefore, its success was intrinsically linked to the economic performance of Marks & Spencer. The various acquisitions and mergers which created Coats Viyella as Europe's largest textile conglomerate gave the company an amorphous identity but through its lineage with Coats Paton, the company traced its heritage to Paisley, dating back to the late eighteenth century. Yet, despite this heritage, Coats made the decision to close the only vertically integrated textile mill in Europe, Anchor Mill, as it started the process of shifting its production offshore. Coats took the interim decision to move some of its production to Northern Ireland, but this was a steppingstone to the business reorientating its manufacturing base from the UK to the global South and Eastern bloc countries.

These structural changes to the textile industry occurred in the context of the ending of the Multi Fibre Arrangement, the protectionist treaty which governed the quotas on the level of textile imports into nations in the global north, which was officially phased out in the decade following 1995. The end of the MFA removed the restriction on textiles manufactured in other nations being imported into the UK. This

was the catalyst that enabled British based manufacturers to move their production operations to nations with cheap labour and limited labour laws as they could now import these goods into the UK without concern around adhering to the import quotas on textiles. The result was a domino effect as the impact of one garment manufacturer offshoring their production drove down prices, forcing other companies to move overseas to remain competitive. British manufacturers made an economic calculation. For example, they knew if a competitor could manufacture a garment for one-fifth of the cost in a factory in Morocco, then they would lose contracts with Marks & Spencer, and other retailers, if they were not able to compete with these markedly lower prices. Following the confirmation that the MFA would be scrapped, the decline of the textile industry intensified with 35,000 jobs lost in the following decade, falling from 57,000 in 1993, down to 22,000 by 2004.

In the case of Stoddard Carpets, the company did not have a deeply integrated association with Marks & Spencer, unlike Bairdwear, Claremont Garments, or Coats Viyella. Yet, Stoddard was affected by the shifting attitudes of the public with carpets facing tough competition from alternative options such as laminating flooring. Also, increasingly, people wanted the flexibility to decorate their homes to reflect the latest interior design trends, and this did not align with Stoddard's carpets which were designed and manufactured to be long-lasting. Throughout the 1990s, the company teetered on the brink of financial insolvency with its share price dropping by more than 90 percent from 57 pence in 1992 to a lowly 4 pence by 2001. The company struggled to compete with cheaper imported tufted carpets which was reflected in their annual losses peaking at over £6 million by 2004. The demand for Stoddard's carpets diminished significantly and as the company specialised in the manufacture of one product, there was no space for the company to diversify its production and the company struggled to compete with the influx of cheaper imported carpets, an increasingly fashion-conscious consumer, and growing popularity of laminate flooring.

The garment factories and textile mills analysed in this chapter were not inherently more susceptible because most of their employees were women, but the response of

both the Scottish Executive and UK Government failed to provide sufficient support to the sector as it faced a job crisis in the late 1990s. In Westminster, the Conservative Government between 1979 and 1990 focused on promoting free market economics through privatising previously nationalised industries and deregulating the economy by removing tariffs on trade, such as the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement. In the decade that followed, British politics were dominated by an economic consensus with Tony Blair's 'New Labour' project resulting in the Labour Party accepting the fundamental principles of free market economics, and by extension, the premise that the state has a very limited role in the economy. Yet, this orthodoxy did not apply evenly across all sectors of the economy with the Labour government proactive, interventionist approach to support British car manufacturing contrasting starkly with its limited, reserved approach to the job crisis in the textile sector. The unevenness of this industrial strategy led to understandable accusations by women textile workers and their trade union, the GMB, accusing the Labour Government of sexism. In Scotland, the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 promised the hope of delivering a more equitable, representative politics for people across Scotland. The first election returned a Labour-Liberal coalition Scottish Executive who were quickly faced with a seismic jobs crisis in the textile sector. In the context of the Parliament being in their infancy, it is reasonable to argue that the Executive's response to the jobs crisis was restrained as there was no precedent for how a Scottish Executive should respond to such an economic challenge.

In assessing the effectiveness of organised labour in seeking to challenge these closures, it is important to consider that by the mid-1990s, trade union power had been significantly weakened by six pieces of legislation introduced by the Conservative Government between 1980 and 1993. In the clothing sector, the GMB fought a national campaign which achieved significant media attention, organising textile workers in opposition of the Bairdwear closures, and placing the blame with Marks & Spencer, framing its decision as immoral and unpatriotic. Moreover, as previously mentioned, women workers and their union, the GMB, articulated a searing critique of the UK Government, challenging their sexist approach in

responding to the parallel job crisis in car manufacturing, dominated by male workers, and the textile industry, dominated by women workers. The difference in approach was most visibly evident with the announcement of the Government's rescue package of £129 million for the Rover car plant in March 2000 and the relatively paltry £10 million it pledged to support the textile industry in June 2000. In the context of the textile sector haemorrhaging jobs, losing an estimated 40,000 jobs alone across Britain in 1999, it is difficult not to conclude that the Labour Government's differential approach to the car manufacturing and textile industry was reflective of, consciously or subconsciously, embedded sexist attitudes which considered textiles as a less skilled, less valuable, and ultimately, less important industry which did not necessitate the level of support provided to the car manufacturing industry.

It is the case that each sector within the broad textile industry experienced distinct challenges, but the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement served as a catalyst for retailers, such as Marks & Spencer, to import more garments from overseas which precipitated textile manufacturers, including Bairdwear and Claremont Garments, engaging in a race to the bottom on production cost, offshoring their manufacturing to exploit low wages and limited labour protections. Companies like Stoddard Carpets, although they were not directly involved in offshoring their manufacturing, suffered from globalisation of the textile industry as they struggled to adapt to the significant competitiveness with the growth of cheaper, imported tufted carpets from overseas. This was facilitated by successive UK Governments with successive Conservative administrations involved in negotiating the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement, followed by a New Labour Government, elected in 1997, which was passive in responding to the job crisis in the textile industry. The combination of a more globalised, free market in the textile industry and a passive UK Government which did not assign significant value to the textile industry created fertile territory for the peeling away of another significant layer of Britain's industrial economy with the significant contraction of the textile industry with hundreds of thousands of workers, most women, made redundant

CHAPTER FOUR

Identity, Legacy, and Survival: After the Closure

INTRODUCTION

The job crisis which engulfed the textile industry in the late 1990s was an intensive period of deindustrialisation with around 3,000 workers made redundant from the sector in Scotland alone in the decade between 1993 and 2003. This sustained period of multiple closures contributed to a significant shift in the local labour market with much fewer jobs available in the textile industry and many more roles available in the growing service sector economy or the public services, including education and healthcare: sectors which were commonly perceived as being ‘women’s work’. This chapter will explore the experiences of displaced workers who were made redundant following the closure of the clothing factories and textile mills. It will explore individual workers experiences of navigating the, often treacherous, transition away from industrial manufacturing employment, and examine the support that was provided by the Scottish Executive and the UK Government to support textile workers to retrain and reskill to find other forms of work. Moreover, it will assess the generational difference in experience between younger workers and older workers seeking new employment. For older workers who started in the textile industry directly from school, redundancy presented their first experience of seeking employment in the ‘modern’ economy with more formalised, professional networks of recruitment after several decades.

Furthermore, this chapter will assess residual workplace identity among former textile workers. There is a broadly accepted consensus that the industrial identities of male workers endure beyond the factory gates, rooted in principles and values which remain central in their post-work life. For example, Phillips et al have conceptualised

‘Clydesiderism’ as a form of industrial identity which was embedded among male workers in Glasgow’s shipyards and transmitted from older workers to younger workers, whilst Ferns has argued for the ‘survivability of occupational identities’ among male steel workers.¹ This section will deploy Acker’s concept of a ‘craft outlook’ to assess if women textile workers, specifically sewing machinists who were classed by their peers as skilled workers, display a residual industrial identity in their post-work life, through continuing to hone their craft and engage in trans-generational education.²

Moreover, it will consider the deep-seated scars of deindustrialisation that manifest in the years following the closure of a factory, critically exploring the lingering impacts on communities and individual lives. It deploys Linkon’s concept of the ‘half-life of deindustrialisation’ to illuminate the long-lasting corrosive impact of deindustrialisation, which she compares as being akin to toxic waste.³ It will explore the data which shows that industrial communities suffer poorer health outcomes with higher levels of alcohol and drug dependency, elevated levels of poor mental health, including suicide, and the heightened levels of poverty associated with prolonged periods of unemployment. This is a particular issue for the geography of the case study companies discussed in this thesis with west-central Scotland recording higher levels of mortality compared with other traditionally industrial areas in Europe.⁴

Finally, the chapter will critically analyse workers memories, examining more deeply their general assessments about their working lives. It will deploy Strangleman’s concept of ‘the imagined workplace’ to examine expressions of nostalgia in the oral testimonies.⁵ It will deconstruct workers testimonies to better understand how

¹ Jim Phillips, Valerie Wright and Jim Tomlinson, ‘Being a “Clydesider” in the age of deindustrialisation: skilled male identity and economic restructuring in the West of Scotland since the 1960s’, *Labor History*, vol.61, no.2, (2020), pp.151-169; James Ferns, ‘Workers’ Identities in Transition: Deindustrialisation and Scottish Steelworkers’, *Journal of Working-Class Studies*, Vol.4, No.2, (2019), pp.55-80.

² George Ackers, ‘Craft as work-life unity: The careers of skilled working-class men and their sons and grandsons after deindustrialization’, *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol.26, (2019), pp.180-196.

³ Linkon, *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization*, p.2.

⁴ David Walsh, Martin Taulbut, and Phil Hanlon, ‘The aftershock of deindustrialization – trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe’, *European Journal of Public Health*, Vol.20, No.1, (2009), p.63.

⁵ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, p.11.

women articulate their memories of work in the textile industry. Many of the women textile workers expressed contradictory memories of their working lives as they described the challenging, labour-intensive working conditions, whilst simultaneously articulating happier, more joyful emotions when discussing other aspects of their work, such as social trips with their fellow workers. It will build on Clarke's research to contend that workers expressions of nostalgia should be considered an expression of rebellion against the 'present time', the deindustrialisation era, rather than an uncritical, rose-tinted nostalgia.⁶

DISPLACED WORKERS

In 2003, Heathcott and Cowie urged scholars of deindustrialisation to move the analysis beyond a 'body count'.⁷ In doing so, they argued that the focus should be placed on displaced workers experiences of the closure of their workplace, exploring the long-term impact of deindustrialisation on their lives following redundancy. In Glasgow, the textile workers who were made redundant were effectively deskilled by the local labour market. This is not an unfamiliar story as when an industry experiences an economic down-turn it is likely that there will be multiple closures in a contracted period, rather than one factory closing in isolation. For example, Angela Coyle noted that the closure of the Roger Firth textile factory in Harrogate, Yorkshire, resulted in an incongruity between available local jobs and the skills possessed by the women who were made redundant by Roger Firth, stating: 'The real problem was that they were deskilled by the labour market. They had been skilled machinists but, since there were no local job opportunities for clothing machinists, they were effectively deskilled by the labour market and classified as unskilled labour'.⁸ In Glasgow, and the wider region, the textile industry continued to contract, restricting the number of available jobs in the sector, and significantly reducing the long-term stability of these roles.

⁶ Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization', p.123.

⁷ Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialisation*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p.5

⁸ Angela Coyle, *Redundant Women*, (London: Women's Press, 1983), pp.54.

These workers possessed expert knowledge and specialist skills which were highly desirable in the textile sector but were not necessarily transferable to other sectors. Some workers, usually younger workers, were able to find new opportunities in the textile sector although they were fewer and further between, and available those few available opportunities were defined by their increased precarity. It was more desirable for textile companies to employ workers who were already trained, skilled and familiar with the industry rather than hire someone with no experience in the sector. Following the closure of Claremont Garments in 1997, Lisa Lamont was only unemployed for a short period before being employed by Edward MacBean & Co., a textile company based in Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire, which specialised in the production of outdoor clothing and military uniforms. The role was of comparable status and remuneration as the time-and-study engineer role which Lisa performed in the Pollokshaws factory and involved the use of scientific management techniques to calculate the time it would take to perform each small operation on the production line.

Arguably, Lisa was fortunate to be in a position to accept the offer of employment at Edward MacBean & Co. The factory, located in Cumbernauld, was located around eighteen miles north-east of Glasgow. From her family home in the north-west of Glasgow, it was a relatively easy to commute although the roundtrip could take easily more than one hour during the busy rush hour. However, a large proportion of the women made redundant from Claremont would not have applied for this job as the almost forty-mile round trip daily would have been too difficult, expensive, and too time-consuming to complete using public transport to make the role a viable option. This would have been particularly challenging for working mothers as the additional time spent commuting to-and-from the Cumbernauld factory would have contributed to increased pressure and stress as they attempted to ‘juggle’ their paid employment and their unpaid domestic responsibility as primary caregivers and homemakers.⁹ It was common for working-class women to be burning the candle at both ends as they tried to achieve societal expectations of domesticity and femininity. They were expected to be a dutiful wife, taking primary responsibility for raising the

⁹ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.104.

children, maintaining a clean, organised home, whilst also working to make a substantial contribution to the family income and keeping the family above the poverty line. The double-burden, the duality of women's lives, has been identified by McIvor as 'a primary cause of fatigue, stress and breakdown for women' in Britain, particularly for married women in dual income households, and more so for women who were the head of single parent families.¹⁰

In August 2000, Edward MacBean & Co. went into receivership after failing to win a contract with the Ministry of Defence which would have been worth an estimated £5.5 million.¹¹ The GMB Union expressed significant anger at the lack of support provided by the UK Government, and the Scottish Executive, to support the company from entering receivership, as the company was close to securing a contract worth £3.1 million to manufacture uniforms for the Turkish Police.¹² In the weeks following, Lisa managed to find another job in the textile sector with Delta Textiles. The factory, in East Kilbride, was located around fifteen miles south-east of Glasgow. However, this was short-lived with the factory closing only six months later. In this sense, Lisa was a displaced worker who was forced to consider employment opportunities beyond her community, the city of Glasgow, to try and maintain her income, job status, and utilise her skillset. In the accelerated phase of deindustrialisation, once significant portions of an industry have closed their factories, displaced workers are pushed to the periphery and forced to travel further, outside their own town or city, to find a job of comparative skill and remuneration in an industry in which they possess experience and knowledge. In Sturgeon Falls in Northern Ontario, the closure of the town's papermill in 2001 removed the community's largest sole employer and forced displaced workers to travel to find jobs of comparative skill and pay. Steven High provides illuminating examples such as Karen Beaudette who was re-employed in the town of Sudbury, fifty-five miles west of Sturgeon Falls, for a wage of \$12 per hour, less than half of the \$26 per hour that she earned whilst working in the paper mill.¹³ One of her workmates in the

¹⁰ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.142.

¹¹ BBC News, 'Army Clothes Firm Receivership', (29 August 2000). Accessed on 12 February 2024. Available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/901119.stm>.

¹² BBC News, 'Army Clothes Firm Receivership', (29 August 2000).

¹³ High, *One Job Town*, p.281.

Sturgeon Falls papermill, Marcel Boudreau who forced to accept a job working twelve-hour shifts in a factory in North Bay, twenty-four miles east of Sturgeon Falls, in order to earn only around half of what he had previously earned.¹⁴

It is notable that redundancy was perceived differently by those handing out the letters from the human resources department, compared to those on the receiving end of the redundancy notice. On the experience of redundancies in the textile industry, former personnel manager, Margaret Kilpatrick at D&H Cohen/Claremont Garments, reflected: ‘I think, for some people, redundancy worked out quite well and they went on and did other things. And it opened up other avenues for them because for some people, it was almost an automatic, like, oh, you left school and you went into Cohens and, but you did learn a skill!’¹⁵ This is rooted in the dual assumption that, firstly, people did not enjoy their work in the textile industry and secondly, there were plentiful opportunities for training and reskilling to equip redundant workers for employment in another sector. Understandably, workers tried to seek alternative employment in the textile industry as they were familiar, experienced, and qualified within the sector but the broader economic outlook for the industry in this era made the opportunities for employment of a comparable status and remuneration severely limited.

As a younger worker, in many respects, Lisa’s search for employment was less restrictive because, as High notes, older workers are more likely to be tied to local community due to home ownership, their partner’s employment, and family connections.¹⁶ In 1996 when she was made redundant from Claremont Garments, Lisa was only aged twenty-six, still living in the family home and did not have any responsibilities, such as children or a long-term partner, which she had to consider when exploring job opportunities. In Castleford and Harrogate, Coyle observed that available employment opportunities for women with school-age children were severely limited as these women had to prioritise opportunities which offered

¹⁴ High, *One Job Town*, p.282.

¹⁵ Margaret Kilpatrick, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 7 February 2020.

¹⁶ High, *One Job Town*, p.279.

working-hours scheduled around the school day.¹⁷ Ultimately, Lisa's experience in the textile sector was punctuated redundancy, experiencing the closure of Claremont Garments, Edward MacBean, Delta Textiles, and Glenmore in less than three years. This was reflective of the difficult conditions in the textile industry in Glasgow and the wider area throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s. She offered a blunt assessment of her working life in the textile industry: 'Bottom line is, everywhere I went shut down. I was in Cohens [Claremont], MacBeans, Delta, and then I went to Glenmore. It was just going downhill, everywhere.'¹⁸ The Summer 2003 edition of Glasgow Economic Monitor provided a stark overview of the accelerating 'clothing crisis' in Glasgow:

Up until autumn 1999, Glasgow escaped most of the troubles, with the sector in the City having previously undergone its own configuration over the early 1990s, losing Claremont Garments, (Pollokshaws), Mansfield Hosiery Mills, (Easterhouse), and Glengyle, (Bridgeton) with an associated 900 job loss. Recently however, Glasgow has again been very much caught up in the 'clothing crisis'. Over the period December 1999 to March 2001, some 740 clothing sector jobs were lost. Baird Clothing closed its Polmadie facility in March 2000 with a 210 job loss and the Springburn unit closed in summer 2000 with a 116 job loss. Other knocks have included the closure of Queenslie-based jeans factory, Patrol (Manufacturing) Ltd, (in December 1999), with the loss of 50 jobs; the liquidation (in February 2000) of Campsie Knitwear, Carntyne with the loss of 280 jobs, and the closure of Gelfer, (Bridgeton), in January 2001, with a job loss of 88 and, in June 2001, the insolvency of flag maker McSymon & Potter, (18 jobs).¹⁹

In 1993, there were eighty textile companies operating in Glasgow with a combined workforce of 4,300.²⁰ Over the following decade, the total number of textile companies had increased to one hundred, yet the workforce had been decimated to around one-third of its 1993 figure, with only 1,500 still employed in the sector by 2003.²¹ This figure suggests that Glasgow remained a hub of textile production in Scotland, but the composition of the sector had shifted from large companies focused on mass manufacturing, to independent firms producing small runs of couture garments and limited ranges of high-end products marketed at a niche luxury market.

¹⁷ Coyle, *Redundant Women*, p.95.

¹⁸ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 June 2019.

¹⁹ Scottish Enterprise, 'Glasgow Economic Monitor: Summer 2003', (Glasgow: Glasgow City Council, 2003), p.25.

²⁰ Scottish Enterprise, 'Glasgow Economic Monitor: Summer 2003', p.25.

²¹ Scottish Enterprise, 'Glasgow Economic Monitor: Summer 2003', p.25.

Following the trauma of four redundancies in less than three years, Lisa was unemployed for almost three years. In January 2001, Wendy Alexander MSP, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, detailed the Scottish Executive's spending to support displaced textile workers, and the wider textile industry. In total, £2 million was allocated for spending on initiatives to support retraining for workers made unemployed at Bairdwear and DAKS Simpson; £1.2 million invested in establishing, in conjunction with Heriot-Watt University, a Centre of Manufacturing Excellence in Galashiels; £700,000 allocated by the Scottish Executive and Scottish Enterprise to support the industry; and a further £300,000 in Regional Selective Assistance being awarded to areas most reliant on employment in the textile and clothing sector.²² This displayed a willingness from the Scottish Executive to recognise the significant job losses in the textile sector, but their narrative aimed to contextualise these job losses within the wider performance of the Scottish economy. In doing so, whether deliberately or subconsciously, it served the purpose of diminishing the severity, and intensity, of the crisis in the textile sector. Notably, in response to a question from Phil Gaillie, Conservative MSP for South of Scotland, regarding the closure of Glencraig Knitwear, Glentrool Knitwear, Strathclyde Knitwear, The Sweater Shop and Wilsons in Ayrshire, then Minister for Lifelong Learning, Henry McLeish MSP retorted: 'It is important that we put into perspective what is happening in the Scottish economy: output is up, exports are up, and unemployment is at its lowest level for 25 years.'²³ Moreover, in a debate on unemployment, Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Nicol Stephen MSP, although recognising the job losses in the textile industry, was eager to reframe the discussion and focus on new jobs created in other sectors:

It is clear that there has been a considerable number of job losses – too many. However, it is important to remember that there have been some good-news stories as well: BskyB has created over 600 jobs in Dunfermline; and even in Clackmannanshire, where the problems have been greater, there has been success in the retail and textile sectors. I do not want to state whether the following represents good or bad news – the facts speak for themselves – but for the record, Clackmannanshire now has an unemployment rate of 9

²² Debate: Borders Textile Industry, Scottish Parliament Official Report, 31 January 2001, c.797-799.

²³ Question Time: Manufacturing Industry, Scottish Parliament Official Report, 17 February 2000, c. 1205-1207.

percent, which is down from 10.4 percent last year and down from 12.8 percent back in 1996. The Scottish average is down from 6 per cent to 5.7 percent.²⁴

It is the case that governments, of all political hues, will spin negative news stories, such as job losses, factory closures and unemployment, into a more positive narrative. The focus of the Labour-Liberal Scottish Executive was on emphasising the bigger picture of economic performance without the necessary focus on specific retraining and reemployment programmes for those affected by the closures. In her search for employment, Lisa did not receive any support from any specific policy measure introduced by the Scottish Executive. However, she did actively engage with the Job Centre to improve her chances of finding employment, as she explains:

I was unemployed for two or three years, but I took it upon myself to train up in the Microsoft certification, so that I had to pay for myself. Still go to the Job Centre and then eventually, I went to a place called 'True Grit' in the Gorbals and it was just a kind of, in between, stepping-stone place to get you back in to getting up in the morning, having to focus on a task, having to be accountable for things. Basically, just to get you in the way of working again. And then, from there, they help you apply for jobs. They give you all the help in the world. They give you newspapers, stamps, kid-on interviews: "This is what you could be asked", "This is the sort of thing you would have to be ready for".²⁵

To improve her employability in the increasingly office-based, service sector economy in Glasgow, Lisa decided to diversify her skillset by gaining the Microsoft certification as she concluded that this would be an essential qualification to allow her to compete in the more computer-literate 'post-industrial' jobs market. Shortly after gaining her Microsoft accreditation from Anniesland College, Lisa was successfully employed by the University of Strathclyde, based at their Jordanhill campus, in the north-west of the city, working as part of the IT support service. In the first few weeks of starting at the Jordanhill campus, Lisa bumped into a former workmate of Claremont Garments. It was Maureen Kyle, a former machinist who had started in Cohen's aged fifteen years old and worked in the factory for a cumulative total of thirty-seven years between 1956 and 1996 with her working life

²⁴ Debate: Clackmannanshire and West Fife (Unemployment), Scottish Parliament Official Report, 9 September 1999, column 401-403.

²⁵ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 31 May 2019.

punctuated by motherhood and childrearing. When it was announced that Claremont Garments would be closing, Maureen was fifty-six years old. She recalled her experience of having to apply for jobs for the first time in her life:

So, you feel as if you'd worked hard aww your life and you felt that the carpet was drawn fae under yer feet. So, you didnae know what you were gonny do. And, then it brought in that ye had tae have a CV. Never had a CV in ma life 'til then tae I was fifty-six - don't ask me what it entailed because I couldnae even tell ye! Then ye thought, "I'm noo gonny work again". And then I applied for the job at the University as the cleaner and I thought it was Strathclyde but Jordanhill was a part of Strathclyde at the time. But I got the thingmy back and it was Jordanhill. I didnae even know where Jordanhill wis at the time [laughs].²⁶

The admission that she did not know where Jordanhill was located in Glasgow is testament to the strength of community, particularly delineated by social class, within cities. Jordanhill is an affluent district situated in the north-west of Glasgow.

Maureen Kyle was raised in the east-end of Glasgow, before moving to Castlemilk in the south-east of the city, a 1950s housing estate which was built by the Glasgow corporation to accommodate removal of slum housing in the Gorbals, whilst she worked in the southside of Glasgow at the factory in Pollokshaws. Therefore, despite Jordanhill was less than ten miles from home, it was an unfamiliar location which was economically and socially distant from Maureen's lived experience in working-class communities on the southside. In studying the experience of workers made redundant from the Burberry factory in Treorchy, south Wales, Blyton and Jenkins noted that workers reflected that one of the main benefits of factory work was its close proximity as they could commute to-and-from work in less than fifteen minutes as the workplace was the centre of a community.²⁷ This is also reflected in High's study of the closure of the Sturgeon Falls paper mill as he observed that 'the fear of forced relocation loomed over our interview conversations like Damocles' Sword.'²⁸

²⁶ Maureen Kyle, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 8 July 2019.

²⁷ Paul Blyton and Jean Jenkins, 'Life after Burberry: Shifting experiences of work and non-work life following redundancy', *Work, Employment and Society*, Vol.26, No.1, (2012), p.34.

²⁸ Steven High, "'They Were Making Good Money, Just Ten Minutes from Home": Proximity and Distance in the Plant Shutdown Stories of Northern Ontario Mill Workers', *Labour/Le Travail*, Vol.76, (Fall 2015), p.28.

Maureen continued, explaining the support that provided by the Department for Social Security through the Job Centre:

The government, or the social, witever you want to call them, they got you people tae help you with your CV. That was aboot aww you got. [...] A lot of them came intae the factory and advised ye wit tae dae for your CV. Don't ask me what it contained because I wisnae interested. I done it, whatever it wis that was done. But, I thought, "At our ages, a CV? I've never heard of it in ma life." Now, it's a done thing now but years ago it was never. Years ago, it was never. You got your job through me talking for you, or somebody talking for you. We never had any of that.²⁹

Older workers found the experience of searching for a new job to be daunting. The increased responsibility of human resources departments in the recruitment process had eroded older, more informal practices of hiring which relied on social networks of friends and family and rooted in a sense of communitarian values. Angela Coyle has illustrated the informal recruitment process that was common in the textile sector: 'Once employed there [Roger Firth], people tended to draw in members of their families, so that the labour force was actually a network of mothers and daughter, fathers and sons, uncles, cousins and siblings.'³⁰ However, the professionalisation of recruitment made the task of finding a new job incredibly difficult to navigate with many, particularly older workers, unfamiliar with drafting CVs and rehearsing for interviews. For Maureen, her work in the factory as a machinist was the only job that she had ever held, and it required no application as she was able to 'get in' to the factory as her mum was already employed as a machinist. In the 1960s and 1970s, when women of Maureen's generation were school-leavers seeking their first job in the garment factories and textile mills, the recruitment process was vastly different to the formal application process which was standard practice come the late 1990s when Maureen applied to work as a cleaner at the University of Strathclyde. For example, Maureen Taggart recalled how a simple enquiry was sufficient to being employed in Anchor Mill in Paisley as a fifteen-year-old school-leaver in 1967:

After leaving school, I left school on the Friday and I started in the Mill on the Monday [...] We had to go along and filled in a form and then you got word that you were set to go and to report for yer overall and you were to

²⁹ Maureen Kyle, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 8 July 2019.

³⁰ Coyle, *Redundant Women*, p.52.

bring a cup [...] Then they just took you to the department. I remember there were a few of us and they just took you to the department you were going to go to, and I was to go to the embroidery department and I was to make boxes.³¹

It was incredibly difficult for older workers to find employment of a comparative status, skill, and remuneration as the available opportunities in the textile sector were limited, and dwindling, and as they were nearing retirement, the time required to retrain in a new skill and find employment in a new sector was not an appealing prospect.³² This was particularly tough for women, due to the dual burden they carried, as Frisone noted in her analysis of the interaction between women's unpaid domestic labour and their involvement in paid employment, as she stated: 'Women's role as primary caregivers not only makes it harder for them to find a new job with good conditions that meet their family's needs but also constraints their ability to take part in forms of mobilisation.'³³ In Sturgeon Falls, High spoke of industrial workers 'toughing it out' until retirement, such as Pierre Hardy who only had eight years until he received his pension³⁴. As these workers were heading towards the end of their working lives, there was a sense that they could 'tough it out' by finding sporadic, seasonal work to ensure they have enough to get by until they can retire. This is reflective of the experience of women of Maureen's generation who were made redundant in the textile industry as they were more likely to accept employment of a lower status in order to earn a wage, with the jobs in the most plentiful supply available in traditional feminised areas such as cleaning, commonly for an organisation or as a domestic in National Health Service hospitals. This was noted by Kathleen Wisner, who started working in the Victoria Infirmary on the southside of Glasgow, following Claremont Garments closure of the factory in Pollokshaws, as she noted: 'I know a lot of people [from the factory] went to work in the Victoria [Infirmary] [...] That's right, because a lot o' them still do work in the Victoria Infirmary.'³⁵

³¹ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed on 29 July 2019, by Rory Stride.

³² In the UK, the normal retirement age for women was 60 as this was the age they received their state pension. This was changed in 2010 by the Pensions Act 2011 which accelerated raising the age at which women receive their state pension from 60 to 65 years old in 2018.

³³ Frisone, "*We won't go back home!*", p.18.

³⁴ High, *One Job Town*, p.278.

³⁵ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

In Renfrewshire, when Bairdwear announced the closure of their Inchinnan factory in March 1999, Betty McKee was made redundant, aged forty-seven. She experienced a brief period of unemployment before starting as a part-time domestic worker in the Royal Alexandria Hospital (RAH) in Paisley:

Well, I was actually, it was a part-time kind of job I was looking for. And, because obviously by then, the grandchildren had started coming and things like that and, I was needed to, you know, fer baby sittin', watchin' them so it was really part-time. So, it was one of the Bairdwear workers that actually phoned me and told me to contact the hospital, that they were looking for domestics, so I went, and I got interviewed and I got started as a domestic in RAH.³⁶

The social network that Betty had established in Bairdwear was essential in helping her find an opportunity to re-enter the labour market after her redundancy. In searching for a new job, Betty's decision was, subconsciously, directed by dominant conceptions of femininity for grandmothers which situates them as their secondary child-carer. Betty had prioritised her role as a grandmother, and this shaped the type of paid employment she decided to look for: reliable part-time work which was close to home. The hospital was in close proximity to Betty's home in Paisley, located only two miles away, which was important as the convenience of working at the hospital provided Betty with the flexibility to help her daughter with childcare of her granddaughter. The role of a domestic in the Royal Alexandria Hospital was an extension of women's unpaid domestic labour with primary responsibilities including cleaning, tidying, and providing considered, compassionate conversation to patients on the hospital wards. Betty recalled that several other women from Bairdwear started working at the RAH as domestics in the months following the closure of the factory which is reflective of the proliferation of women in part-time employment during the last quarter of the twentieth century.³⁷ Betty's experience was not the only post-factory closure narrative of paid employment in which women shifted to paid employment which was an extension of their unpaid domestic labour. After the closure of Bairdwear's factories in Glasgow, Alison Anderson recalled how she

³⁶ Betty McKee, Interviewed on 14 February 2021 by Rory Stride.

³⁷ Betty McKee, Interviewed on 14 February 2021, by Rory Stride.

decided to shift into a different sector, returning to college to retrain and achieve a formal qualification:

I thought, doing the after-school care would be better and I could take ma kids to ma sister's after-school care and go through ma Level 2 in Childcare [at college] as well. So, I started doing that [Level 2 childcare course]. I got more and more into that and went to work in her [her sister's] after-school care.³⁸

It represented a fusion of unpaid domestic labour and paid employment as studying for a further education childcare course enabled Alison to earn an income, working with her sister operating an after-school childcare service, whilst, concurrently, providing care for her own children. There is no clearer example of the 'porous' dynamic, as McIvor described, between women's domestic labour and their paid employment.³⁹ It is a symbiotic relationship which shapes and defines all aspects of women's lives. The increased flexibility of paid part-time employment reinforced prevailing gender roles as it afforded women the time to conform to hegemonic notions of domesticity: the primary caregiver and homemaker. It is for this reason that Coyle described part-time work as 'the work of married women and particularly women with children'.⁴⁰ The deep connection between the double burden and the concentration of women in part-time employment is why Lyonette and Crompton have concluded that, until there is a fundamental shift towards an equal distribution of domestic labour, an equitable sexual division of labour, women will not be able to compete with men in the labour market, as their options are constrained by societal expectations of domesticity.⁴¹ The sense of stress and exhaustion experienced by women as a result of the double burden was captured by a woman from south-west England who was in part-time employment, in addition to her unpaid labour, quoted by McIvor, in response to a *Mass Observation* study in 1998: 'Basically, what makes me feel unwell... just overburdened, is having too much to do... just tired and pissed off having too much to do. On a day-to-day basis the overburdening usually

³⁸ Alison Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 16 July 2019.

³⁹ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.104.

⁴⁰ Coyle, *Redundant Women*, p.132.

⁴¹ Lyonette and Crompton, 'Sharing the Load?', p.36.

comes from me having to do everything that needs doing to keep the show on the road.’⁴²

For male workers who were seeking employment following an industrial closure, although earning a wage to provide for their family was the primary motivating factor for re-entering the labour market, their decisions were often informed by a desire to preserve their status as a hard-working, skilled industrial worker. In the south Wales ‘Steel Town’, Walkerdine and Jimenez provide the example of Jim, a former steelworker who was re-employed in a supermarket chain after the closure of the town’s steel plant. In his narrative Jim lamented that his work in the supermarket was ‘not really proper work’ as he would come home from a shift feeling as if ‘you haven’t done anything, nothing worthwhile anyway.’⁴³ For Jim, one of the crucial aspects of work in the steel-works was how the arduous, tiring, dirty nature of the work provided an opportunity for the embodiment of hard-man masculinity in the workplace as it required a certain level of physical toughness to perform the work. He felt emasculated by his work in the supermarket as it did not conform to his understanding of working-class masculinity.⁴⁴ The physicality, and the way the labour-intensive nature of the work sculpted the body, contributed to the toxic *machismo* being intertwined with male industrial jobs.⁴⁵ However, the notion that all male workers feel emasculated when entering more feminised sectors of the economy has been challenged. In a Scottish context, Ferns has challenged the notion of universal emasculation among former male industrial workers in his study of male steelworkers arguing that it is not merely working in more female dominated jobs which stirs feeling of emasculation, but rather, it is a result of female-dominated areas of the labour market being historically more exploitative with women’s work being more commonly defined by more precarity, lower levels of pay, and low, or no, trade union organisation.⁴⁶

⁴² McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.100.

⁴³ Valerie Walkerdine and Luis Jimenez, *Gender, Work and Community After De-Industrialisation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), p.92.

⁴⁴ Walkerdine and Jimenez, *Gender, Work and Community*,

⁴⁵ Johnston and McIvor, ‘Broken Bodies: Masculinities’, p.136.

⁴⁶ James Ferns, ‘Workers’ Identities in Transition: Deindustrialisation and Scottish Steelworkers’, *Journal of Working-Class Studies*, Vol.4, No.2, (2019), p.74.

In contrast, for working-class women, particularly those who were in their thirties or older, their relationship with paid work was tied to hegemonic gender roles as women, classed as wives and mothers, as they held the responsibility as the primary caregiver and homemaker. They engaged in paid employment, in part, to meet societal expectations of mothers to provide for their families: to support their children and their grandchildren. They derived pleasure from their experiences in the garment factories and textile mills but in taking on their next job, their options were shaped by a desire, and expectation, to provide for their family in the domestic sphere. In deciding to re-enter paid employment after an episode of redundancy and unemployment, women's decisions were defined by dominant conceptualisations of femininity as they needed the wage to provide for their families and provide themselves with a degree of financial independence. This was captured by Coyle as she analysed the experience of men and women in the aftermath of redundancy in Yorkshire: 'For men, work is an integral part of their daily, social relations, as men, and job loss affects them as men, not simply as waged labour. It may be that because women still have an ongoing role within the family, unemployment and the ensuing confinement to the household does not pitch them into crisis in the way it may do for men. Unemployment for women is not a crisis of gender identity and women's domestic role can offer ways of making sense of job loss.'⁴⁷

This was still relevant in the late 1990s, and into the early 2000s, as shown by Lyonette and Crampton's qualitative study, despite shifts in undoing entrenched gender norms with men and women expressing a willingness to distribute domestic work more equally, it was evident that women were still responsible for the majority of domestic labour in the home.⁴⁸ The endurance of traditional, hegemonic gender roles, is captured, as they describes:

The pressures on women to take responsibility for housework remain considerable, despite the increase in women's "breadwinning" capacities [...] If men continue to work long hours, and many women are effectively forced to work part-time, even those couples who want to share will find it impossible to do so. At the same time, until *all* men are willing to take on

⁴⁷ Coyle, *Redundant Women*, p.121.

⁴⁸ Lyonette and Crampton, 'Sharing the Load?', p.37.

more domestic tasks, so allowing women to take on greater responsibility within the workplace, any hoped-for progress in gender equality is likely to stall.⁴⁹

One aspect that is under appreciated is the considerable contribution that a woman's wage made to the household income, and by extension, the significance of the loss of this income. The passage of the Equal Pay 1970, which in large part owed its existence to the industrial action taken by women sewing machinists at Ford's factory in Dagenham in 1968, enshrined women's right to pay parity with male colleagues doing similar work, of a similar grade and value. However, due to the concentration of women in lower paid sectors of the economy, and with a higher proportion of women engaged in part-time employment, the gendered conception of a male breadwinner remained strong in communities across the country until the late twentieth century. However, several women, often after the recorder was turned-off after the conclusion of an interview, recalled, anecdotally, that they earned a comparable wage – and sometimes even a higher wage – than their husbands, as they were able to supplement their standard wage through enhanced pay for weekend and late shifts in the factory. In Claremont Garments, Kathleen Wisner noted how the piecework pay system incentivised intensive working, but equally, provided an opportunity for women to markedly increase their wage, as she described: 'You could earn...these girls earned a lot o' money! They did! They earned a lot o' money!! You know, they earned decent. And they worked hard for it.'⁵⁰ A similar sentiment was expressed by Alison Anderson, who worked in Bairdwear during the 1990s, as she recalled how her wage in the garment factory was more than double what her husband's wage:

As I say, for a way back then, to earn the money we were earning, it was brilliant! And there was always the opportunity to work overtime at night and do Saturday and Sunday work, so you could really build your money up [...] So, moneywise, if I can say anything at that time, they [Bairdwear] were great payers. I mean, I remember, like, my husband, erm, was a trainee chef and he was seriously getting something like a £100 a week being a trainee chef, and I was probably bringing in £250!⁵¹

⁴⁹ Lyonette and Crampton, 'Sharing the Load?', p.38.

⁵⁰ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

⁵¹ Alison Anderson, Interviewed on 8 July 2019 by Rory Stride.

The good rate of pay, with opportunities to enhance the basic rate, as described by Alison was also mentioned by Betty McKee, who worked as a presser in Bairdwear's factory in Inchinnan, Renfrewshire, as she described it as 'good pay' with the option to significantly boost her wage by working overnight on a Thursday evening, a Friday, or a Sunday.⁵² In her study of women's work in manufacturing industries in south Wales, Stevens highlights that a sewing machinist, who worked in a Louise Edwards factory in 1960s, recalled earned double the wage of her husband, a coalminer.⁵³ These are anecdotal examples, rather than empirical data, but they serve as a powerful and persuasive riposte challenging the notion of a woman's wages being merely 'pin-money'. They reveal that in working-class households, a woman's wage was critical as it was often comparable, or it surpassed, men's wages in industrial occupations, due to the women's opportunities for enhancements through work intensification and overtime.

It has been noted by McCarthy that recessions, and declining job security in traditionally male dominated industries, in the 1980s and 1990s served as a catalyst for an increasing number of women becoming the main earner – the breadwinner – for their households.⁵⁴ This point has been reinforced by McIvor, who noted that when a large number of male industrial workers were made unemployed, as deindustrialisation deepened in the historically male-dominated industries, women 'stepped up' to fill the traditionally male breadwinner role.⁵⁵ In tandem, this made the financial impact of women's redundancy, and subsequent unemployment, particularly marked as the loss to the household income was significantly, verging on catastrophic, but less studied due to the resilient, deeply ingrained gendered view of men being the primary breadwinner and women's role being primarily homemakers and caregivers. In this respect, these narratives seek to, as Laframboise describes,

⁵² Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021; Bairdwear operated a four-day working wage so additional work carried out on a Friday was classed as overtime.

⁵³ Stevens, *Voices from the Factory Floor*, p.56.

⁵⁴ McCarthy, *Double Lives*, p.353.

⁵⁵ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.103.

‘destabilise the male breadwinner’ notion in the popular conception of industrial work and family dynamics.⁵⁶

GENDER AND CRAFT IDENTITY

There has been little research which explicitly explores working-class women’s enduring attachment to their work and the ways in which their experience of industrial labour helped to cultivate a distinct working-class femininity. Yet, the role of skilled work has been central to the construction of masculinity in industrial communities with men carving out their sense of identity, pride, and status from the money they earned and the labour they performed. In Glasgow, there has been a strong link between work on Clydeside and the image of a hard, masculine, violent industrial working class. In the workplace, Johnston and McIvor’s research revealed how masculinity in the shipyards and heavy engineering on Clydeside was cultivated through the performance of heavy, dangerous labour-intensive work, describing a ‘cult of toughness’ into which new, younger workers had to assimilate in order to survive.⁵⁷ They noted that ‘the inherent dangers and harsh, brutal realities of the Clydeside workplace in the heavy industries thus acted to incubate a dominant mode of masculinity. Here we see machismo attitudes forged in an almost exclusively male, tough, and physically demanding work culture, created and reproduced in a not dissimilar way to how military service incubated masculine identities.’⁵⁸ This cult of toughness was captured by Danny Houston, who worked in Fairfield Shipyard, Govan, Glasgow, as he recalled his enjoyment of the tiring, physically demanding nature of being a blacksmith: ‘Anything that had be shaped, we done that in the blacksmiths. Hard, hard work. Very physical. Ye went hame shattered, nae argument but it wis great.’⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Laframboise, ‘Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal’s Garment Industry’, p.12.

⁵⁷ Johnston and McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies’, p.138.

⁵⁸ Johnston and McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men’, p.148.

⁵⁹ Danny Houston, Interviewed on 11 November 2016, by Rory Stride. Interview accessed from Scottish Oral History Centre ‘Oral history project on the changing work identity of Govan’s shipbuilders, c.1960-2016’ project, University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections – GB249/SOHC 33

More recently, Phillips, Wright and Tomlinson have explored the nature of occupational identity in industrial workplaces in the late twentieth century and consider its endurance over time and place.⁶⁰ In their study, they use the experiences of two male industrial workers, Alan Glover who was a welder in Fairfield's shipyard on the upper Clyde, and Joe Reilly who worked in a car assembly plant in the town of Linwood, located south-west of Glasgow. The authors argue that a distinct working-class identity was formed in the shipyards of the upper Clyde in Glasgow which continued to endure in the newer forms of manufacturing which emerged from the 1960s onwards, forming a distinctive 'skilled male employment culture' which they term 'Clydesiderism'.⁶¹ The concept of 'Clydesiderism' was embodied by autonomy at work, engaging in skilled craft labour, good pay, stable employment, sharing knowledge and skills to educate, pride in your work, macho toughness, and solidarity. Phillips et al posit that Clydesiderism endured as a prominent, embedded identity in communities and workplaces in west-central Scotland as working-class men inoculated younger generations, including those who they fathered in the domestic sphere or educated in the workplace.⁶² In their own words the authors described Clydesiderism as being 'constructed in workplaces and communities, remembered as sites of learning – the shipyard was “the best university in the world” – where knowledge and understanding were transmitted inter-generationally. Graduates emerged with a distinct working-class moral worldview that structured their thoughts and actions in different labour market situations.'⁶³

This defined Clydesiderism as being cultivated during the first half of the twentieth century in the macho environment of the Glasgow shipyards where the workforce was overwhelmingly male, whilst adapting and enduring throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. In this respect, 'Clydesiderism' is a gendered construct which is not applicable to women workers in the textile industry on Clydeside as their lives were shaped by their roles were defined by their gender: as women, wives, and

⁶⁰ Jim Phillips, Valerie Wright, and Jim Tomlinson, 'Being a "Clydesider" in the age of deindustrialisation: skilled male identity and economic restructuring in the West of Scotland since the 1960s', *Labor History*, vol.61, no.2, (2020), pp.151-169.

⁶¹ Phillips et al, 'Being a "Clydesider"', p.152.

⁶² Phillips et al, 'Being a "Clydesider"', pp.163-165.

⁶³ Phillips et al, 'Being a "Clydesider"', p.164.

mothers. Their working lives in the textile industry were often punctuated, or suspended, by marriage or motherhood. This was the case for Maureen Leitch who left her employment at D&H Cohen in 1968, after a decade working the factory, after marrying her husband and relocating to Paisley.⁶⁴ The women who continued to work in the textile industry after marriage, or returned after their children reached school-age, their working hours would be defined by their domestic role as the primary caregiver and homemaker, with many women working part-time, or unsociable evening and weekend hours. This was the sacrifice they made to fulfil the dual burden of unpaid domestic labour and paid employment, and maintain a sense of economic independence, social connection, and a sense of purpose outside of the home. Kathleen Wisner recalled that, as a single mother of two children, she only decided to return to work once her son had started school and she had secured a place at nursery for her daughter. She recalled that ‘the best thing about D&H Cohen, it was a great, big company and it did all different hours to suit married women with children. That was the beauty of it! You had an 8-1 shift, an 8-4 shift, an 8-5 shift, a 9-2 shift.’⁶⁵ This was a similar experience to Andrea Anderson’s recounting returning of work at Ferguslie Mill, after a temporary break from paid employment after giving birth: ‘I went back to do a twilight shift [at Ferguslie] because I was married then and I had kids so I had to wait until my ex-husband came in from work and then I went and did the twilight shift.’⁶⁶

It is revealing in this extract that, implicitly, Andrea frames her role as being the primary caregiver for her children. Her husband worked standard daytime hours, whilst Andrea’s employment opportunities were restricted to unsociable hours in the mill, after an arduous day of unpaid domestic labour and childcare. This is indicative of the distinct relationships men and women have with the domestic sphere and the space they occupy within the home.⁶⁷ It is critical to understand the deep interconnectedness between the dual aspect of women’s life with their role in the domestic sphere defining their experiences in paid employment. This dynamic, the

⁶⁴ Maureen Leitch, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 5 August 2019.

⁶⁵ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

⁶⁶ Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2022.

⁶⁷ Frisone, “*We won’t go back home!*”, p.3.

synergy between domestic and public spheres, was captured by McIvor as he described that ‘paid employment and unpaid work in the home and for the family were porous: stressors in one spilt over into the other, especially so for women with children, given the prevailing culture which identified women as the primary carers and homemakers.’⁶⁸ This point was emphasised by Laframboise in her study of women’s work in the garment industry in Montreal, as she described that ‘women who worked in the deindustrializing garment industry also understood their experiences within the context of their roles as wives, mothers, and women too, who also had a whole other world of work to attend to in the home and in their communities.’⁶⁹

The enduring relevance of industrial cultures beyond the factory gates has also been an area of focus for James Ferns in his study of the post-redundancy experience of Scottish steelworkers.⁷⁰ Ferns has advocated the ‘survivability of occupational identities in post-redundancy employment’ among former male steelworkers who worked at the Ravenscraig steel plant in Motherwell, concluding that ‘former steelworkers’ work-based identity did not shatter under the pressure of deindustrialisation [...] [They] did not cease to exist with the closure of their workplace, neither did their occupational identities and values, which they brought with them into their new places of employment’.⁷¹ In considering the role of occupational culture on shaping the identities and values of industrial workers, Strangleman has deployed Raymond Williams concept of residual structures of feelings to analysis how workplace cultures, their values and sense of identity, continue to endure as a society navigates the uncomfortable shift from industrial to post-industrial.⁷² In the context of Guinness’ Park Royal Brewery, Strangleman attempted to draw out how the residual structure of feeling was expressed among former workers: ‘We can think of it as a set of norms and values into which people

⁶⁸ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.104.

⁶⁹ Laframboise, ‘Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal’s Garment Industry’, p.14.

⁷⁰ Ferns, ‘Workers’ Identities in Transition’, pp.55-80.

⁷¹ Ferns, ‘Workers’ Identities in Transition’, p.74-75.

⁷² Tim Strangleman, ‘Work Identity in Crisis? Rethinking the Problem of Attachment and Loss at Work’, *Sociology*, Vol.46, No.3, (2012), p.415.

are socialised and which they live by, but these are not static values, even though they appear to be so.⁷³

It is understandable that the norms and values, cultivated in the workplace, which shape a worker's identity do not dissipate following redundancy or plant closure. Rather, they continue to be a defining component of their identity, shaping their core sense of self. For women formerly employed in the textile industry in Glasgow and Renfrewshire, the end of their employment in the sector did not simply mark the end of their attachment to their work. For some, this involved continuing to find a means to continue to use their skill as experienced, talented sewing machinists and remain employed in the sector. However, as a result of the deluge of factory closures in the textile sector during the 1990s and 2000s, in order to find employment, they were forced to find a niche growth sub-sector within the industry or to create their own employment opportunities. Following the closure of Claremont Garments, two former managers John Greene and Anne MacKenzie opened a small company, AllSew Clothing, in Hillington Industrial Estate, Glasgow, in September 1997. In their first few months, the company secured a contract worth £350,000 to supply a 'major retail chain' and hired twenty-four machinists.⁷⁴ The overwhelming majority were unemployed former Claremont Garment machinists.⁷⁵ There is little available information on AllSew Clothing, which makes it difficult to ascertain the success of the company as none of the women interviewed for this research were employed in the factory, although several were aware of its existence.

The brief emergence of AllSew Clothing can be interpreted as a symptom of terminal lucidity in Glasgow's garment industry with former managers and workers at Claremont deploying entrepreneurship as a means of resistance against deindustrialisation in the textile industry as they aimed to regain agency and provide economic stability and security over their employment. It is not uncommon for entrepreneurship to be used to resist deindustrialisation as workers seek to use the

⁷³ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, p.103.

⁷⁴ Gordon Thomson, 'From Rags to Riches... Ex-Claremont Staff Rescued from the Dole', *Evening Times*, (9 September 1997), p.15.

⁷⁵ Thomson, 'From Rags to Riches', *Evening Times*, p.15.

knowledge and skills learned from working in an industry to form their own company. Another example that emerged following the closure of Claremont Garments was Nimble Thimbles, a sewing and alteration business, located less than two miles from the old factory, in the Cathcart district of Glasgow. The business was founded by two former machinists, Ann and Grace, who, by establishing their own company, were able to remain within the textile sector by moving from manufacturing to repair, and from employees to owners. Throughout the oral testimonies, numerous former Cohen's workers noted that they would go out of their way to visit Nimble Thimbles for any alteration works they required. They expressed their pleasure at the opportunity to keep in contact with Ann and Grace, who were a key conduit of information regarding the lives of other former Cohens workers as former Cohen's machinist, and latterly personnel manager, Michelle Nairn described:

Even now, Ann and Grace that I talked about, own a wee repair shop [Nimble Thimbles], a wee... I don't think any of the two of them need to work but they do it. It's a wee alterations shop not that far from where I live, and I quite often go in and see them. But I'm not the only one who goes in. They are a life-link to other people who still know of other people. So, when you go in, it's a bit: "Oh, what about this one?" Or "Did you hear about that one?" Or "Did you...", you know.⁷⁶

Although the focus of this chapter is predominantly on those who experienced redundancy from the textile sector, it is important to remember that many women left the industry in their twenties and thirties, withdrawing from the labour market due to the responsibilities of motherhood and childrearing. This did not mean these women had a lesser attachment to their working lives or did not derive pleasure from their work, but rather that the patriarchal structure of British society continued to place a disproportionate responsibility for raising children and unpaid domestic labour, homemaking, on women. Alison Irvine trained as a machinist in Edward MacBean & Co. in Glasgow before being hired at D&H Cohen as a computer grader in 1984.⁷⁷ Alison left the industry in 1989, aged twenty-four, after the birth of her oldest daughter, Ashley, yet she continued to exhibit a strong connection with being a machinist after her engagement with paid employment had ceased. In her home, Alison has converted a downstairs living space into a sewing studio which she shares

⁷⁶ Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

⁷⁷ Alison Irvine, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 July 2019.

with her daughter, Kimberly, who runs her own small business manufacturing bespoke, handmade occasion and evening wear.⁷⁸

In attempting to better understand the transcendence of working-class occupational identities and the associated craft skills across generations, Ackers focused on the experience of men employed at the Royal Dockyard in Kent and their sons and grandsons who did not work in the dockyard.⁷⁹ Ackers has attempted to challenge the concept of a 'job for life' as being outdated in the modern economy by arguing that once a person leaves an industry or retires, they continue to use skills which they developed and honed during their careers as skilled workers. The research found that outside of their working lives, these men continued to use the craft skills they learned in the Royal Dockyard when engaging with hobbies or undertaking domestic projects. For example, Ackers noted that outside of the Dockyard, men with electrical and metal craft skills were commonly interested in car and motorcycle maintenance, whilst skilled craftsmen who worked with wood in the Royal Dockyard enjoyed making wooden toys and furniture in their leisure time.⁸⁰ In this context, Ackers defined craft as 'an outlook and not a narrow occupational role' and therefore, in the case of his study, using this framework to explain how male workers continue to identify as craftsmen despite either working in non-manual jobs or being retired as they continue to have a 'craft outlook'.⁸¹ This 'craft outlook' has several key characteristics including a pride in their work, respect for expertise of more experienced workers, a reverence for quality labour, and a long-term commitment to developing and improving their craft. Furthermore, another facet of the craft outlook was the importance of knowledge sharing to ensure the preservation and continuation of the craft skills in the future. Ackers found that ex-dockyard workers narratives were shaped by the pride they expressed in being able to transfer their craft knowledge to the next generation, whether through training apprentices in the workplace or teaching their own family members in the domestic setting.⁸²

⁷⁸ Alison Irvine, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 July 2019.

⁷⁹ George Ackers, 'Craft as work-life unity: The careers of skilled working-class men and their sons and grandsons after deindustrialization', *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol.26, (2019), pp.180-196.

⁸⁰ Ackers, 'Craft as work-life unity', p.182.

⁸¹ Ackers, 'Craft as work-life unity', p.182.

⁸² Ackers, 'Craft as work-life unity', p.182.

In Ackers study, the craft outlook is considered as an aspect of working-class masculinity which embeds itself as a component of a male craft workers identity. In parallel to many industries, there were skilled and unskilled jobs in the textile industry. For example, in garment factories, ‘pressers’ were responsible for steaming garments using light machinery like the Hoffman steam presser or handheld irons and this was considered an unskilled job which required little to no training as Karen Green mentioned when recalling starting her job as a presser in Bairdwear: ‘A small bit of training. You were... You’d have a manager, a line manager, standing over you for, maybe, three or four garments and then you were left to it.’⁸³ However, the craft outlook framework developed by Ackers is applicable to women who worked as machinists in garment factories. Although machinists did not serve a formal apprenticeship of between two and four years akin to shipyards workers, they did have to spend several months in the training school to learn the basics of their craft. Once they were deemed to be sufficiently competent machinists, they would be moved to the factory floor. Nan McKernan started in D&H Cohen in 1963, aged fifteen years old, recalled her introduction to factory life: ‘It was a wee woman called Julie that done the Training School. I think we were there for nine months then we got put over tae where Elaine was and she would be my supervisor off and on all the time.’⁸⁴

To succeed, machinists were required to possess remarkable dexterity, precision, and speed. If machinists were not able to meet the expected speed and quality, the piecework system meant they would not survive in the job as they would be unable to produce sufficient garments of the desired quality to make a living. This was not work that anyone could do, particularly without any training: it was skilled labour, and it was recognised as such by their peers in the factory. In studying the post-redundancy experience of women in Harrogate following the closure of the Roger Firth factory, Coyle outlined the distinct knowledge and skillset that the displaced workers possessed: ‘Many of the women from Roger Firth were very skilled clothing

⁸³ Karen Green, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 October 2019.

⁸⁴ Nan McKernan, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 9 July 2019.

workers. They had worked in the industry (sometimes that very factory) for some years and many of them were exceptional for industry now, in being able to “make through” a garment.’⁸⁵ This is why Laframboise has urged for a greater focus on critically analysing, and unpicking, notions of ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ labour, as she argues: ‘There is nothing inherently unskilled about working at a sewing machine, rather, this work is actively devalued [*sic*: along] the lines of race, class, and gender.’⁸⁶ Moreover, the level of skill required by workers was recognised by textile companies with Stoddard Carpets describing the role of a Spinner as requiring ‘craftmanship of an exceptionally high order’.⁸⁷

On the notion of dexterity, it is important to recognise that this has historic connotations to the sexist conception that women have smaller, more delicate hands, whilst men were perceived to have large hands indicative of their brute strength.⁸⁸ In advertising semi-skilled jobs, Oppenheimer has noted that in the 1960s, the use of the term ‘dexterity’ was used as a form of ‘sex-labelling’ in job adverts to indicate that an employer was seeking to employ a woman worker.⁸⁹ However, as Oppenheimer notes, it is not clear whether women do, generally, possess greater dexterity than men but it was considered by employers to be true, and they believed this made women more suitable for manufacturing jobs that required precision, including being a machinist. Therefore, as dexterity has been a trait associated with women, conceptions of skilled labour have commonly degraded the work of sewing machinists classifying it as requiring a limited skillset.

On the factory floor, women recognised the skill required to be an elite machinist and expressed their respect for colleagues who were the most skilled. In Bairdwear’s Inchinnan factory, Betty McKee recalled performing a test on a sewing machine under management supervision to decide which role she was to be assigned in the

⁸⁵ Coyle, *Redundant Workers*, p.51.

⁸⁶ Laframboise, ‘Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal’s Garment Industry’, p.16.

⁸⁷ Job Descriptions, ‘The Spinner’, A&F Stoddard & Co, Corporate Archive, Scottish Business Archive, University of Glasgow. – STOD/200/2/9/3/2

⁸⁸ Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer, ‘The Sex-Labelling of Jobs’, *Industrial Relations*, Vol.7, No.3, (1968), p.227.

⁸⁹ Oppenheimer, ‘The Sex-Labelling of Jobs’, p.234.

factory. It was decided that rather than being a machinist, Betty would work in a less skilled role as a presser.⁹⁰ There was a recognition among workers that to be a machinist required a specific skillset and that it was not a role which any worker could perform. In the domestic context, machinists commonly displayed a craft outlook, continuing to use their sewing skills as a pastime, making accessories, decorations, and toys, as well as using their craft skill for more practical domestic chores such as repairing damaged clothes or amending curtains. In 1970, Nan McKernan left D&H Cohen, aged twenty-two, due to pregnancy and did not return to the factory. However, the skills she learned during her seven years in Cohens as a machinist did not disappear and in 1987, she was reemployed in a curtain factory in Nitshill area of Glasgow. Subsequently, Nan went on to work for several smaller textile companies in the city, predominantly focused on curtains. In discussing her hobbies and leisure time, Nan commented:

Aye, I'm still, if anybody wants curtains, I still dae it and I dae the alterations for the shop [...] Oh aye, 'cause I've got a big industrial sewing machine in the hoose and I've got an overlocker and a felling machine, which takes up hems. So, that takes up hems. So, I've got they three machines in the hoose.⁹¹

At the time of our interview in 2018, Nan was seventy years old and had left D&H Cohen almost fifty years previously, yet she continued to use the skills she learned in the factory's training school. The financial investment in appropriate machinery, the apportioning of space within the household, and the dedication of time exhibits Nan's deeply held commitment to being a craft worker despite being formally retired. The skills that she first learned in the training school in D&H Cohen's have transcended her working life. Nan's choice to continue to make curtains and do alterations was not motivated by financial necessity: it was borne from the pleasure she extracted from using her craft skill as a machinist in a recreational manner.

Alison Irvine continued to exhibit a 'craft outlook', as defined by Ackers, despite leaving D&H Cohen in 1988.⁹² Throughout her life she has continued to sew, practising her craft, making clothes, decorative items and gifts for friends and family,

⁹⁰ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021.

⁹¹ Nan McKernan, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 9 July 2019.

⁹² Ackers, 'Craft as work-life unity', p.182.

in her dedicated sewing studio, which includes an industrial sewing machine which she purchased directly from a clothing factory which was closing in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire. For example, Alison spoke of handcrafting gowns for each of her four children's Christening ceremonies, making decorative felt star shaped garlands to gift to children, as well as making bespoke clothing items:

I mean, I've made all my children's christening robes [...] I still like, you know, for Ashley's [daughter] thirtieth [birthday], I'll still want to wear something that's completely different so I will need to design and make it myself [...] And the garland I've got in the hall there, with the felt, that was just a wee thing that I was playing about with but one Christmas, for all my minding children, I've made stars and it starts like, black, dark grey and light grey, dark blue, all the shades of blue.⁹³

This testimony is a revealing example of the blurring of the boundaries between women's unpaid domestic labour and their paid employment, with Alison using the skills she developed as a skilled machinist in the garment industry in the domestic sphere, to perform her role as a mother and the primary carer, as she manufactured garments for her children. Moreover, Alison's craft identity, as a skilled sewing machinist, was exhibited in her commitment to educating younger generations in the craft of sewing. For several years, Alison has taught children in their early primary school years, between six and nine years old, the basics of sewing, as she explains:

The wee girl that I'm teaching, I've taught her, if you put pins in, as long as the thread is in, and you sew through the middle of it, you'll not snap your needle! "Oh, I never knew that!" And just now, 'cause she's like, my gran's like, "what about your fingers?" I says, "I've been sewing since I was in primary school and I've put my finger in the needle three times and I'm fifty-four now, pet!"⁹⁴

Alison's narrative is an illustrative example of how machinists in the textile industry possessed a craft outlook. For those women who worked on the sewing machines in the garment factories at Bairdwear and D&H Cohen, the craft skills that they had learned were foundational to their identity and sense of self. Sewing was a craft as its performance was not confined to the factory floor which women only engaged in return for a wage. To use an industrial sewing machine to produce quality garments required incredible dexterity, concentration and muscle memory developed through

⁹³ Alison Irvine, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 July 2019.

⁹⁴ Alison Irvine, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 15 July 2019.

practice and repetition, imprinting the process on the brain, allowing women to operate the machine at an intense speed to achieve a high-quality finish. Just like the male wood workers who worked in the Royal Dockyard who continue to hone their craft through making wooden toys and bespoke furniture, or the male engineers who spend their weekend modifying and fixing old cars and motorcycles, women who were skilled machinists were able to use their skills to make unique, quality products for home decoration. It is a skill which they continually developed and utilised in the domestic sphere for leisure purposes as a hobby. Moreover, Alison's willingness to educate young women on the sewing machine personifies the craft outlook, representing a deep commitment to ensuring that the knowledge and skills are passed down, as a form of heritage, from one generation to the next.

SCARS OF DEINDUSTRIALISATION

The closure of a factory marks the end of production at a particular site and results in workers being displaced by redundancy, but it is not the end point of deindustrialisation. In the months, years, and decades which follow the closure of a plant, deindustrialisation continues to have a profound impact in shaping the life experiences of individuals and communities. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Linkon has termed the pervasive longevity of deindustrialisation as 'the half-life', comparing its devastating, corrosive influence to radioactive toxic waste: 'Like toxic waste, the persistent and dangerous residue from the production of nuclear power and weapons, deindustrialization has a half-life. Its influence may be waning, slowly, over time, but it remains potent, and it cannot simply be forgotten or ignored. In its half-life, deindustrialization may not be as poisonous as radioactive waste, though high rates of various illnesses as well as alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide suggest that it does manifest itself in physical disease.'⁹⁵

The scars of deindustrialisation on industrial communities across Scotland are visible. In 2009, research concluded that the mortality rates in west-central Scotland are 'generally higher and – crucially – are improving at a slower rate than those of

⁹⁵ Linkon, *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization*, p.2.

other, comparable, post-industrial regions in Europe’, such as Wallonia in Belgium, Ruhr in Germany, and Swansea and the surrounding south Wales coalfields.⁹⁶ Notably, the authors identified alcohol, drugs, suicide, and violence as ‘rising problems’ which were impacting mortality rates in west-central Scotland.⁹⁷ A report published by the National Records of Scotland has highlighted that Scotland had the highest drug-related death rate in the European Union with 295 drug deaths per million of the population aged between fifteen and sixty-four, whilst the next highest rate was recorded in Sweden which recorded 81 drug-related deaths using the same measure.⁹⁸ Most interestingly, two of the three local authority areas with the highest drug-related death rate in Scotland were situated in west-central Scotland with Glasgow City and Inverclyde recording high rates, although behind Dundee City, which recorded the highest rate in Scotland.⁹⁹ In summarising the profoundly devastating, and enduring, impact of deindustrialisation on industrial communities, and individual lives, McIvor has noted that ‘whole swathes of Glasgow and West Central Scotland became desolated and “ruined” communities, with high levels of consolation-seeking unhealthy and risky behaviours including smoking, alcohol, and drug abuse.’¹⁰⁰ In recent years, Scotland has also experienced increasing rates of suicide, particularly among men, with 2020 recording the highest rate of suicide in Scotland in nine years.¹⁰¹ Reflecting the concerning rise in the rate of suicide among younger men in industrial communities, Motherwell Football Club, from the town which was home to the Ravenscraig steelworks before its closure in 1992, have been pioneering in supporting the North Lanarkshire Council’s Suicide Prevention initiative, displaying the logo prominently on their jersey, on advertising hoardings

⁹⁶ Walsh, Taulbut, and Hanlon, ‘The aftershock of deindustrialization – trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe’, p.63.

⁹⁷ Walsh et al, ‘The aftershock of deindustrialization’, p.63.

⁹⁸ National Records of Scotland, ‘Drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2019’, 15 December 2020. Available here: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/deaths/drug-related-deaths-in-scotland/2019>. Accessed on 22 June 2021.

⁹⁹ Ed Lowther and Steven Brocklehurst, ‘Scotland’s drug death crisis in six charts’, 15 December 2020. Available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-48853004>. Accessed on 22 June 2021.

¹⁰⁰ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.74.

¹⁰¹ Kirsteen Paterson, ‘Suicide rate in Scotland rises to highest level in almost 10 years’, *The National*, 24 November 2020. Available here: <https://www.thenational.scot/news/18895342.devastating-loss-experts-react-suicide-increases-scotland/>. Accessed on 18 June 2021.

around their stadium, and with the Club using social media campaigns to promote the ‘Let’s Talk’ initiative.¹⁰²

There is a growing body of empirical research emerging in the field of public health which has studied the impact of redundancy and unemployment on the health of displaced workers. In Sweden, Eliason and Storrie have studied the link between job loss and poor health, making two key conclusions.¹⁰³ Firstly, that alcohol-related hospitalisations were ‘significantly increased’ for both men and women following job losses, and secondly, being made redundant increased the likelihood of hospitalisation as a result of traffic accidents and self-harm, particularly among men.¹⁰⁴ In analysing the variance in experience between men and women, the authors found ‘no considerable gender disparities in the health effects of job loss’, but they did note that ‘women have generally shown to respond to stressful life events with higher levels of depression and anxiety, although less likely to result in hospitalisation for self-harm than men.’¹⁰⁵ It is worth considering if the higher levels of depression and anxiety recorded among women following job loss is connected to the relentlessly of the double lives in, which following a redundancy, women have significant responsibility in the domestic sphere as the primary caregiver and homemaker. One garment worker in Montreal, following her redundancy, explicitly attributed issues with her heart, as Laframboise notes, to ‘both the adversity of hard industrial labour, and the stresses of everyday life as a mother’.¹⁰⁶

It can be problematic to extrapolate case studies which are distinct in their geography, culture, and history but Bonfiglioli’s study of the decline of the textile industry in the former Yugoslavia, provides an interesting insight into the impact of deindustrialisation on displaced workers in the context of a former authoritarian

¹⁰² Motherwell Football Club, ‘Suicide Prevention Partnership Extended’, 26 July 2021. Available here: <https://www.motherwellfc.co.uk/2021/07/26/suicide-prevention-partnership-extended/>. Accessed on 28 July 2021.

¹⁰³ Marcus Eliason and Donald Storrie, ‘Job loss is bad for your health – Swedish evidence on cause-specific hospitalization following involuntary job loss’, *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 68, (2009), pp.1396-1406.

¹⁰⁴ Eliason and Storrie, ‘Job loss is bad’, p.1402.

¹⁰⁵ Eliason and Storrie, ‘Job loss is bad’, p.1402.

¹⁰⁶ Laframboise, ‘Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal’s Garment Industry’, p.56.

regime which has endured warfare and continues to experience pronounced ethnic and national tensions. Notably, Bonfiglioli shares the story of Pavlica, a former manager in the Arena textile factory in Pula, northern Croatia, who was treated by a psychologist after being diagnosed with clinical depression, which she attributed to her premature retirement from her work in the textile factory.¹⁰⁷ This is an illuminating example of how the experiences of unemployment – either through redundancy or retirement – can be a profoundly distressing, life-altering episode in a workers' life.

In my research on the closure of the Templeton's carpet factory in the east-end of Glasgow, one former worker, Catherine Johnstone, displayed a powerful testimony as she recalled the memories of being informed of the factory's closure in 1981:

You actually felt like your world had ended. And it wis, "Wit ye gawny dae noo?" because in ma life, that had been ma life, really, since I wis seventeen. I'd grew up in there. I knew aww the people. It wis... Ye know, ye just canny explain it. It wis like a death. An unexpected death in the family. You know, like you're just so. You wur lost. We were aww greetin' going oot. Dae ye know, [Catherine breaks down and starts crying] I'm even greetin' just even thinking about it. I know it's silly. We were aww greetin' walking oot.¹⁰⁸

This evocative testimony is revealing of the scars of deindustrialisation. Forty-five years after being issued with the notice of closure, this episode continues to illicit a visceral, emotional response from Catherine which is indicative of the deep trauma of deindustrialisation inflicted on industrial workers. It was not just the impact of the immediate closure, but the trauma was reflective of the long, lingering impact of a plant closure which shaped, to varying degrees, workers' lives in a profound manner, including through episodes of unemployment, poverty, and ill-health. The enduring, pervasive impact of unemployment has been compellingly articulated by McIvor as he argues: 'A consensus has emerged that *long-term* unemployment directly contributed to degeneration in psychological health, defined as "the emotional and

¹⁰⁷ Chiara Bonfiglioli, *Women and Industry in the Balkans: The Rise and Fall of the Yugoslav Textile Sector*, (London: I.B Tauris, 2019), p.134.

¹⁰⁸ Catherine Johnstone, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 2 July 2018. Interviewed accessed from Scottish Oral History Centre, 'Oral history project on women's experiences of work and closure at James Templeton & Company Ltd, Glasgow, c.1960-1981, University of Strathclyde Archives and Special Collections – GB249/SOHC 31; Stride, 'Women, work and deindustrialisation: The case of James Templeton & Company', pp.154-180.

cognitive state, including a person's mental health, happiness, work and life satisfaction." Work loss was felt and experienced intimately in workers' bodies, constituting a primary cause of widening health inequalities.¹⁰⁹

In Scandinavia, Eliason and Storrie stress the importance of placing their research within the specific context of the Swedish economy in the late 1980s which experienced a fairly strong performance which meant that workers who were made unemployed as the result of a plant closure were unlikely to experience one, or several, long episodes of unemployment.¹¹⁰ The duration of unemployment following a redundancy and its impact on suicide risk has been studied in the US by Classen and Dunn. The authors found a positive correlation between mass layoffs and an increased risk in suicide among both men and women, but crucially state that 'the duration of unemployment rather than job loss itself is the primary determinant of suicide risk'.¹¹¹ The authors adopted a holistic approach in assessing the impact of job loss noting that it was not necessarily the trauma of job loss which increased the risk of suicide but rather it was the result of the associated financial and social consequences of long-term unemployment, such as a reduction in the household income leading to a change in lifestyle in order to prioritise provision of necessities such as a food and rental or mortgage payments.¹¹² In this respect, Coyle has argued that it is single women who are hardest hit by the financial impact of redundancy as they are lacking the financial support provided by a partner and are therefore forced to reduce their financial outgoings, including eating less food, strictly monitoring their household energy usage, and withdrawing from their leisure activities due to the expense of socialising.¹¹³ This reinforces Cavendish's observations in her ethnographic study of working in a factory on the production line, as she reflected: 'Our take-home pay was too low for a single person to love on. It was married

¹⁰⁹ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.73.

¹¹⁰ Eliason and Storrie, 'Job loss is bad', p.1402.

¹¹¹ Timothy Classen and Richard Dunn, 'The effect of job loss and unemployment duration on suicide risk in the United States: A new look using mass-layoffs and unemployment duration', *Health Economics*, vol.21, (2012), pp.348.

¹¹² Classen and Dunn, 'The effect of job loss', p.349.

¹¹³ Coyle, *Redundant Women*, p.105.

women's wages based on the assumption that there was a higher male income for you to fall back on.'¹¹⁴

In the interviews I conducted with women formerly employed in the textile industry in Glasgow and Renfrewshire, the profound impact of plant closure, redundancy and unemployment on their lives was discussed in detail. However, in all the conversations I enjoyed with former textile workers, no women raised any issues they experienced with addiction, mental health, or any other challenging, negative life event which stemmed from their experience of redundancy or unemployment. Therefore, it is important to recognise that the testimonies of the women I interviewed represent survivor narratives. The interviews which have informed this research represent the life experience of those have been able to survive: those individuals who have retrained, retired, or found new employment in a different sector. The nature of oral history means that those who volunteer to give their time to participate in the research and answer questions about their working lives are less likely to have a catastrophic narrative. Although, it should be recognised that Johnston and McIvor's seminal oral history based research on asbestos-related-diseases is an important notable exception in this regard.¹¹⁵ It is significantly easier for people to share stories which paint a positive perception of their lives than to share difficult, painful life experience with an interviewer. As Portelli has observed, people wish to portray the best version of themselves when narrating their own life stories, stating: 'Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.'¹¹⁶ Unfortunately, it is generally the case those who have experienced the worst excesses of deindustrialisation either no longer possess the social capital or physical health to share their experience of job loss and redundancy through the research, or tragically, they have not survived to tell their own story, in their own words. The classification of the narratives of the women interviewed for this research as 'survivor stories' does not serve to diminish their tangible anger, stress, and trauma they expressed when

¹¹⁴ Cavendish, *Women on the Line*, p.80.

¹¹⁵ Ronnie, Johnston and Arthur McIvor, *Lethal Work: A History of the Asbestos Tragedy in Scotland*, (Edinburgh, Tuckwell Press, 2000).

¹¹⁶ Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*, p.50.

narrating their memories of redundancy, job loss, and unemployment, as highlighted by the numerous examples explored in chapter three.

THE IMAGINED WORKPLACE

In assessing the long-term impact of a factory closure, it is worthwhile exploring how displaced workers construct their own narrative when asked to reflect on their working lives in an industry or in a specific workplace. In recalling the past, it is human nature to place less emphasis on the more negative episodes which illicit emotions of guilt, sadness, or regret but in oral history, when does this instinct become mere uncritical nostalgia which airbrushes the past? In their seminal study of deindustrialisation in industrial communities throughout the United States, Heathcott and Cowie urged scholars to guard against ‘smokestack nostalgia’ – the uncritical romanticisation of industrial work – arguing the importance of recognising that industrial workplaces involved ‘tough work that people did because it paid well and was located in their communities.’¹¹⁷ This is a fair warning as it is important that scholars of deindustrialisation studies avoid sentimentalising work and deploy critical thinking when constructing their analysis. However, this is complicated when utilising oral history methodology with industrial workers who construct their own narratives, expressing their own emotions, experiences, and memories in their own words. What does the articulation of positive memories and reflections from their former job explain about workers enduring, residual connection to their working lives in the afterlife of a factory closures? The study of the past raises the quandary of how to interpret these memories without being accused of perpetuating smokestack nostalgia, as Strangleman has queried: ‘Do we simply dismiss their [older workers] ideas that the past was better as nostalgia, or can value and explanatory power be found there, and if so how?’¹¹⁸ Ultimately it is difficult to quantify the accuracy of memory due to its inherent fallibility but as Hytonen argued: ‘Nostalgia is not about facts and measurable truth. Instead, it is about meanings,

¹¹⁷ Cowie and Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins*, p.14.

¹¹⁸ Tim Strangleman, ‘Work Identity in Crisis? Rethinking the Problem of Attachment and Loss at Work’, *Sociology*, vol. 46, no. 3, (2012), p.412.

interpretation and everyone's right to reconstruct their own personal paradise to long for.'¹¹⁹

In his study of the Guinness Park Royal Brewery in London, Strangleman explored the importance of memory and imagination in seeking to understand work, and its changing nature, during the brewery's lifetime. Oral history was deployed as one of his key methodologies as he explored workers' perceptions of the nature of change at work, stating: 'Those who worked at Park Royal conceived of work at various points in time in particular ways. These were shaped powerfully by experience inside and outside the workplace. At the same time, they were in all their different ways imagining and reimagining work in the past, present, and future.'¹²⁰ In this sense, Strangleman was interested in what he considered an 'imagined workplace': how workers perceived and remembered their working life in the brewery. For those who share their stories, perception is reality – or more accurately, it is *their* reality.

The oral narratives of the women interviewed for this research were peppered with a sense of loss about their working lives in the textile industry. This was not merely rose-tinted nostalgia but rather it should be interpreted as a sense of connection with a positive era of their lives. It is important as people's attachment to work is not constructed solely based on their experience of the labour process. Memories of work can illicit positive associations as workers commonly perceived the factory floor as a social space in which they were able to carve out a degree of autonomy and build friendships. Moreover, for older workers, particularly those who are retired, discussing aspects of their working lives can evoke positive memories as they situate that experience in the context of their life story. Asking a retired worker to reflect on their experience of a particular job may bring positive associations, not because the labour was easy or the pay was rewarding but rather by rekindling memories of a period of their life when they were younger, working alongside people of a similar age and outlook, having less responsibility, and possessing more disposable income. In Treorchy, south Wales, Blyton and Jenkin's study on workers experience of

¹¹⁹ Kirsi-Maria Hytonen, 'Hardworking women: nostalgia and women's memories of paid work in Finland in the 1940s', *Oral History*, Vol.41, No.1, (Autumn 2013), p.97.

¹²⁰ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, p.11.

redundancy and unemployment following the closure of the town's Burberry factory concluded that workers positive reflections of their working life in the factory were shaped by the strong, positive social relationships they had fostered in the workplace and the positive work atmosphere which helped to puncture some of the more challenging, monotonous, or strict aspects of work.¹²¹

The testimonies of the former textile workers in Glasgow and Renfrewshire did not seek to romanticise the job or airbrush the difficult, intensive nature of the work. Their testimonies reflected the multifaceted nature of work. On one hand, their work provided tangible and intangible benefits through financial remuneration, life structure, pride, and a social space. And these positive aspects of work should not be interpreted as nostalgia with Frisone warning against narratives which diminish women's attachment to, what she describes, as 'nondomestic jobs', whilst McIvor has noted that 'female clothing and textile factory workers invariably expressed a deep sense of gratification in their working lives.'¹²² Effie Anderson, quoted by McIvor, worked in the Peebles woollen mill, situated in the Scottish Borders, reflected on her working life, concluding 'Ah enjoyed ma work. I did enjoy ma work.' This sentiment was echoed by Nan McKernan as she effusively discussed her time work at D&H Cohen clothing factory: 'Oh, aye, I loved, I loved working in Cohens! [...] I loved me time working in Cohens. Aye, it was a good time in ma life! Aye. Met a lot of nice people as well.'¹²³ Another former Cohen's worker, Maureen Leitch, worked in the factory as a presser for a decade during the 1960s expressed her fondness for her working life with brevity, as she reflected: 'It wis a good job. I liked it.'¹²⁴ The positive sentiments of work were also articulated by Maureen Taggart as she reflected on her formative years working in the Anchor Mill in Paisley, starting straight from leaving school: 'It was good fun and an experience and learning different, wee jobs an' meeting a lot o' nice people an' that! It's part o' growing up! [Laughs] Part o' learning! And aye, nice memories of the Mill.'¹²⁵ These positive testimonies reflect Coyle's conclusion that women have an

¹²¹ Blyton and Jenkins, 'Life after Burberry', p.33.

¹²² Frisone, "'We won't go back home!'", p.18; McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.34.

¹²³ Nan McKernan, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 9 June 2019.

¹²⁴ Maureen Leitch, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 5 August 2019.

¹²⁵ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 29 July 2019.

‘extraordinary attachment’ to their paid employment, as she explains that women’s decision to work ‘is not simply a question of financial need, for women derive satisfaction and status from their work.’¹²⁶ As Kathleen Wisner reflected, for many women, their work in the factory was central to their life journey, as she reflected on keeping in touch with friends she made on the shopfloor: ‘We always reminisce about our time in Cohens. It was such a big part of all of our lives.’¹²⁷ One women factory worker in south Wales, quoted by Stevens, are revealing of how paid employment provided the space for women to carve out a sense of identity, a sense of being, that was distinct from the domestic sphere, as she stated:

[Factory work] gave them [the women] a sense of independence and also a sense of who they were as individuals. Because most of them were married and families everybody [outside the factory] related to them in that way – they were somebody’s wife and somebody’s mother, but while they were in the factories they were themselves, and ... they got back in touch with their identity and who they were.¹²⁸

Yet, on the other hand, the work was tough and intensive, and in some cases, as discussed in chapter two, could expose workers to risks, hazards, and exhausting work regimes which were incentivised by piecework wage systems and these counter narratives are also elucidated throughout the oral testimonies. For example, Alison Anderson, who worked at Bairdwear, reflected on her experience of work in the factory: ‘So, I really enjoyed it. Loved the bunch of people I worked wae and we are still friends tae this day. But a hard, hard... A hard, hard job but a very rewarding job as well and an enjoyable job.’¹²⁹ Here, Alison does not seek to diminish the difficulty of the work, yet she qualifies this statement by clarifying that the intense labour was worthwhile as it was ‘a very rewarding job’. This is an interesting qualification as the physicality of work is often evoked as a defining characteristic in constituting work as being a worthy, rewarding endeavour. For Betty McKee, her time working at Bairdwear’s factory in Inchinnan as a presser elucidated positive memories but also an honest assessment on the difficulty of the job: ‘Aye, aye, there’s a lot of good memories [from Bairdwear]. It was hard work but rewarding at the end of it.’¹³⁰ It is

¹²⁶ Coyle, *Redundant Women*, p.121.

¹²⁷ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

¹²⁸ Stevens, *Voices from the Factory Floor*, p.125.

¹²⁹ Alison Anderson, Interviewed on 8 July 2019 by Rory Stride.

¹³⁰ Betty McKee, Interviewed on 14 February 2021 by Rory Stride.

notable that, like Alison Anderson, Betty classifies the work in Bairdwear as 'rewarding' due to the labour-intensive nature of role. It is, perhaps, an inherent hardwired subconscious reflection of capitalist culture that workers readily define labour-intensive, physical-demanding work as 'rewarding'. Or, alternatively, it is plausible that defining labour-intensive work as 'rewarding' is coded language which portray a positivist view of work, rather than describing it as, simply, 'exhausting'. The sense of the work in the garment industry being intensive and exhaustive was prevalent in the testimonies of former workers. In unvarnished reflection on her working days in D&H Cohen, Maureen Leitch, stated: 'You always had tae be at it. You had to be at it aww the time to make the bonus. You couldnae afford tae relax - you had tae get it out [...] Oh aye, it was a routine. You didn't get away with laxing about. You knew ye were working - put it that way!'.¹³¹

In her oral testimony, Lisa Lamont, who worked at D&H Cohen, summarised her experience in the factory which as she stated: 'It was great. It was good fun. I'd go back if they'd put the wages up! [laughter]'.¹³² On the surface, Lisa's remarks read as a joyous reflection of her experience in Cohens as she expresses a willingness to return to her old job in the industry. Yet, on closer inspection – a deeper listen - Lisa's comments read as a pointed, honest assessment that she did not believe her role was sufficiently remunerated when working at D&H Cohen, which she wrapped in light-hearted humour to soften the criticism. In this respect, workers expressed some negative comments on their job, recalling the monotony of the work, whilst overall reflecting positively on their memories of work due to the social aspects and convivial atmosphere they shared with friends. This is not an experience which is distinct to women industrial workers in west-central Scotland as Clarke observed in her study of the Moulinex factory in northern France: 'When Moulinex assembly workers recall what they miss about their old workplace, they draw less on the language of achievement than on memories of the line as a space of feminine working-class sociability and solidarity.'¹³³

¹³¹ Maureen Leitch, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 5 August 2019.

¹³² Lisa Lamont, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 31 May 2019.

¹³³ Jackie Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization and Nostalgia in Contemporary France', *History Workshop Journal*, vol.79, (2015), p.111.

The women who worked in the textile industry in Glasgow and Renfrewshire did express nostalgia for their old jobs, but this was commonly framed through the camaraderie, friendships, and social activities they associated with the industrial culture in the factory. In summarising her experience of working at Bairdwear's factory in Inchinnan, Betty McKee described: 'As I say, a lot of good memories, just a lot of good friends. You still remember all your wee weekends and your trips away tae Blackpool and as we always said: "What happens in Blackpool, stays in Blackpool!"'¹³⁴ For Betty, the most positive memory she associated with her time working in Bairdwear were the weekend trips down to the seaside holiday resort town of Blackpool in north-west England. She did not mention that she missed her job, pressing the garments, which she attested to be an exhausting role due to the residual heat in that area of the factory when she recalled: 'In the summer, it was really, really hot. They had the warehouse doors open and that tae let, tae try and get air in [...] Some nights I was in my bed for eight o'clock, I can assure you!'¹³⁵ These testimonies reflect the reality that workers narratives offer nuanced reflections on their own experience and their positive associations of their working lives are not just a rose-tinted nostalgia. Different people attribute varying levels of importance and significance to their work and despite not particularly enjoying the labour involved with her role in the factory floor, Betty still reflected on that period of her life as an enjoyable, rewarding experience and this was intrinsically linked with positive social memories connected to the friendships she made with other women on the factory floor in Bairdwear.

For women who started in the industry in their teenage years and achieved decades of service with one company, their work was a formative and defining experience. Their working life was so deeply interwoven into the tapestry of their life story narrative that the two are inseparable due to length of service with one company. In her narrative, Kathleen Wisner, who was employed at D&H Cohen's for over thirty

¹³⁴ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021.

¹³⁵ Betty McKee, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 14 February 2021.

years, initially starting on the button machine, attaching buttons to trousers, in the late 1960s, explored the formative role of factory work:

I grew up with people who came in from school, got married, had their children, and came back. You know in thirty years you've grown up with all these people, you'll just never experience that in your lifetime because nothing seems to be for thirty years or sixty years.¹³⁶

Kathleen was from an older generation of workers at D&H Cohen's, having been born in Glasgow in the aftermath of the Second World War in 1946. Her work in Cohen's was formative to her life as she witnessed, and shared in, the major life events of her workmates, who had become friends, as they were married, had children, and celebrated milestone birthdays. It is therefore difficult to disentangle Kathleen's working life in Cohen's from her wider life narrative as the factory was a constant presence throughout a significant proportion of her adult life. Kathleen continued, describing how her life is still in many respects linked to the friendships she built during her working life at D&H Cohen:

And, yes, all the time I talk about it [working in D&H Cohen]. And my children were so aware - well my son worked there - but my daughter was aware of the friendships I have, and I still have these people - they've never left my life [...] I would say it touched everybody that worked in it. Well, maybe some people didn't like but most people did like it and we did have great fun.¹³⁷

In this extract, Kathleen places the focus on the workplace acting as the locus for the construction of long-term friendships which endured for a lifetime, beyond the closure of the factory. This mirrors the experience among workers at the Burberry factory in south Wales where Blyton and Jenkins argued that people's working life in the factory had wider 'spill-over effects into the non-work lives of its workforce' which included deep, lasting friendships which endured beyond the closure of the Burberry factory in Treorchy.¹³⁸ Therefore, Kathleen's positive association of her years working in the Cohens factory is not nostalgia which seeks to portray an unqualifiable enjoyable experience, but is the reality of how her work enriched her

¹³⁶ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

¹³⁷ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

¹³⁸ Blyton and Jenkins, 'Life after Burberry', p.38.

life through the social relationships it helped her foster and develop beyond the closure of the factory.

The shopfloor was a tightknit industrial community due to the relatively homogenous composition of the workforce with several generations of different families working alongside one another being a common occurrence in the industry. This was observed as a distinct feature by Lisa Lamont when she reflected on her time working at Cohens:

Yea. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. And I loved the fact it that was, so family orientated. There was Michelle and her two daughters. There was Helen and her son. There was George and his son. There was me and my dad. There were married couples. It was just good fun.¹³⁹

It is revealing that Lisa's testimony articulates a sense of loss, but it does not consider the loss of work or the labour process, but rather is focused on the loss of the social connections and unique composition of the workforce. The extensive networks of various generations of different families working alongside one another was a common feature in the textile sector. This helped to create strong social bonds as the workforce was so interconnected. In Cohen's, the informal recruitment process was based on patronage in which a common requirement involved being related to someone in the factory. It is notable that Lisa commented on the composition of the workforce as an important factor which made D&H Cohen's an enjoyable place to work. Increasingly, the changing nature of the economy has seen the growth of human resources professionalising recruitment, the proliferation of temporary and zero-hour contracts causing a higher turnover in the workforce, and the movement of manufacturing overseas, make the interconnectedness of Cohens as a workplace difficult to replicate in the contemporary labour market. Therefore, Lisa's reflections can be interpreted as not just nostalgia but an articulated opposition to modern workplaces, particularly in the service sector. It is not about arguing that the professionalisation of the employment process has not had tangible benefits, but rather, Lisa's testimony the sincere value she found from the way Cohen's recruitment process helped foster a cohesive and interconnected workforce.

¹³⁹ Lisa Lamont, Interviewed on 31 May 2019, by Rory Stride.

The expression that D&H Cohen fostered a distinct workplace culture was also touched on by Kathleen Wisner as she reflected on the closure of the factory:

I think back now what a sad loss it is. Because my memories - and I'm sure a lot of people are the same - it was a great place to work. It was fun and friendly. And, you'll never get it again. It was a bit Billy Connolly - the way he speaks about life - the characters who didn't realise how funny they were.¹⁴⁰

The statement that 'it was a great place to work. It was fun and friendly. And you'll never get it again' is an expression of mourning for a workplace which, for Kathleen, belongs to a different era. It portrays D&H Cohen's as a unique company which was 'fun and friendly' a great place to work' but Kathleen was unequivocal in her assessment that the company and its workplace culture cannot be replicated in the twenty-first century economy: 'And, you'll never get it again.' The case of D&H Cohen is a distinctive example from the other case study companies as it was a family-run paternalist employer for most of its existence. Although by the time of its closure it was owned by Claremont Garments and its manufacturing capacity and workforce were substantially smaller, the factory retained a strong industrial community on the shopfloor. On the factory floor in Cohen's, the production line was Fordist by nature, serving to maximise efficiency and limiting worker's autonomy over the labour process. Yet, there was a deep deference and loyalty, most prominent among more senior workers who worked for the company since their teenage years, for Denis and Harry Cohen, the brothers who managed the company, illustrated by workers still referring to Denis Cohen using the deferential title of 'Mr. Cohen'. There was a clear understanding that the primary objective of the Cohen brothers was to run a profitable business, the workers believed that all decisions would be taken in the best interests of the workforce at large. McIvor has found that in family-run factories such as Cohens, paternalism helped to humanise the workspace as having regular social interactions with the company owners helped workers feel valued as individuals, rather than just being another number.¹⁴¹ This is

¹⁴⁰ Kathleen Wisner, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 3 February 2021.

¹⁴¹ Arthur McIvor, *Working Lives: Work in Britain since 1945*, (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2013), p.55.

exemplified by a brief anecdote shared by Lisa Lamont when reflecting on being called to one of the managers offices in Cohen's:

He [Mr. Hampston] says, "Well Lisa, I've just discovered you've just passed your driving test. I've got a bottle of champagne for you. So, you can drink that when you hit eighteen because I know you're not eighteen yet and your dad will kill me. So, I know your dad very well, he works in our Cutting Room, as you know, so make sure you leave it for a few weeks until you hit eighteen." I said, "Thanks very much, Mr. Hampston" and that was that. So, in the main, it was great. I've nothing but fond memories.¹⁴²

In this anecdote, Mr. Hampston displays a thoughtfulness and generosity by gifting Lisa a bottle of champagne for passing her driving test, but it also acts as useful illustration of why the workforce considered that the Cohen family, and their management, acted with compassion and humanity: treating them as people, and not just replaceable numbers in a transient workplace. There are parallels in Clarke's study of the Moulinex factory, where it was observed that the workers had a deep reverence for the company owner, Jean Mantelet, who they viewed as the patriarch of the factory and associated his stewardship of the company with economic stability.¹⁴³ However, workers perception of how Jean Mantelet managed the company was incongruous with the reality of his management of Moulinex. In that specific case, Mantelet was instrumental in downsizing the company, making hundreds of workers redundant throughout the 1980s, despite workers perceiving his management tenure to be associated with stable employment. Similar to the Moulinex workers in Alencon, Kathleen's mourning is not just for D&H Cohen's, but it can also be considered as an obituary to the end of paternalist employers in an economy which is ever reliant on finance and the service sector, and characterised by low union density, stagnant low pay, and increasingly precarious labour.

Kathleen Wisner reflected on the changing nature of work and employment in Britain when she stated: 'nothing seems to be for thirty years, or sixty years'. This can be interpreted as a reference to reduced job security in the modern economy and the erosion of the aspiration of having 'a job for life'. Whether the notion of a 'job for life' was ever a widespread experience in working-class communities is

¹⁴² Lisa Lamont, Interviewed on 31 May 2019, by Rory Stride.

¹⁴³ Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization', p.113.

debatable, however, it did reflect a belief that employment was more stable, meaning that if you were a 'good worker', it was a realistic expectation for some workers to spend most of their working life with one company. In the textile sector, despite the relative peaks and troughs in demand for manufacture, employment levels remained stable, and it was not uncommon for some workers to spend the majority of their life at one company. An example was highlighted earlier in the chapter with the case of Maureen Kyle who started working at D&H Cohen in 1956, aged fifteen years, working for the company for forty-one years, until she was made redundant in 1997, when the factory closed. For workers at Stoddard Carpets, the company held an annual 'Long Service Awards' where workers with twenty years' service were presented with a commemorative timepiece to recognise their service, as well as being inducted into the 'quarter century club', whilst workers with forty years' service were presented with 'either a canteen of cutlery or a set of crystal glasses and decanter as a gift from the company'.¹⁴⁴ The reality might have been different but the sentiment expressed by Kathleen reflects a nostalgia for the perceived stability of employment that companies, like D&H Cohen and Stoddard Carpets, provided in working-class communities across Scotland during the second-half of the twentieth century.

The perceived change in the labour market was also considered by Michelle Nairn when reflecting on her working experience at D&H Cohen:

So, it's a big question and I feel I'm struggling to answer it for two reasons. Number one because I am older and wiser and I don't know if you get to this age and you think "Oh, people don't have the same work ethic as what they used to have" and I heard that when I was young! So, I don't know if it's driven from age and experience - having life experience - or if it's driven from what I remember then to what I remember now and like I say, maybe you can have selective memory about what was good and what wasn't good. I do think that it was a harder time economically for people because they weren't as financially stable, but it was a more stable time for people from a work perspective because there was an assurance which is why the closure came as such a shock to people.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ *Glenpatrick News*, 'Rewards for Loyal Service', Issue No.11, Summer 1991, p.2; *Illoominator*, 'Long Service Awards', Issue No.4, Winter 2000, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ Michelle Nairn, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 19 November 2019.

It is notable that in grappling with constructing her narrative, Michelle offers a sophisticated awareness of the potential pitfalls of memory, questioning how subconsciously selective she is being in recalling certain experiences and memories, and excluding others, from her reflections on working at D&H Cohen. However, Michelle articulates a nuanced, reflective answer which considers the changing nature of employment and outlines a subtle observation on how workers shifting expectations of work has affected their sense of positive association with their employment at D&H Cohen. Michelle describes her time working at Cohens as ‘a harder time economically for people because they weren’t as financially stable’. This can be interpreted as a reference to the universal use of performance-related piecework system for textile workers throughout the twentieth century which was one factor which contributed to the reputation of the industry as exploitative. This changed with the passage of the National Minimum Wage Act in 1998, which came into effect in April 1999, setting the legal minimum rate of pay for all adults twenty-two years and over at £3.60 per hour, raising the income of 1.2 million workers overnight.¹⁴⁶ For those earning less than £3.60 per hour, the national minimum wage increased their wage by over 15 percent between 1998 and 1999, with Heyes and Gray concluding that the national minimum wage had ‘a beneficial impact in raising textile and clothing workers’ pay’.¹⁴⁷

On Michelle’s assessment that ‘it was a more stable time for people from a work perspective because there was an assurance which is why the closure came as such a shock to people’, it is understandable that she perceives the late 1980s and early 1990s as an era which provided greater stability in terms of employment. In the British textile industry, the end of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement in the late 1990s caused significant disruption with tens of thousands of workers made redundant as high-street retailers and manufacturers rapidly shifting significant proportions of their textile production to nations in the global South, in nations with cheaper production costs and weaker labour regulations. Michelle’s argument is not rose-

¹⁴⁶ David Metcalf, ‘Why has the British National Minimum Wage Had Little or No Impact on Employment?’, *Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol.50, no.3, (2008), p.490.

¹⁴⁷ Metcalf, ‘Why has the British NMW’, p.490; Jason Heyes and Alex Gray, ‘The Impact of the National Minimum Wage on the Textiles and Clothing Industry’, *Policy Studies*, vol.22, no.2, (2001), p.95.

tinted nostalgia. Rather, it is a considered, reflective calculation, from the perspective of a textile worker in Scotland, that this period provided a greater degree of stability in employment due to the industry being significantly larger and more vibrant with a wide range of employment opportunities. This is illustrated by the range of textiles manufacturers operating in Glasgow during the mid-1980s. The city was home to more than 130 textile companies in 1985, with the twenty largest companies employing around 6,000 workers: including Bairdwear and D&H Cohen's who were the city's two single largest textile employers with workforces in excess of 1,000.¹⁴⁸ In the textile sector, decline may have been a long-term trend, with job-shedding and closures from the 1950s onwards, but relatively speaking, within the living memory of many workers, pre- and post-1995 is the key watershed through which they interpret and frame their memories. This reflects Clarke's argument that workers' expressions of nostalgia should not be interpreted as an uncritical, rose-tinted endorsement of 'the past', but rather, it is an act of rebellion against the present, the deindustrialisation era, and its associated instability and suffering.¹⁴⁹

When people die, obituaries are written with a reverence and respect for the deceased, recalling their greatest achievements, attesting to the character of the individual, offering a celebration of their life. On occasion, they may reference challenging episodes or controversy encountered throughout their life. Yet, despite accepting some of the character flaws or mistakes an individual has made during their life, the broader narrative remains a positive reflection of their character and a celebration of their life. This is a useful frame of comparison for analysing the nostalgia expressed by women who worked in the textile industry in west-central Scotland. Throughout their narratives, there were a variety of individual elements of their job that they did not enjoy including the arduous labour, the long hours, the relatively low pay, and the less than comfortable working conditions. However, despite these numerous flaws and negative aspects, they adopted a much broader frame in assessing their memories of work which reflected the elements of their working lives which they valued most highly. In a considered, reflective manner, the

¹⁴⁸ Glasgow District Council, 'A Guide to clothing and textile producers in Glasgow' (Glasgow: Glasgow District Council Planning Department, 1986).

¹⁴⁹ Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization', p.123.

narratives of the former textile workers articulated what they once had, and perhaps did not appreciate at the time, in a manner which recognised the enjoyable, positive elements of the past, without uncritically celebrating the past as a wholly positive time.

In his study of the Park Royal Brewery, Strangleman described a former brewery worker as ‘voicing an obituary for a lost world of work’.¹⁵⁰ However, narratives of the women who worked in the clothing factories and textile mills across west-central Scotland do not constitute an obituary to a lost industry as the textile industry has undergone a radical transformation, rather than died out. It is undeniable that the industry has fundamentally transformed from the one these women recognise from their experiences throughout the second half the twentieth century. Notably, Scotland remains home to a much smaller, more bespoke, high-end textile industry with flagship industry companies including Harris Tweed, Johnstons of Elgin, and Pringle. The transformation of the industry towards smaller-scale, more high-end production is illustrated by the fact that in 1995, there were over 35,000 people employed in textile and clothing sector in Scotland. Nearly a quarter of a century later, employment in the industry had declined by almost 75 percent, with only 9,000 working in textiles in 2019.¹⁵¹ In the twenty-first century, the textile industry in Scotland is unequivocal in asserting: ‘We don’t want to be the biggest, we want to be the best; the supplier of choice from cashmere to car seats.’¹⁵² As Strangleman has cautioned: ‘We have, therefore, to be careful not to dismiss memory as “simply nostalgic”, rather we have to be far more attentive in interpreting what that critical account of the past and present represents.’¹⁵³ In this respect, history should not be considered as dichotomous with the future represented by modernity and progress and the past defined as old-fashioned and regressive.¹⁵⁴ This overly simplifies our

¹⁵⁰ Strangleman, *Voices of Guinness*, p.171.

¹⁵¹ Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), ‘Borders Textile Industry Research Note’, 30 January 2000. RN 01/12. Accessed on: 30 March 2021; Scottish Enterprise, ‘Scotland’s Textiles Facts’, February 2021. Accessed on 2 September 2021. Available here: <https://www.scottish-enterprise.com/learning-zone/research-and-publications/components-folder/research-and-publications-listings/scotlands-textiles-facts>

¹⁵² Textile Scotland, ‘Scottish Textile Industry Strategy, ‘10 Year Plan’, (February 2016), p.2.

¹⁵³ Strangleman, ‘Work Identity in Crisis?’, p.414.

¹⁵⁴ Clarke, ‘Closing Time: Deindustrialization’, p.123.

conception of history and lacks critical thought and nuance. For these women textile workers in west-central Scotland, the positive memories and associations with their old jobs is not just a rose-tinted nostalgia but rather reflects what they most valued in the workplace: it is *their* perception of *their* reality in *their* workplace.

CONCLUSION

It is almost thirty years since the textile sector experience intense deindustrialisation and its deep-seated impact remains important and relevant. Deindustrialisation lingers, rooting itself in communities and continuing to exert pervasive influence, profoundly shaping people's lives decades after the closure of the factories. For the thousands of displaced textile workers, predominantly women, made redundant during the jobs crisis, they were faced with traversing the transition from industrial to 'post-industrial' employment as they had been significantly deskilled by the local labour market. The experience of workers who tried to survive in the textile industry was marked by repeated closures as the sector continued to contract and decline into the mid-2000s. There was a clear distinction in the generational experiences with younger workers, like Lisa Lamont, able to retrain, reskill and forge a career in a sector that was relevant to the new economy. However, Lisa was only able to diversify her skillset and gain her Microsoft certification because she was still in the family home, supported by her parents. The experience for Maureen Kyle was notably different as she contented with finding her first 'new' job aged fifty-six, after working in the Cohen's factory for forty years. She received support from the State, with the Department of Social Security helping with the application process but ultimately, she accepted a role of lower status and less skill as a cleaner.

The National Health Service was another popular option for older textile workers as healthcare was perceived as providing a good supply of feminised jobs, such as working in domestic services or as an auxiliary nurse. One aspect of the women workers' transition out of the textile industry and into new forms of employment that was revealed by oral testimonies was the significant contribution that many women were making to the household income. The duality of the piecework system allowed contributed to exploitation, but it also provided workers with the opportunity to

maximise their incomes by working at an exhaustively fast pace. In conjunction with the plentiful opportunities to extra additional money from overtime shifts at the weekend, or working unsociable hours in the evening, this enabled some women to become the main contributor to the household income, with their wages being markedly higher than their husband's income. One textile worker, Alison Anderson, noted that her income was more than double what her husband was earning as a trainee chef, which added additional significance to the value of her employment. These reflections from the oral testimonies contributes to, as Laframboise has argued, the 'destabilising' of the male breadwinner concept into the late twentieth century, but they also illuminate the profoundly scarring financial impact of women being made redundancy from the textile industry.¹⁵⁵ Their earnings were not frivolous pin-money: it was a substantial wage which made a significant contribution to the household income and allowed families to stay above the poverty line

In their post-industrial working lives, sewing machinists, considered the most skilled workers by their peers, exhibited a 'craft outlook', continuing to use their skills in a more recreational manner and engage in trans-generational education by teaching younger people, including their children and grandchildren, the skills of being a sewing machinist. Some women expressed their strong occupational identity as textile workers by establishing their own textile businesses which provided a more bespoke, niche service. These companies served as an act of defiance, in the face of intense deindustrialisation, by textile workers who were determined to fight for survival in the sector. The occupational identity of textile workers was resilient, and it endured. It could not be disentangled from their own identity as it was central to their sense of self. It was at the very core of who they were as people.

The toxic legacy of deindustrialisation remains evident in industrial communities across west-central Scotland. Its enduring impact on both the physical and mental health of people in these communities is profound and remains a significant issue for policymakers to address. Although the interviews conducted with women textile

¹⁵⁵ Laframboise, 'Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal's Garment Industry', p.12.

workers for this research did not uncover harrowing personal experiences, this should not be generally interpreted to argue that women experienced less catastrophic or painful experiences of deindustrialisation compared with male workers. Rather, the lack of these narratives in the interviews conducted for this research should be interpreted through the understanding that people wish to portray the best versions of themselves during oral history interviews. Indeed, Catherine Johnstone's powerful, emotional testimony reflecting on the closure of the Templeton's carpet factory illuminates the enduring salience and profound impact of deindustrialisation on the lives of women textile workers.

Finally, critical engagement with the oral testimonies in this chapter revealed the multifaceted nature of women's memories of their working lives in the textile industry. Their memories focused on both the tiring, labour-intensive nature of the work and often uncomfortable working conditions, whilst simultaneously recalling the happier, more convivial aspects of factory work. They did not seek to romanticise or airbrush the most challenging aspects of the work, but they were eager to share the pride and pleasure they extracted from their work. This sense of pride, and sense of worth, that women extracted from paid employment in the textile industry was captured by McCarthy when she stated: 'Paid work provided a source of selfhood and meaning not just for the privileged minority of women pursuing well-remunerated careers, but for mothers across social classes and ethnicities.'¹⁵⁶ There was a profound sense of pleasure gained from paid employment as it provided purpose outside the realm of the domestic sphere, with factory work allowing women to occupy a distinct space in the public sphere where they built friendships, learned skills, and gained financial independence.

Moreover, the oral testimonies revealed that women textile workers' narratives of their working lives, and the impact of deindustrialisation, are shaped by a reflective, nuanced analysis rather than an uncritical, rose-tinted nostalgia which defines 'the past' as better than the future. Their critical reflections were framed through the reality of the present, with an implicit critique of the post-industrial neoliberal

¹⁵⁶ McCarthy, *Double Lives*, p.362.

economy, which is defined, in some part, by the temporary nature of work and the disposability of labour. This reality of 'the present' contrasts starkly with workers' memories of the perceived heyday of the textile industry in Scotland between the 1960s and 1980s, when the industry was a pillar of regular, stable employment, prior to the significant contraction and major jobs crisis experienced in the 1990s. In this respect, workers' memories of 'the past' are mediated through the reality of 'the present', which is captured in the camaraderie, solidarity, stability, and sense of permanency that they perceive to be lacking for workers in the modern economy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recasting the Industrial Legacy: Culture, Regeneration and (re)Negotiating Space

INTRODUCTION

It has been more than two decades since Bairdwear closed its garment factories in East Kilbride, Grangemouth, Inchinnan, Polmadie, and Springburn for the final time. In this period, to what degree has the heritage of the textile industry, and the tens of thousands of women who worked in the industry throughout the second half of the twentieth century percolated into authorised, mainstream representations of deindustrialisation in west-central Scotland? For High, the impact of deindustrialisation is heightened in places where its effects are not overtly visible, as this signifies a process of ‘forced forgetting’ in which regeneration of the built environment actively removes the visible symbols of industrial history and working-class heritage by either destroying or repurposing former sites of production, including factories and mills.¹ The process of ‘forced forgetting’ is not just applicable to tangible forms of heritage such as buildings and workplaces, but through the exclusion of people’s lived experiences from the main arenas in which ‘the past’ is presented. Therefore, it is critical to examine how this episode of history is understood, interpreted, and represented in popular conceptions of deindustrialisation in west-central Scotland.

History that is visible - whether it be the bricks and mortar of a textile mill, an exhibition in a museum with oral history from a textile worker, or a dramatized depiction of working-class life in 1990s Glasgow - is critical in the construction of

¹ Steve High, ‘Beyond Aesthetic: Visibility and Invisibility in the Aftermath of Deindustrialization’, *International Labour and Working Class History*, No.84, Fall 2013, p.143.

what aspects of history are perceived as significant and worthy. This is why it is critical to forensically examine our built environment, our heritage institutions, and our popular culture as they are the lens through which we interpret the past.

This chapter will explore the heritage of the twentieth century textile industry in four areas. Firstly, it will analyse the physical, tangible heritage – the bricks and mortar - of the textile sector, exploring the trajectory of former textile sites. It will consider why some buildings are preserved, whilst others are redeveloped, and many are demolished. Although the politics of urban redevelopment are contentious in all industrial cities which face their own specific, nuanced debates regarding the preservation or demolition of former industrial workplaces, this issue is particularly pertinent in Glasgow with McIvor describing the city as indulging in ‘an orgy of destruction’ when it comes to industrial buildings.² The resulting legacy of vacant sites and residual industrial pollution, McIvor has argued, played a significant role in the environmental degradation of Glasgow.³ In this context, the interaction between space and memory will be examined in considering whether the preservation of former industrial sites is an important or meaningful process.

Secondly, the chapter will assess how local policymakers have deployed cultural-led regeneration strategies in their efforts to reinvigorate industrial towns and industrial cities and shift them into a ‘post-industrial’ era. Specifically, it will focus on the experiences of Glasgow’s award as European City of Culture 1990 and Paisley’s unsuccessful campaign to be named UK City of Culture 2021, and examine the approaches used in each case to mainstream the lived experience of working-class textile workers into their vision for renewal. Moreover, the tangible benefit of cultural led regeneration among the communities who experienced the worst excesses of deindustrialisation will be assessed.

² Arthur McIvor, ‘Where is “Red Clydeside”? Industrial Heritage, Working-Class Culture and Memory in the Glasgow Region’, in *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Historical Culture and Identity in Regions Undergoing Structural Economic Transformation*, by Stefan Berger (ed.), (Oxford: Berghahn, 2020), p.57.

³ Arthur McIvor, ‘Blighted City: Toxic Industrial Legacies, the Environment and Health in Deindustrialising Glasgow’, in Liz Kryder-Reid and Sarah May (eds), *Toxic Heritage: Legacies, Futures, and Environmental Injustice*, (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 239-54.

Thirdly, the chapter considers the role of heritage institutions in forging local identities through its curatorial decision-making over what exhibitions are displayed. These institutions can be classified in to two distinct categories. The first are civic institutions which are funded by the local authority and therefore are situated within what Laurajane Smith has described as the authorised heritage discourse framework: this includes institutions such as Kelvingrove Museum and Paisley Museum.⁴ The second category is comprised of community-led, grassroots institutions such as the Johnstone Museum and the Paisley Thread Mill Museum which operate with little funding and seek to challenge hegemonic discourse by privileging the histories of marginalised communities, recalibrating our understandings of the past. Furthermore, Paisley's Sma' Shot Day festival is examined as an example of intangible community-based heritage which is rooted in the heritage of an industrial dispute between textile weavers and their mill managers in 1856.

Finally, the chapter will explore how women textile workers have been represented in iconic depictions of working-life in west-central Scotland including plays such as *The Slab Boys*, *The Steamie*, *The Ship*, and *The Last Threads*, as well as television series' *River City* and *Still Game*. It will examine how working-class women are represented in these popular culture representations of everyday life in working-class communities. This will draw on Summerfield's concept of the 'cultural circuit' to explore why accuracy and representativeness in the popular culture that we consume is critical due to its role in forging strong, steadfast public narrative of the past.⁵ Moreover, it will consider to what extent these pieces of artistic performance serve to reinforce, or challenge, the authorised narrative of deindustrialisation in Glasgow which is overwhelmingly male and symbolised by shipbuilding and other heavy engineering works.

⁴ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵ Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Journal of the Social History Society*, vol.1, no.1, (2004), pp.65-93.

Demolition, Preservation, or Regeneration?

Ferguslie Mill

At its peak the Ferguslie Mill in Paisley consisted of nine different mills involved in the thread making process. Following the closure of the Ferguslie site by Coats Viyella in 1984, some buildings were demolished, and the site was abandoned, becoming an industrial wasteland in the heart of Scotland's largest town. The dereliction of the site gained significant local interest from residents who were invested in the area, but the issue also attracted national interest, especially from conservationists and industrial archaeologists who were particularly interested in the preservation of the No.1 Spinning Mill at Ferguslie. There was a robust debate regarding whether the derelict No.1 Spinning Mill could be redeveloped and repurposed, or whether it was more sensible to demolish the mill and sell the land to be redeveloped. *The Sunday Times Scotland* neatly captured the spirit of the debate over the future of the Ferguslie Mill, stating: 'The easy option is to let the council's decision stand, and the grandiose Victorian building fall, to be replaced by modern, high-density housing. The hard option is to take positive steps, including substantial grant aid, to create an imaginative, prestige development of roomy, luxury flats and offices within the mill.'⁶

The local authority, Renfrew District Council, voted to demolish the No.1 Spinning Mill, citing a lack of funding and necessary support from the Scotland Office to make a redevelopment of the existing mill a viable option. Furthermore, the local authority claimed there were significant environmental concerns at the site due to a presence of rats. This resulted in some of the most ardent advocates for the demolition of the mill being residents whose homes neighboured the derelict site with around 600 residents signing a petition in support of demolition of what they perceived as 'a danger and an eyesore'.⁷ One Labour Councillor, Nancy Allison, outlined her shift in opinion regarding the future of the mill, stating: 'When the mill

⁶ Jeremy Hodges, 'Troubled mill heads for final shutdown', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, (21st April 1991), p.5.

⁷ Hodges, 'Troubled mill', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, p.5.

closed, I was one of those who thought we should protect our heritage. But the situation has deteriorated to the extent that the whole of the area is like a bomb site. You can't expect people to live next to something like that. I'm worried that somebody is going to be killed.'⁸

This opposition was understandable, as *The Sunday Times Scotland* reported, the derelict site had become associated with anti-social behaviour and criminal activity with numerous reports of fire-raising and people scaling the building to strip copper from the roof which could be exchanged for cash-in-hand at local scrapyards.⁹ In this context, a sizable group of residents viewed Ferguslie Mill as an undesirable eyesore which was having a negative impact on their quality of life. They were living with the looming shadow of ruination. For local residents, demolition was the easiest way for the site to be used as part of a wider effort to regenerate the community. Yet, it raises the issue of how the site was allowed to become a derelict industrial wasteland in the heart of Scotland's biggest town.

Figure 5.1: The derelict No.1 Spinning Mill, Ferguslie Mill.



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Source: © Newsquest (Herald & Times). Licensor www.scran.ac.uk

⁸ Hodges, 'Troubled mill', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, p.5.

⁹ Hodges, 'Troubled mill', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, p.5.

The politics of derelict industrial sites are complex as Shackel explains: ‘What ruins are saved and remain visible and what is removed from the landscape is, in the long run, highly political. These ruined landscapes are more than aesthetics. They are about job loss, health disparities, and environmental degradation.’¹⁰ The decision to demolish an industrial site is political and its consequences for the community can be wide-ranging. The demolition of an industrial site contributes to a sense of marginalisation among industrial workers, to whom the site holds significant meaning and value, as they must move on and embrace ‘modernity’ through regeneration projects, which are commonly preoccupied by aesthetics and the perception of outsiders.¹¹

This raises the question as to why the No.1 Spinning Mill at Ferguslie Mill was demolished. Alice Mah has offered a concise theory on how sites of dereliction emerge, stating: ‘Industrial ruins are produced by capital abandonment of sites of industrial production; they can be read as the footprint of capitalism, the sites which are no longer profitable, which no longer have use value.’¹² The site was owned by a local businessman, John Pitt, who planned to make a substantial profit by demolishing Ferguslie Mill and selling the land to a property developer to build around 150 new houses. He did not intend to redevelop Ferguslie Mill as this would have diminished the profit he could achieve through the sale of the land. He was transparent about what motivated his decision-making over the future of the historic site, abruptly stating: ‘But, at the end of the day, this is not about conservation or Paisley’s heritage – it’s about money, and the money simply is not there’.¹³ There was no sense of civic duty, community well-being, or local pride. For Pitt, this was purely a commercial decision based on his ability to boost his personal finance by selling the site for a substantial profit.

¹⁰ Paul A. Shackel, ‘Structural violence and the industrial landscape’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol.25, no.7, (2019), p.750.

¹¹ Steve High and David W. Lewis, *Corporate Wasteland: The Landscape and Memory of Deindustrialisation*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), p.8.

¹² Alice Mah, ‘Memory, Uncertainty and Industrial Ruination: Walker Riverside, Newcastle upon Tyne’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol.34, no.2, (2010), p.399.

¹³ Jeremy Hodges, ‘Pride of Paisley lies in ruins of neglect’, *The Sunday Times Scotland*, 21st April 1991, p.5.

Those campaigning to save Ferguslie Mills demolition emphasised the physical building's grandiose architecture and design. A representative from the Scottish Civic Trust, John Gerrard, whilst campaigning against its demolition described the qualities of the mill, stating: 'It's a beautifully proportioned building, and a lot of detail was put into it, to make it the flagship of the west of Scotland textile industry.'¹⁴ This was reinforced by the President of the Old Paisley Society, Ellen Farmer, who stated: 'This is not just an industrial building that been flung up – it's considered one of Europe's finest mill buildings.'¹⁵ In the campaign to save the mill, formal stakeholders placed an overwhelming emphasis on preserving the *building* due to its aesthetic beauty.

The 'authorised heritage discourse' framework, articulated by Laurajane Smith, argues that the dominant conceptualisation of heritage is narrowly focused, and privileges physical aspects of history which are 'aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places, and or/landscapes.'¹⁶ The established authorised heritage discourse has also been criticised by Shackel et al who have argued that it is too narrow in scope as it only celebrates buildings and physical structures which are classified as 'material, grand, "good", aesthetically pleasing and monumental'.¹⁷

In considering the case of the No.1 Spinning Mill at Ferguslie, it meets the classification of the authorised heritage discourse as outlined by Smith. It was a monumental and ornate building which was commended for its architectural significance. It was also B-listed, officially classifying it as a 'building[s] of regional or more than local importance, or major examples of some period, style or building type which may have been altered'.¹⁸ Yet, despite conforming to and being

¹⁴ Hodges, 'Pride of Paisley', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, p.5.

¹⁵ Jeremy Hodges, 'Pride of Paisley lies in ruins of neglect', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, (21 April 1991), p.5.

¹⁶ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, (London: Routledge, 2006), p.29.

¹⁷ Paul Shackel, Laurajane Smith, and Gary Campbell, 'Labour's Heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol.17, no.4, (2011), p.292.

¹⁸ Renfrewshire Council, 'Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas'. Accessed on 11 November 2021. Available here: <https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/2486/Listed-Buildings-and-Conservation-Areas>.

considered an ‘authorised’ form of heritage, the No.1 Spinning Mill was still demolished as it served the interests of private capital, despite the wider support within the heritage sector for salvaging the structure and using it as a locus around which to redevelop the site in the interests of the community.

Figure 5.2: The derelict Ferguslie Mill.



Source: © West of Scotland Archaeology Service. Licensor www.scran.ac.uk

The official stakeholders involved in the campaign to save Ferguslie Mill lacked a critical voice to advocate the case to redevelop and repurpose the mill based on its central role in the community as a place for the development of friendship, relationships, and where working-class people made their living through work. The decision by Renfrew District Council to demolish Ferguslie Mill was indicative of a lack of finance, foresight, and political leadership to recognise Ferguslie Mill as an important symbol of industrial heritage site and for ex-mill workers the No.1 Spinning Mill acted as a unifying community icon representing shared memories of work, friends, and family. There were some who advocated that the Ferguslie Mill should be repurposed as a museum. However, there was a realism in the approach that accepted that the funding was not available to make this a viable option with Ellen Farmer stating when speaking with *The Sunday Times Scotland*: ‘Ideally, we

would like to see it as an industrial museum, but we know the money isn't here.'¹⁹

However, the creation of an industrial museum would not have solved the problem of perceiving the inherent historic value and interest in being in the bricks and mortar of the building as an architectural structure. Yet, the very existence of a museum would have provided an opportunity to explore more nuanced understandings on the experience of community, leisure, and work, for those who worked in the Paisley mills in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century.

Former mill-worker Andrea Anderson lived in England for several decades before returning to live in her hometown, Paisley, recalled visiting the former site of the Ferguslie Mill after moving home:

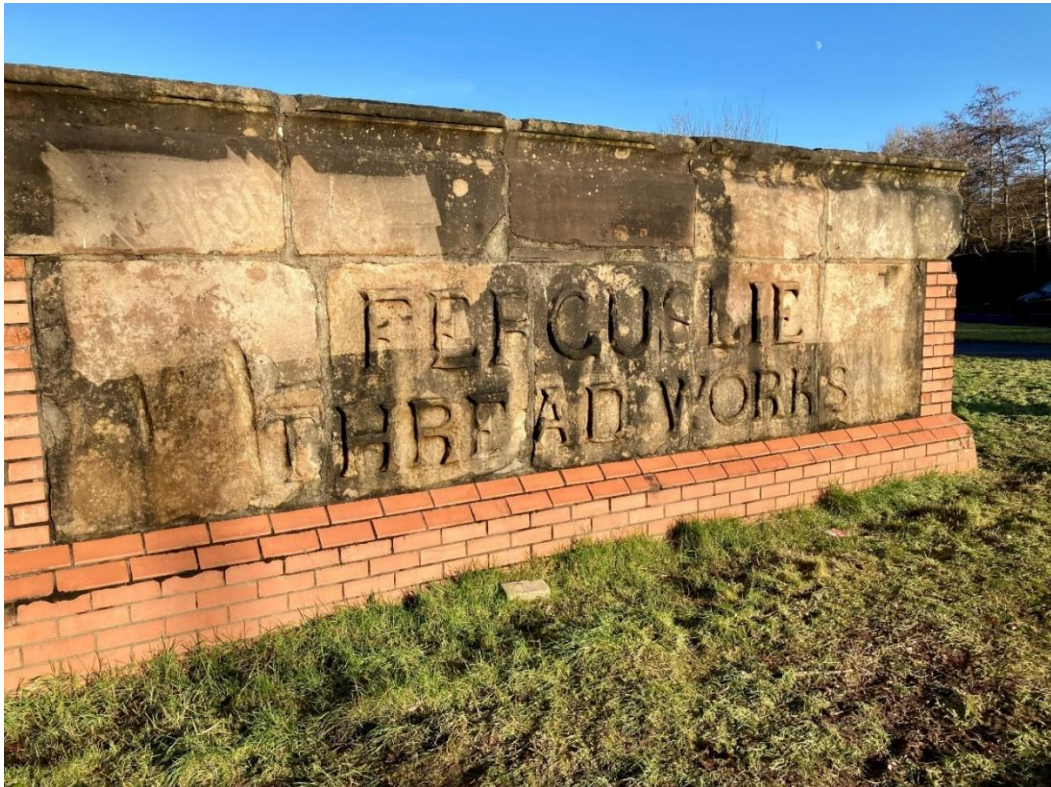
I remember one minute they were there and the next minute there was a big housing estate. I think it's terrible. There's nothing been saved at all. There's one small bit of wall, which I think is terrible [...] I actually got quite tearful. Because the Ferguslie Mill covered a huge area: a huge, huge area. [...] Yea I've tried to because my sister was trying to explain where this little bit of wall was, so I went walking all around this housing estate, but I couldn't find it. But there should be something there because the whole town was built on the Mills. And now it's houses. I just think it's sad. They could have at least kept one building maybe as a little museum.²⁰

The suggestion by Andrea that it would have been fitting to have kept one of the larger Mill museums to host a small museum focused on the Ferguslie Mill is indicative of her belief and desire that the heritage of Ferguslie Mills should be accessible, prominent, and reflective of the experience of those who worked there, to ensure its history endures for future generations to analyse, learn, and understand more. The 'little bit of wall' remaining from Ferguslie Mill which Andrea refers, is located on a grass verge at the side of Old Mill Road (shown below in figure 5.2). It consists of masonry stonework reading 'Ferguslie Thread Mills' which was salvaged during the demolition and repurposed as a small roadside memorial to recognise the land on which the new housing estate was built.

¹⁹ Hodges, 'Pride of Paisley', *The Sunday Times Scotland*, p.5.

²⁰ Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2021.

Figure 5.3: Ferguslie Thread Works stonework, Old Mill Road, Paisley.



Source: 'Ferguslie Thread Works', 20 January 2020, [Personal Copy of Rory Stride].

In recent times, there has been a growing concern among Paisley residents, and those with close connection to Ferguslie Mill that its demolition has contributed to an erasure of its memory. Barbara Anderson, who worked in the cheese-winding department in Ferguslie Mills, and lives locally, discussed the memory of Ferguslie Mills in the context of Paisley's textile heritage:

It's been forgotten about. Which makes me feel sad... Sorry I'm going to cry again. [pauses to regain composure before continuing] It makes me feel sad as well that it's just totally forgotten. Paisley has got a lot, a lot of history but the heritage is dwindling away, and Ferguslie Mills is one of them. And Ferguslie Mills was a thriving place to be in the day when the Mills were there. It's a shame. It is just really a shame.²¹

The sadness emanating from Barbara's testimony is visceral. This reflects a feeling that formative aspects of her life experience have been devalued by the absence of Ferguslie Mills in Paisley's heritage. When something is finished, wasted, lacking in

²¹ Barbara Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 27 January 2021.

value, then we put it in the bin. For items we value, we keep, protect, and we seek to re-utilise them and pass them down the generations. For ex-mill workers, the demolition of Ferguslie Mill is an expression that their living lives, the memories, their identity as mill workers is disposable and of little, or no, value. High has argued that the impact of deindustrialisation is heightened in places where its effects are overtly visible, usually through dereliction or demolition.²² In this respect, the demolition of industrial buildings contributes to a process of ‘forced forgetting’ as it removes those tangible, physical, visible artefacts of industrial heritage and working-class history. This sense of ‘forgetting’ of the Ferguslie Mills was present in Barbara Anderson’s reflections on visiting the housing estate which is now situated where the Mill once stood:

I just feel quite sad. I go in and I look... I've drove round about it but I've never actually walked through it. But I can see where the [Ferguslie] Mills were sitting and I just try and... and I just, I just feel quite sad. The south gate that looks on to the, I think it's the Ferguslie Park, I think that's what they call the South Gate. Because you've got a gate at Station Road and you've got a gate doon there. Well, that gatehouse is still sitting there, I don't know wit they're dain with it but it's still sitting there. But then if you go right along Maxwellton Street as well, along that way, it's just aww hooses again and I think tae myself, "my God".²³

In the earlier extract from Barbara Anderson, she referred to some of the smaller buildings which were part of the Ferguslie Mill site which are still in existence that have been integrated into the new housing development, stating: ‘Because you've got a gate at Station Road and you've got a gate doon there. Well, that gatehouse is still sitting there, I don't know wit they're dain with it but it's still sitting there.’ The three most relevant structures which remain on the Ferguslie Mill site are: the Bridge Lane Gatehouse and the North Gatehouse, and the Counting House. In the lifetime of the Ferguslie Mills, the Bridge Lane Gatehouse had a utilitarian function serving as an administrative office, a storage facility, and the personnel office, whilst the North Gatehouse served primarily as the main location for workers to clock-in and clock-out at the beginning and end of their shifts, and the Counting House was where wages were distributed at the end of the week. These buildings lack the striking

²² Steven High, ‘Beyond Aesthetic: Visibility and Invisibility in the Aftermath of Deindustrialization’, *International Labor and Working Class History*, no.84, (Fall 2013), p.142.

²³ Barbara Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 27 January 2021.

iconography of the No.1 Spinning Mill. Today, these three structures are category B listed and now function as private property with Bridge Lane Gatehouse and the North Gatehouse being subdivided into flats, and the Counting House has been redeveloped as a family home. Yet, for former mill workers, there is much less of a connection with these smaller subsidiary buildings that remain standing as they were peripheral in their working lives in the Ferguslie Mill. Taylor has argued that in industrial towns, the physical geography of the community contributes to a sense of unity and togetherness.²⁴ In this sense, the demolition of important sites of industrial heritage, such as the textile mill in Taylor's study of 'Carpetvillage' in Yorkshire, contributes to a seismic rupturing to a community's sense of identity and sense of self. The demolition of Ferguslie Mill has been a significant rupture in Paisley with ex-mill workers expressing a sense of dislocation and marginalisation by the demolition which has contributed to a gradual erosion of the heritage and memory of Ferguslie Mill.

Anchor Mill

In contrast to Ferguslie, much of the Anchor Mill site has been maintained and repurposed. The most striking example being the Domestic Finishing Mill which has been repurposed as high-end luxury apartments. The Anchor Mill site remained an active site of production until 1992 but the Domestic Finishing Mill stopped being used by Coats Paton in 1987. The building was listed with Historic Environment Scotland in 1984, several years prior to its closure, but it was upgraded to be classed as a grade A listed building in September 1989, following its closure.²⁵ This provided the building with an additional level of protection from any potential threat of demolition. In addition, Anchor Mill's Mile End Mill, which was still in operation until Coats Viyella ceased its manufacturing in Paisley in the early 1990s, is situated around a one mile east the town centre was also classified as category A listed by

²⁴Lisa Taylor, 'Landscape of Loss: Responses to Altered Landscape in an Ex-Industrial Textile Community', *Sociological Research Online*, Vol.25, No.1, (2019), p.49.

²⁵ Historic Environment Scotland, 'Anchor Mills, Former Domestic Finishing Mill', LB38915. Available here: <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB38915>. Accessed on 27 November 2022.

Historic Environment Scotland in 1980.²⁶ Although the Mile End Mill is slightly detached from the urban centre, nestled among residential housing, its towering free-standing brick chimney stack is the only one remaining from either the Anchor Mills or Ferguslie Mills site, and serves as an evocative omnipresent reminder of the area's intrinsic association with thread manufacturing. In this respect, Anchor Mills, is situated within the authorised heritage discourse as its remaining building, most prominently the Domestic Finishing Mill and the Mile End Mill, are officially recognised as aesthetically grand and architecturally important buildings which are celebrated as physical structures rather than as places of significant meaning.²⁷

In the town, Anchor Mill's Domestic Finishing Mill remains a clear and visible symbol of the town's industrial heritage. It is situated less than a ten-minute amble from Paisley Town Hall, near the main shopping precinct, the Piazza shopping centre, and Paisley High Street. Its central location means that from most vistas in central Paisley, it dominates the horizon. In addition to the domestic finishing mill, there are a total of four buildings which comprised the sprawling Anchor Mill site which have been redeveloped and integrated into the Abbey Mill business centre which provides commercial office space for around 150 companies. Included in the Abbey Mill business centre's portfolio is the Mile End Mill which serves as the headquarter for Abbey Mill's business operations as well as providing a home to the small, volunteer-led Thread Mill Museum which opened in 2003; the grade B listed Sir James Clark Building which was the former gassing mill where the thread was previously treated to alter its characteristics; and the grade B listed old embroidery mill which dates from the 1840s and provides a base for the Paisley People's Archive.²⁸

The redevelopment of Anchor Mill has been popular with local citizens, particularly the beautiful Domestic Finishing Mill which is *the* icon of the town. In the oral history interviews, former mill workers shared their reverence for the Anchor Mill

²⁶ Historic Environment Scotland, 'Anchor Mills, Mile End Mill', LB38917. Available here: <http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB38917>. Accessed on 27 November 2022.

²⁷ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.29; Shackel, et al, 'Labour's Heritage', p.292.

²⁸ Abbey Mill Business Centre, 'The Abbey Mill Buildings', Available here: <https://www.abbeymill.co.uk/about/abbey-mill-buildings/>. Accessed on 18 January 2022.

domestic finishing mill, emphasising the importance of saving such a grand, aesthetically appealing Victorian mill of historic significance. In this respect, the authorised heritage discourse is hegemonic in popular conceptions of heritage. Andrea Anderson who worked in the cheese-winding in Ferguslie Mill commented: ‘The big one [Anchor Mill] is now luxury flats, aren't they? They cost a fortune those flats [...] They've done a good job of renovating it into the flats. And it's a lovely big building. I'm glad they saved it.’²⁹ This sentiment was also articulated by Maureen Taggart when reflecting on the redevelopment of the Anchor Mill site:

I mean, like, I've got a fondness for the [Anchor] Mill as you can see from the picture! These were happy days and Paisley was thriving [...] I would hate to see that building [Anchor Mill] being knocked down to be honest. I know that the other mill's [Ferguslie Mill] is away and it's all houses there now. Well, that's all houses as well but it's flats, but it's still the nice big building, you know.³⁰

In this extract Maureen refers to the painting of Anchor Mill which hangs in her hallway. Maureen continued, describing how the Anchor Mill domestic finishing mill acts as a locus for storytelling and between community members: ‘And when you pass it, whoever I'm with, I point out "that's where I worked" and "that's the wee moat over to it" and things like that.’³¹ It is notable that despite the Anchor domestic finishing mill having been redeveloped as luxury flats, marginalising the building from any wider community access or benefit, Andrea Anderson and Maureen Taggart both articulate a positivity – verging on pride - that the building has been salvaged, redeveloped, and reused. For them, it is a symbol of centuries’ long heritage of meaningful labour that shaped the lives of so many of the town’s people. In this sense, the Anchor Mill is more than just the bricks-and-mortar of which it is built. It is a tangible, visible symbol which is valued and celebrated by former mill workers as a critical site of meaning in their lives. Its continued existence as a building instantly recognisable as a textile mill serves as a conduit from the present to the past.

²⁹ Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2021

³⁰ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 29 July 2019.

³¹ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed on 29 July 2019.

This poses the issue of why Anchor Mill and Ferguslie Mill experience such a divergent reality following their closure as a site of production. There was a sense that as Anchor Mill was the last functioning aspect of the thread industry in Paisley, once it was threatened with closure, there was a recognition that it was important to preserve some of the buildings to ensure the town's heritage was not lost. This led to a private-public partnership between the Phoenix Trust charity, Renfrewshire Council, Scottish Enterprise, Historic Environment Scotland, and Safeway, with the partners working together to support the £12 million redevelopment of Anchor Mill.³²

Figure 5.4: Domestic Finishing Mill, Anchor Mill, Paisley.



Source: John McKenna, 'Old Coats Anchor Mill Building', [undated]. Personal Licence: Alamy Images.

In the wider regeneration agenda, there was a transparent attempt to use the redevelopment of the Anchor Mill into luxury apartments as a tool to attract a professional, middle-class clientele to move to Paisley with Ian Snodgrass, Director

³² Deborah Anderson, 'First Peek at historic mill's £12m revamp', *Evening Times*, (29 October 2003), p.21.

of Planning at Renfrewshire Council stating: ‘Anchor Mill will attract those with no preconceived ideas and their arrival will change Paisley.’³³ There were direct parallels drawn between what Paisley was trying to achieve and Glasgow’s successful regeneration agenda that rebranded the traditional, industrial east-side of Glasgow city centre as ‘Merchant City’ before it held the status as European City of Culture in 1990.³⁴

The redevelopment of the former warehouses and factory buildings in ‘Merchant City’ into luxury apartments provided a partial blueprint for Anchor Mills, which was rooted in a belief that attracting a new, wealthier demographic to live in Paisley would improve the town as this wealth would trickle down into the community and stimulate economic growth. In the case of Glasgow, MacInnes described how the development of luxury apartments had changed the composition of the inner city population, stating: ‘There is a strong theme running through these developments that Glasgow has made itself into an attractive location not only for the tourists for a short stay but for the senior manager or public official for their working lives.’³⁵ He continued by explaining the consequential impact of the growth of luxury apartments on the city’s wider economic performance: ‘It is hoped that just as important as the immediate income or employment returns to the economy of the city from these cultural and other consumption activities is the longer term ability to attract more mobile investment to Glasgow and its hinterland, and encourage more potential entrepreneurs, qualified workers and decision makers to want to stay in Glasgow, rather than migrate South towards the centre of the British economy,’³⁶

The redevelopment of an industrial site for the building of new private housing is one of the most contentious aspects of the politics of industrial regeneration. For example, in Walker, in the east-end of Newcastle, Mah observed that the proposed regeneration of their community caused significant anxiety.³⁷ There was concern that the proposed regeneration, which included the building of new housing, would bring

³³ Jim McBeth ‘Anchor Mill sets Paisley on road to rebirth’, *The Scotsman*, (10 June 2003), p.8.

³⁴ Jim McBeth ‘Anchor Mill sets Paisley on road to rebirth’, *The Scotsman*, (10 June 2003), p.8.

³⁵ John MacInnes, ‘The Deindustrialisation of Glasgow’, *Scottish Affairs*, No,11, (Spring 1995), p.90.

³⁶ MacInnes, ‘The Deindustrialisation of Glasgow’, pp.90-91.

³⁷ Mah, ‘Memory, Uncertainty and Industrial Ruination’, pp.398-413.

professional, middle-class ‘outsiders’ to the area, and in doing so, destabilise a tight, homogenous, and deeply embedded working-class community. In essence, residents were concerned about their gentrification and the potential of being squeezed out of the place they called home. This experience was mirrored in a former textile village in west Yorkshire, where local residents expressed similar anxieties about ‘outsiders’ moving into the area to live in a new private housing estate which had been built on the site of the village’s former substantial carpet factory. In the case of ‘Carpetvillage’, Taylor outlined the simmering community tensions between long-term residents and new ‘incomers’: ‘Perhaps most worryingly a section of the sample ruminated about “these people” or “incomers”, the anonymous people who are living in new housing. Where were they from? How did they make their money? Did they have any idea about the place that Carpetvillage had once been?’³⁸

In the oral history interviews conducted for this research, there was concern expressed regarding who lived in the new private housing estate. It is evident that houses were built to attract middle-class professionals. This was true for Ferguslie Mill with the site being used for the construction of a private housing estate, and Anchor Mill through its redevelopment as luxury apartments. The online property site Rightmove notes that, in 2021, the average house price in Paisley was £134,656.³⁹ Yet, in Arkwrights Way – a street situated on the Ferguslie Mill site – in 2019 three properties sold for an average price of £296,000.⁴⁰ In discussing the redevelopment of Anchor Mills, Andrea Anderson described them as ‘luxury flats’, which reflects the reinforced understanding that the redevelopment of the Domestic Finishing Mill was not about providing more housing: it was focused on attracting wealthy individuals into Paisley. Two decades since the completion of the redevelopment, despite its central location, the Domestic Finishing Mill is dislocated from the local community, likely operating as microstate for young, middle-class professionals who may live in Paisley but are not connected to Paisley, commuting out of Paisley for their employment.

³⁸ Taylor, ‘Landscape of Loss’, p.60.

³⁹ ‘House Prices in Paisley’, Rightmove. Accessed on 16 November 2021. Available here: <https://www.rightmove.co.uk/house-prices/paisley.html>.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Glasgow's Garment Factories

On the southside of Glasgow, following the closure of the D&H Cohen's factory on Coustonholm Road, the site was derelict into the new millennium. In 2002, Cala homes were granted planning permission to build over 200 apartments on the site and the industrial buildings which had comprised the D&H Cohen's site were demolished. In addition to the new apartment blocks, the UK Government built, a large Job Centre on the site of the factory, an act which was in equal parts perverse and symbolic.

Since its closure, the surrounding area has experienced prolonged, and ongoing, gentrification, with its demographics shifted towards young professionals who are attracted by the area's (Shawlands) diverse range of independent businesses and its thriving culinary scene. The construction of these apartments by Cala, described as a 'luxury development of one-, two-, and three-bedroom flats', were aimed towards this demographic. In 2022, *Time Out* magazine listing Shawlands as one of the UK's 'coolest neighbours', as they described: 'The neighbouring areas of Langside, Strathbungo and Govanhill have all played their part in the Southside's rise to eclipse the West End as the city's best area to hang out and live in recent years – but Shawlands is the bustling nexus of Glasgow below the Clyde.'⁴¹ In justifying its choice, the article continued: '[...] it's surrounded by buzzy independent local businesses – from horticultural haven Aperçu to French-Japanese patisserie and design shop Godshot Studio – on the main artery of Pollokshaws Road [...] explore the side streets too for delightful plant-based lattes and flat whites at Frankie, or superior sourdough from Deanston Bakery.'⁴²

The D&H Cohen's site was comprised of perfunctory industrial factory buildings. It did not include any listed buildings which were celebrated for their architectural

⁴¹ Huw Oliver, 'The 12 coolest neighbourhoods in the UK', *Time Out*, (11 October 2022). Accessed on 10 February 2023. Available here: <https://www.timeout.com/uk/travel/coolest-neighbourhoods-in-the-uk>

⁴² Huw Oliver, 'The 12 coolest neighbourhoods in the UK', *Time Out*, (11 October 2022). Accessed on 10 February 2023. Available here: <https://www.timeout.com/uk/travel/coolest-neighbourhoods-in-the-uk>

grandeur. Its demolition was just one example of the erosion of Glasgow's industrial heritage which resulted in hundreds of factories across the city being demolished once a company closed and ceased their operations on that site. The demolition of the site occurred in the gradual gentrification of the local area and, indeed, the demolition facilitated this gentrification, providing Cala Homes with the brownfield space for their development of luxury apartments. Due to its location, nestled in a densely residential urban area, the factory was deeply embedded in the community: it was a local institution that provided an anchoring effect as it was a place where generations of families earned their living. Therefore, its demolition, and replacement with luxury apartments and a Job Centre, represented a powerful shift in the local community, symbolising the areas transition from a working-class community with a manufacturing base to a gentrified district with a core of professional, middle-class residents. The redevelopment of the site provided a lost opportunity to commemorate its historic importance to the communities of Pollokshaws and Shawlands, recognising it as a place of significance and meaning to former workers.

The case of Bairdwear is distinct as the company located its manufacturing on the periphery of cities and towns, in utilitarian factory buildings on non-descript industrial estates with its three factories in greater Glasgow situated in Cowlairs Industrial Estate in Springburn, Polmadie Industrial Estate in the south-east of Glasgow, and Inchinnan Industrial Estate in Renfrewshire. The location of the factories resulted in the company being dislocated from its neighbouring communities as their operations were hidden from sight. This resulted in Bairdwear having a temporary relationship with its industrial units, contributing to a lack of permanence as the company did not embed deep roots in communities, but rather they identified affordable, functional manufacturing units which would be most cost effective for their needs. The hidden nature of Bairdwear's manufacturing may, in part, explain the company's relative invisibility in public conceptions of the textile industry and deindustrialisation in Scotland with the company's brand identity having limited public resonance. Indeed, in many respects, when Bairdwear factories closed, the scars of deindustrialisation were obscured as there was no obvious scene

of industrial ruination in the urban centre of a town or city to represent the scale of the job losses and closures. In contrast to the textile mills in Paisley which are viewed as iconic symbols of the town's long, rich heritage as a manufacturing town, Bairdwear lacked a visibility and identity which reflected its size and importance to the textile sector as an important institution in the Scottish textile industry.

Cultural Regeneration

Glasgow – European City of Culture 1990

Cultural regeneration has provided a pathway for industrial cities looking to redevelop following a prolonged period of industrial contraction. It was an idea pioneered by Glasgow in the 1980s as it aimed to cleanse its reputation as a deprived, polluted, industrial, and violent city. In 1983, the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign launched, utilising Roger Hargreaves Mr Happy character, to present the city as a welcoming, modern cultural destination. Glasgow then hosted the UK National Garden Festival in 1988, before being awarded the status as European City of Culture in 1990. The decision to award Glasgow the status of European City of Culture was a marked departure with previous winners, since the competitions inception in 1985, being recognised centres of European high culture such as Athens, Berlin, and Paris.⁴³ In this instance, the European City of Culture status was to serve as the catalyst to expedite Glasgow's transition into an international cultural destination.⁴⁴ This was about recasting Glasgow's international reputation as captured by Mooney who describes the city's attempt at rebranding: 'Throwing off its long-term reputation as a place of grim urban decay, poverty, violence and industrial unrest, Glasgow was re-imagined as a "vibrant", "post-industrial", "fashionable" city.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Beatriz Garcia, 'Deconstructing the City of Culture: The Long-term Cultural Legacy of Glasgow 1990', *Urban Studies*, Vol.42, No.5, (2005), p.842.

⁴⁴ Garcia, 'Deconstructing the City of Culture', p.842.

⁴⁵ Gerry Mooney, 'Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation? Critical Reflections on Glasgow, European City of Culture, 1990', *Local Economy*, Vol.19, No.4, (2004), p.329.

Glasgow 1990 transformed the city into a hub for European cultural exchange with the year being marked by sixty world premieres, thousands of dance, theatre and music events, as well as performances from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bolshoi Opera Company, and Luciano Pavarotti.⁴⁶ There were pronounced critiques about the city's status as European City of Culture, most prominently articulated by the Workers' City collective who argued that the city's working class were being marginalised by local policymakers' desire to portray a sanitised version of Glasgow as a destination for tourists.⁴⁷ It has been rightly identified by Mooney that aspects of the Workers' City critique were steeped in a smokestack nostalgia that expressed a profound sadness that industrial employment in shipyards on the Clyde had been replaced with low-paid service sector jobs but with no critical comment on the gruelling, labour-intensive nature of the work and its inherent dangers. Yet, the group raised some fundamental questions around whose interests did the regeneration taking place. Workers' City fairly concluded that the European City of Culture regeneration agenda was primarily about selling Glasgow to an external audience as an attractive city to invest, visit, and live, rather than being focused on trying to tackle some of the city's underlying social problems and in doing so, improve the lives of its working-class residents.⁴⁸

Farquhar McLay outlined his stern critique of Glasgow's status as European City of Culture in his introduction to the Workers City anthology, stating: 'In the light of the hard facts of life as it is lived by people at the bottom of the heap in Glasgow, it is difficult to see the "culture" tag as being anything other than a sham accolade to help grease the wheels of capitalist enterprise and smooth the path for the politicians. It is little wonder working-class Glasgow remains unimpressed.'⁴⁹ He continued his blistering critique, focusing on the displacement of working class communities by middle-class professionals: 'The so-called Merchant City might be reborn but only

⁴⁶ Hannah McGill, 'Insight: Glasgow – City of Culture 25 years on', *Glasgow Herald*, (27 September 2015). Accessed on 11 February 2019. Accessed at <https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/insight-glasgow-city-of-culture-25-years-on-1-3899379>

⁴⁷ Mooney, 'Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation?', p.330.

⁴⁸ Mooney, 'Cultural Policy as Urban Transformation?', p.331.

⁴⁹ Farquhar McLay, 'Introduction', *Workers City: The Real Glasgow Stands Up*, by Farquhar McLay (ed.), (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1988), p.1.

for those and such as those: the well-heeled who serve and perpetuate the system and profit by the miseries and inequalities inherent in the system: the kind of people who now find themselves installed in central areas where the have-nots “who have not yet benefitted from the Thatcher revolution” were long ago uprooted.⁵⁰ The perception that the European City of Culture failed to have a material impact on improving the quality of life for the city’s working-class residents was captured in Anne Mullen’s poem, included below, published in the Workers’ City anthology.⁵¹

To Whom It May Concern by Anne Mullen

I read about it in the papers, I’m seeing it
on the news. COME TO GLASGOW THE CULTURE CITY.
... It’s giving me the blues.

COME TO GLASGOW’S GARDEN FESTIVAL. Only one
week’s buroo money. We could live off the smell
of flowers. While they reap all the money.

ENTERTAINMENT CITY. To the exclusive few.
40 grand houses, a shopping mall, an opera
house or two. ENTERTAINMENT CITY.....
For who?

William needs new shoes, the window’s needing
fixed, the roof is letting in water
and the settee’s needing stitched.

Can you read between the lines. Have you ever
really tried... Don’t you really want to know
what it is they’re trying to hide.

⁵⁰ McLay, ‘Introduction’, p.1.

⁵¹ Anne Mullen, ‘For Whom It May Concern’, in *Workers City: The Real Glasgow Stands Up*, by Farquhar McLay (ed.), (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1988), p.5.

The poem reflects the reality faced by working class people in Glasgow. In the second stanza, Mullen highlights that the cost of attending the Glasgow Garden Festival is equivalent to a week's social security money and with a sharp, ironic wit makes the point that the pleasant smell of flowers will not pay the bills or put food on the table. Furthermore, the fourth stanza references the very limited disposable income to spend on 'culture' with their son in need of new shoes, old windows and unresolved leaking roof contributing to a cold, damp home, and damaged furniture. The reference to repairing the settee further indicates the lack of available money as they cannot afford to buy a new couch to replace the old, damaged settee. The poem encapsulates the alienation experienced by Glasgow's working-class population whose lives were not materially improved by Glasgow's cultural regeneration with its role as European City of Culture 1990 failing to resolve the city's social ills.

The long-term legacy of Glasgow 1990 was largely cultural, with the city establishing itself as a cultural hub with the city's wide range of free municipal museums, thriving live music scene, and burgeoning culinary sector. In assessing the legacy of Glasgow 1990, Garcia has concluded that the best sustained successes have been cultural rather than economic, as it helped to shift the city's reputation and secure its status as a cultural city.⁵² The hegemonic narrative considered Glasgow 1990 a success, creating a legacy that cultural led regeneration is a pathway to aid the transformation of a city which is grappling with the impact of deindustrialisation and the shift to a post-industrial reality. Since the millennium, the competition has favoured the approach of appointed more provincial cities as European Capital of Culture to help aid regeneration with recent winners including a joint award for the port cities of Liverpool and Norway's fourth largest city, Stavanger, in 2008; Denmark's second largest city, Aarhus, in 2017; and Croatia's third largest city, Rijeka, in 2020.

⁵² Garcia, 'Deconstructing the City of Culture', p.861.

Paisley - UK City of Culture 2021 Bid

Paisley is representative of many industrial towns and cities which continue to grapple with the consequences of deindustrialisation. This is because deindustrialisation is a process, not a one-off event. In the months, years and decades which follow the closure of a plant, deindustrialisation continues to have a profound impact in shaping the life experiences of individuals and communities as Linkon, among others, has persuasively argued.⁵³ The scars of deindustrialisation on industrial communities across Scotland are visible. As discussed in chapter four, research has concluded that the mortality rates in west-central Scotland are ‘generally higher and – crucially – are improving at a slower rate than those of other, comparable, post-industrial regions in Europe’.⁵⁴ This phenomenon, in conjunction with entrenched health inequalities, and elevated rates, drug and alcohol-related deaths, has been theorised as ‘the Glasgow Effect’.⁵⁵

This reflects Paisley’s experience in the decades which have followed the closure of the main source of employment in the town, the Anchor Mill and Ferguslie Mill. In 2006, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identified the area of Ferguslie Park in Paisley as the most deprived in all of Scotland. The SIMD splits Scotland into 7,000 small community groupings – officially referred to as ‘data zones’ – and is published every four years, providing a snapshot of Scotland and where its areas of relative wealth and deprivation are concentrated to allow for necessary policy interventions to tackle emerging issues.⁵⁶ Its definition of deprivation is devised of seven key indicators: education, employment, crime, health, housing, income, and access to services. The SIMD is not an infallible measure, but it is a useful indicator. The Ferguslie Park housing scheme is situated around one and a half miles north of the former site of Ferguslie Mills.⁵⁷ In the most recent SIMD

⁵³ Linkon, *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization*.

⁵⁴ David Walsh, Martin Taulbut, and Phil Hanlon, ‘The aftershock of deindustrialization – trends in mortality in Scotland and other parts of post-industrial Europe’, *European Journal of Public Health*, Vol.20, No.1, (2009), p.63.

⁵⁵ Walsh et al, ‘The aftershock of deindustrialization’, p.63.

⁵⁶ Scottish Government, ‘Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)’. Available here: www.simd.scot. Accessed on 5 May 2020.

⁵⁷ Valerie Wright, ‘“Tinkering at a local level”: Unemployment, State Intervention and Community Agency in Ferguslie Park, Paisley, c.1972-1977’, *Scottish Labour History*, Vol.53, (2018), pp.192-211.

statistics, Ferguslie Park was listed as the third most deprived area in Scotland, with another formerly industrial community in the west of Scotland, an area around Greenock town centre, being classified as the most deprived area of the country.⁵⁸

On 29 September 2017, Paisley launched its bid to be named UK City of Culture 2021. Although formally a town, rather than a city, Paisley was eligible for entry to the competition which is run by the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport. The City of Culture 2021 bid followed the pioneering approach of Glasgow's status of European City of Culture 1990. Since the establishment of the UK City of Culture competition in 2009, its two previous winners, Derry-Londonderry in 2013 and Hull in 2017 were like Paisley: former industrial centres which were attempting to secure investment to help fund regeneration following significant deindustrialisation. In a clear distinction from the early years of the European City of Culture, the UK City of Culture competition aimed to use culture as a transformational tool to regenerate an urban area experiencing economic and social hardship. The essence of the competition was articulated by Phil Redmond, the Chair of the panel of judges for the UK City of Culture 2021 bid, who, during a visit to Paisley outlined: 'We specifically stated "We don't just want to see the crown jewels. It's important to understand not just how you do high-end culture, but what will actually change."' ⁵⁹ For local policy makers, securing the City of Culture status was not viewed as the only objective. Rather the competition acted as a framework in which to focus energies and finance into investment in the town and help to refresh people's conceptions of Paisley, boosting its reputation as a place to live, work, and visit. In recent years, the town has become synonymous with Ferguslie Park being classified as the most deprived area of Scotland, and a synonym for the aftermath of deindustrialisation.

The sense that Paisley 2021 was primarily about boosting people's civic pride in Paisley and to recover the town's reputation was captured by the Director of the bid,

⁵⁸ Alistair Grant, 'Greenock tops list as most deprived area', *The Herald*, (29 January 2020), p.2; Sean Damer, *Scheming: A Social History of Glasgow Council Housing 1919-1956*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018).

⁵⁹ Mike Wade, 'Paisley sets out its designs on City of Culture', *The Times*, (25 October 2017), p.14.

Jean Cameron, who spent her formative years in the Ferguslie Park estate, who stated: ‘We’ve had real challenges, and recent times have been grim. This is about giving people much-needed hope, but it’s also about laying firm foundations for the future.’⁶⁰ In the transition to post-industrial, hope is an important antidote to feelings of alienation and despair but, ultimately, hope is not a solution to reducing poverty and tackling systemic social issues. The oral history testimonies of former mill workers were laced with general civic pride in Paisley whilst recognising that the town had experienced more prosperous years. This was captured by Andrea Anderson, who was raised in the Ferguslie Park estate, and worked in the Ferguslie Mills operating the cheese-winding machinery, as she described:

If you walk about Paisley, me and my sister did a tour. We did a walking tour. We thought, ‘we live in the town but we probably don’t know half the things about it.’ And the guy, we were walking along the high street and the guy said to us, “Don’t look down, look up!” And see if you walk along Paisley’s high street and look up, you want to see the buildings! All the beautiful sculptures and there’s metal sculptures that used to be a big hotel! He says, “Never look down, always look up!” And it’s true!⁶¹

This sentiment was reinforced by Barbara Anderson who added: ‘There’s great architecture in Paisley. The buildings are beautiful!’.⁶² On this issue, Barbara continued expressing her conflicting emotions about Paisley:

I’m a wee bit sad an’ I’m proud tae be a Paisley Buddie and I’m proud tae say to people, “I’m from Paisley!” an’ when they go, “Paisley?!” Paisley was nae always like that. I’ll always stick up for Paisley. Paisley was nae always like that an’ I am proud tae come fae Paisley, but I think the powers that be should do a wee bit for us an’ clean it up. Make it presentable.⁶³

It is evident that Andrea and Barbara’s perception of history is rooted in the hegemonic interpretation of the authorised heritage discourse, with the town’s diverse range of impressive architecture being central to their expressions of civic pride. In tandem, their narratives reveal the sense that local people in Paisley are conscious of their own heritage but with a recognition that outsider’s perception of

⁶⁰ Cate Devine, ‘Why Paisley deserves to be UK City of Culture’, *The Glasgow Herald*, (29 April 2017), p.14.

⁶¹ Andrea Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 22 January 2022.

⁶² Barbara Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 27 January 2021.

⁶³ Barbara Anderson, Interviewed by Rory Stride on 27 January 2021.

the town are shaped by its knowledge of Paisley as an economically depressed, former industrial town grappling with the aftershocks of deindustrialisation.

In addition to the institutional support, the Paisley 2021 bid secured support from local cultural figures such as singer-song writer Paolo Nutini and actor Gerard Butler. Notably, the Paisley 2021 bid was backed by Coats. The irony is not lost that the single biggest contributor to the loss of Paisley's industrial economy, Coats Viyella, was now supporting efforts at cultural regeneration aimed at revitalising civic pride and prosperity. It seemed pervasive that the endorsement of Coats was so heartily welcomed by Paisley 2021 Director Jean Cameron who stated: 'The legacy left by the Coats and Clarks is all around us in the town today in our buildings and in our people – and that legacy will feature strongly in our bid when it is lodged in April [2017].'⁶⁴ Cameron was correct in describing the omnipresent legacy of Coats in Paisley but she was guilty of a deliberate act of historical erasure by failing to contextualise that Coats were the primary corporate body responsible for the town's deep and prolonged deindustrialisation.

To support the City of Culture bid, the local authority, Renfrewshire Council, invested around £45 million with £22 million allocated for modernising Paisley Town Hall and £10 million dedicated to upgrading and improving the town centre.⁶⁵ However, to what extent was this investment merely a 'facelift' to make Paisley more aesthetically appealing for visitors, rather than a plan which fundamentally improved the lives of people in Paisley? Former mill worker Maureen Taggart captured the sense that the Paisley 2021 bid was an attempt to deliver a surface-level uplift to the town's urban centre to improve the town's reputation and attract tourists, remarking that the only visible improvement of Paisley was the addition of hanging flower baskets, installed by Renfrewshire Council, in the shopping precinct of the High Street. Maureen continued, providing a broader assessment of Paisley's City of Culture bid:

⁶⁴ 'Coats backs Paisley bid to become UK City of Culture 2021', (3 March 2017).

⁶⁵ Aftab Ali, 'Paisley's UK City of Culture bid given emotion send-off in mass musical performance', *The Herald*, 29 September 2017. Available here: <https://www.heraldsotland.com/news/15566842.paisleys-uk-city-culture-bid-given-emotional-send-off-mass-musical-performance/>. Accessed on 3 November 2021.

I mean, whether it cost Paisley a lot of money going for it, I don't know. They could have used the money elsewhere but I don't know where the people that have, the people that think we would have got it, did they no' go into Paisley and see the place? It was a joke! A lot of people thought it was just a joke. I mean, because we had a cathedral and we had a university, that does nae make, you know, the place any better. People are travelling to go to these universities. They are coming from other places and they are no' living in Paisley.⁶⁶

There is an evident frustration in Maureen's testimony that the available funding was being invested to stimulate a culture led regeneration agenda rather than being targeted on social issues which would have a tangible improvement to people's lives. In addition, it is notable that Maureen makes a critical assessment on the effectiveness of the University of the West of Scotland, which has a campus in Paisley town centre, arguing that it has failed to benefit Paisley as the people are 'coming from other places and they are no' living in Paisley.' This provides an implicit parallel with Maureen's perception of the City of Culture Bid: it is about improving the experience of Paisley for 'outsiders' who will visit the town to experience its cultural offering rather than seeking to substantially improve the daily lives of Paisley's working-class residents. This sentiment that local policy makers have assigned greater value to the interests of 'outsiders' than the priorities of local residents embodies the attitudes that were openly espoused from the embryonic stages of Paisley's regeneration agenda, starting with the redevelopment of the Anchor Mills. In late 2017, it was announced that Paisley had lost out on its bid to be UK City of Culture 2021, with the accolade being awarded to Coventry: a city with a rich industrial heritage, known as 'Motor City', reflecting its status as the epicentre of Britain's car manufacturing industry.

Paisley 2021 aimed to reimagine the town's reputation through a cultural renaissance without providing any substantial improvements to living standards. Notably, there has been no announcement or research which has suggested that the City of Culture Bid had any impact on reducing poverty in Paisley. Thirty years following Glasgow 1990, the cultural led regeneration in Paisley has raised similar, enduring questions

⁶⁶ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed on 29 July 2019, by Rory Stride.

regarding in whose interests does it serve? How does it address the various social problems facing the town? And to what extent does it provide a tangible improvement to the lives of the town's working-class residents who have been most deeply impacted by the economic dislocation? Facing a plethora of social problems there is a strong argument that the City of Culture bid was a self-indulgent effort from local policy makers to be seen to 'do something' in lieu of meaningful solutions to tackle the multiple social problems in Paisley which have been exacerbated by the loss of employment provided by Anchor Mill and Ferguslie Mill.

Community, Heritage, and Representing the Past

The attempts at culture-led regeneration in both Glasgow and Paisley provide a useful framework for exploring how the textile industry, and specifically the experience of deindustrialisation, is represented through cultural institutions and community action. This section will analyse the role of authorised civic museums, funded by local authorities, in providing a representative focus on the role of the textile industry within the broader framework of Scotland's industrial economy; the working lives of women in the textile industry; and the impact on the communities who experienced the worst excesses of deindustrialisation and its prolonged aftershocks. It will focus on the experience of the People's Palace, Glasgow's social history museum which is operated by the local authority, and the Paisley Museum, which is the primary cultural institution responsible for the town's history.

Furthermore, this section will consider the role of community, volunteer-led museums, such as the Johnstone Museum and the Paisley Thread Mill Museum, in providing an accessible, democratic form of local heritage which challenge hegemonic conceptions of history. Finally, the section will analyse the Sma' Shot Day festival in Paisley as a form of intangible heritage representing the town's symbiotic relationship with thread manufacturing. The event remains a centrepiece of the local cultural calendar despite the final closure of the Anchor Mill site by Coats Viyella taking place over thirty years ago.

Civic Museums

The People's Palace

For almost half a century the People's Palace has served as the bastion of social history in Glasgow. It has been critical in exploring, reconstructing, and sharing the city's hidden histories of everyday Glaswegians. The success of the People's Palace has been credited to the socialist-feminist Dr Elspeth King who, between 1974 and 1990, served as a visionary force, transforming the Palace from 'an antiquarian version of a local history museum' into 'a modern social history museum'.⁶⁷ The museum's collection features critical aspects of Glasgow's radical political heritage, including the writing desk of leading Red Clydesider John Maclean, a commissioned portrait of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in leader, Jimmy Reid, and banners from the 1989 anti-Poll Tax demonstrations. Furthermore, the museum's collection explores aspects of the social history of the working-class Glaswegians, including a reconstruction of a typical Glasgow 'single-end' tenement flat, a display on the city's famous dancing halls, and a salvaged World War Two air raid shelter.

When recalling her visit to the People's Palace, Alison Anderson stated: 'I've showed them [her children] that [the weaving loom in the People's Palace]. I've showed them that. But even some of them look old for me!'⁶⁸ This comment emphasises the disconnection between former textile workers and the history of the textile industry that is represented in the city's civic museums. Unfortunately, as a result of underinvestment, many of the People's Palace exhibitions are dated and increasingly less relevant to the citizens of Glasgow, as observed in Alison Anderson's comment on the weaving loom which is reflective of the technology of the early twentieth century.

In constructing the framework of the 'authorised heritage discourse', Smith argues the hegemonic 'authorised heritage' excludes the history of marginalised

⁶⁷ O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', p.34.

⁶⁸ Alison Anderson. Interviewed by Rory Stride on 16 July 2019.

communities who are systematically underrepresented in heritage.⁶⁹ Therefore, in response, this had led to the emergence of counter strands within heritage which exist to challenge and oppose the authorised heritage discourse, including but not limited to: industrial heritage, women's heritage, and working-class heritage. In this context, it is a surprising omission that the city's main social history museum does not contain an exhibition on Glasgow's textile industry which employed tens of thousands of working-class women during the second half of the twentieth century. Furthermore, it is notable that, whilst there are some examples, the People's Palace has not been at the forefront of innovatively incorporating oral history into their exhibitions as a means to thread the narratives and life experiences of marginalised groups, such as women who worked in textiles, into their exhibitions. However, this issue is not isolated to the People's Palace, as McIvor has highlighted that across Glasgow's civic institutions, the inclusion of oral history as a tool to reorient narratives and understanding of the past has been significantly underutilised when compared to other civic museums across the UK, most notably in Edinburgh and London.⁷⁰ Glasgow has a considerably rich seam of oral history resources which are archived centrally at the Glasgow Museum Research Centre, including collections from as far back the 1980s, but the incorporation of oral history in the city's various museums is very limited with only a few examples of the voice being centred in public-facing exhibitions.

To be clear, the People's Palace is an excellent institution which has played a crucial role in representing the history of working-class Glaswegians since the nineteenth century, and in doing so, has contributed to the popular conception of Glasgow's reputation as a working-class city with a deep-rooted tradition of political radicalism. It is Glasgow's only official social history museum and since the 1970s it has been central in shaping the discourse over the "real Glasgow" and the battle for the soul of Glasgow. It is a crucial cultural asset which privileges the lives of working-class people and despite being funded by the local authority, it does seek to challenge the Authorised Heritage Discourse. The point is that the museum could do an even better

⁶⁹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.30

⁷⁰ McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?' p.56.

job of challenging the Authorised Heritage Discourse if its exhibitions were refreshed to include a focus on Glasgow's experience of deindustrialisation, incorporating oral history as a tool for working-class women to tell their own story, in their own words, including about the demise of the city's textile industry.

The People's Palace has received strong support from Glaswegians despite experiencing severe funding cuts in the last decade. In response to growing concerns over the museum's long-term future, in 2018, a volunteer campaign group, 'Friends of the People's Palace, Winter Gardens and Glasgow Green' was resurrected, chaired by former curator of the People's Palace, Elspeth King. The organisation has four key objectives, including to 'revitalise the People's Palace, Winter Gardens and Glasgow Green so that it meets the needs of its communities now and into the future.'⁷¹ This statement was a recognition that since the Millennium, the condition and quality of the People's Palace has gradually deteriorated. This issue reached a head in January 2019 with the People's Palace and its Winter Gardens being closed indefinitely by Glasgow City Council after the building was declared structurally unsafe. This decision was described by the Labour MP for Glasgow North-East, Paul Sweeney, as "an appalling act of civic vandalism"⁷².

The dereliction inflicted on the People's Palace has been a conscious decision as whilst Glasgow City Council stated that there was insufficient funding to safeguard the future of the city's official social history museum, they were spending tens of millions of pounds on other civic museums. Most notably, in the west-end of the city, Glasgow City Council contributed £50 million towards the construction of Zaha Hadid's beautifully crafted Riverside Museum, which opened in 2011 and was awarded European Museum of the Year in 2013. More recently, it is estimated that around £30 million of funding for the redevelopment of the Burrell Collection, situated in Pollok Park, equating to almost half of the total renovation cost of £68.25 million, was provided by Glasgow City Council.⁷³ When the People's Palace was

⁷¹ 'Friends of the People's Place, Winter Gardens and Glasgow Green'. Available here: <https://www.friendsofppwggg.org.uk/about/>. Accessed on 10 December 2020.

⁷² Mike Wade, 'Row over closure of Winter Gardens', *The Times*, (4 January 2019), p.17.

⁷³ Eleanor Mills, 'Glasgow's Burrell Collection to reopen in March', *Museums Association*, (15 February 2022). Available here: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums->

forced to close in 2019, it was estimated that between £5 million - £7.5 million of funding would be required to make the building structurally safe and secure the long-term future of the People's Palace.⁷⁴ Yet, over three years since the People's Palace was indefinitely closed, the museum was only able to partially reopen to visitors with necessary repairs still required on the top floor of the museum and the Winter Gardens remain closed. However, this is not a new issue: the underfunding of the People's Palace has been a contentious issue for decades. For example, during Glasgow 1990, £7 million was awarded to commission 'The Words and the Stones' exhibition, whilst the People's Palace was only allocated £300,000 to upgrade the museum in advance of the City of Culture celebrations.⁷⁵

The People's Palace straddles a problematic and arguably contradictory position as it is concurrently an authorised heritage institution which relies on funding from the local authority, as well as being the primary institution which challenges the hegemonic discourse by showing the hidden histories of marginalised communities whose experiences have hitherto been excluded from museums. Therefore, there is an inherent tension between Glasgow City Council and the People's Palace when it comes to funding. This means the People's Palace occupies a unique position as an authorised heritage institution which seeks to challenge how we interpret and understand the past. In 1990, Dr Elspeth King was overlooked for the position of Director of Museums and Keeper of Social History, and subsequently sacked from her role as curator of the People's Palace, along with her assistant Michael Donnelly, for publicly criticising the appointment of Julian Spalding as the Director of Glasgow Museums.⁷⁶ In the *Glasgow Herald*, a leading opinion piece reflected on the decision to overlook Elspeth King, stating 'Little could better illustrate the Establishment's view of Glasgow Green than the rejection of Elspeth King, the current curator of the People's Palace, in her application to become the city's keeper of social history. It

[journal/news/2022/02/glasgows-burrell-collection-to-reopen-in-march/#](https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/journal/news/2022/02/glasgows-burrell-collection-to-reopen-in-march/#). Accessed on 12 January 2022.

⁷⁴ Wade, 'Row over the closure of Winter Gardens', p.17.

⁷⁵ O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', p.34.

⁷⁶ McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?', p.55.

was, in effect, her own job, a position she was fulfilling superbly.⁷⁷ For example, during her tenure as curator, King transformed the People's Palace on a limited budget, increasing annual visitor numbers from 120,000 to 400,000 cementing its place as one of Glasgow's most celebrated cultural institutions, which was recognised when the Palace was named European Museum of the Year 1981. On her sacking, *The Glasgow Herald* opinion piece concluded: 'Elspeth King is a coalminer's daughter with a First-Class honours' degree. She is a woman. She is a Scot. She is the wrong class, the wrong sex, and she does not toe the Establishment line. That is why she did not get the job.'⁷⁸ This gets to the crux of the issue. The success of Elspeth King in transforming the People's Palace into an award-winning social history museum which reflected and represented the history of working-class Glasgow and challenged the established authorised heritage discourse threatened the heritage sector establishment and local policymakers.

With the People's Palace fighting to survive, there is little space in any of the city's portfolio of civic museums which provides a significant exhibition space exploring the city's industrial heritage through people's lived experiences. In a bruising critique of Glasgow's museums, McIvor concluded: 'Surveying the position now, it appears that the people's story is in the background rather than the foreground, obscured by shiny new and extensively refurbished museums that focus on religion, on transport and on art and that fetishize machines, artefacts and technologies. Style has been prioritized over substance and working-class social history.'⁷⁹ In his assessment, the official civic museums in Glasgow are 'sterile modern museums that focused on machines, artefacts, and art, rather than on social history and the "people's story".'⁸⁰

⁷⁷ 'Why Elspeth King paid the price of a Palace revolution', (29 May 1990). Available here: <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/11948473.why-elspeth-king-paid-the-price-of-a-palace-revolution/>. Accessed on 14 January 2022.

⁷⁸ 'Why Elspeth King paid the price of a Palace revolution', (29 May 1990). Available here: <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/11948473.why-elspeth-king-paid-the-price-of-a-palace-revolution/>. Accessed on 14 January 2022.

⁷⁹ Arthur McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"? Industrial Heritage, Working-Class Culture and Memory in the Glasgow Region', in *Constructing Industrial Pasts: Heritage, Historical Culture and Identity in Regions Undergoing Structural Economic Transformation*, by Stefan Berger (ed.), (Oxford: Berghahn, 2020), p.54.

⁸⁰ McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?', p.63.

Social history museums are crucial spaces which help forge local identities through their rich exploration of the past from the perspective of working-class lives. O'Neill has stated that the People's Palace has been the centre of debate over competing notions of the "real Glasgow". What is the "real" Glasgow? In the absence of a fully functional and properly funded People's Palace telling the peoples' story, it is increasingly difficult to examine this question. The fight to keep the People's Palace accessible, open, and well-funded is a fight for the soul of Glasgow. Hodson has advocated historians and civic museums to embrace a 'messy heritage' – one which critically engages with the realities of the past, however complicated, and challenging.⁸¹ In the case of Glasgow, this could include McIvor's work on representing the hitherto neglected environmental history of Glasgow as a heavily polluted, 'toxic city'.⁸² Heritage should not be the act of preserving the past but rather the active engagement with the past in a critical, engaging, and mature manner in order to educate, learn, and teach.

Paisley Museum

In Paisley, the town's most renowned civic heritage institution occupies a prominent location on the High Street: Paisley Museum. The museum is operated by Renfrewshire Council, but it closed in September 2018 for a significant redevelopment totalling £37 million, which is being funded in partnership by Renfrewshire Council, the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Scottish Government, with the museum scheduled to re-open in Spring 2025.⁸³ It has been estimated that the project will increase visitor numbers to Paisley Museum four-fold to an estimated 125,000 per year. It is difficult to ascertain what items and collection will be displayed in the redesigned museum, however, the 'Paisley Museum Reimagined' website lists eight broad disciplines which are covered by the 'Recognised Collection

⁸¹ Pete Hodson, 'Titanic Struggle: Memory, Heritage and Shipyard Deindustrialization in Belfast', *History Workshop Journal*, vol.87, (2019), p.244.

⁸² Arthur McIvor, 'Blighted City: Toxic Industrial Legacies, the Environment and Health in Deindustrialising Glasgow', in Liz Kryder-Reid and Sarah May (eds), *Toxic Heritage: Legacies, Futures, and Environmental Injustice*, (London: Routledge, 2023), pp. 239-54.

⁸³ 'Funding Partners', Paisley Museum Reimagined. Available here: <https://reimagined.paisleymuseum.org/about-paisley-museum/funding-partners/>. Accessed on 2 November 2021.

of National Significance' which will be displayed, including: art, applied art, archaeology, human history, science, social history, textiles, and world culture.⁸⁴ It is evident that there will be a significant focus on the long history of textile production in Paisley, and across Renfrewshire, with Paisley Museum Reimagined describing the vastness of their collection relating to textiles, stating: 'We have 1,200 Paisley shawls – unrivalled anywhere in the world, working looms, pattern the design books, and weaving technology.'⁸⁵

The Paisley Museum is not – and will not be following the completion of its redevelopment -a dedicated social history museum comparable to the People's Palace in Glasgow, the People's History Museum in Manchester, or The Workers Museum in Copenhagen. This is not a problem as the Museum does not claim to be. However, it is important to consider if and how a more critical social history of the Paisley textile mills will be integrated in to one of the exhibitions of the new museum: a 'messy' heritage which embraces the contradictory, complicated, and unsettled nature of 'the past'.⁸⁶ Within the eight broad categories the museum will display, it is impossible to establish if people's lived experiences of deindustrialisation in the town since the 1970s, with the protracted downscaling and eventually closure of both Ferguslie Mill and Anchor Mill, and its aftermath, will be given sufficient exhibition space to allow for critical examination and analysis. It would be a missed opportunity if the exhibition glosses over the experience of deindustrialisation in Paisley through the protracted contraction and decline of the textile industry by Coats during the second half of the twentieth century. It is critical that the redevelopment of the Paisley Museum avoids the trend that McIvor observed with Glasgow's civic museums where the people's story is neglected.⁸⁷ Identity will be central to decisions of what is included in the redeveloped Paisley Museum: who and what represents the 'real' Paisley? In considering how we represent the past,

⁸⁴ 'The Collection', Paisley Museum Reimagined. Available here: <https://reimagined.paisleymuseum.org/about-paisley-museum/the-collection/>. Accessed on 2 November 2021.

⁸⁵ 'The Collection', Paisley Museum Reimagined. Available here: <https://reimagined.paisleymuseum.org/about-paisley-museum/the-collection/>. Accessed on 2 November 2021.

⁸⁶ Hodson, 'Titanic Struggle', p.244.

⁸⁷ McIvor, 'Where is "Red Clydeside"?', p.54.

Frisch's question captures the politics at the heart of decisions within heritage, and is worth repeating here: 'Whose history should be remembered, memorialized, by whom, and to what ends?'.⁸⁸

The experience of the Kelvingrove Museum offers an interesting case study for the redevelopment of the Paisley Museum. O'Neill has explored how the redevelopment of Kelvingrove Museum between 2003 and 2006 provided an opportunity to reorient the focus of the museum, particularly on the issue of making Glaswegian's feel invested in the museum: a sense that their lives and histories were reflected in its collections and exhibitions. For O'Neill, Kelvingrove Museum had to 'genuinely enable all citizens to feel that they have inherited the museum and its contents and that their identity is part of that heritage.'⁸⁹ In doing so, Kelvingrove attempts to celebrate aspects of Glasgow, and Scotland's, history, whilst critically reassessing and openly presenting more contentious and problematic episodes of history which may have previously been airbrushed from exhibitions.⁹⁰ At its heart, during its redevelopment Kelvingrove Museum adopted an 'object-based, visitor-centred, story-telling approach' in a concerted effort to make its exhibitions more engaging, more relevant, and more reflective of the lived experiences and histories of Glaswegians.⁹¹ In doing so, the museum became a more accessible and inclusive space which achieved its objective of appealing to both a first-time visitor and a professor in history.

If Paisley Museum adopts a similar approach, it has an opportunity to not only boost its visitor numbers through attracting tourists to visit but to also develop huge interest and affection from local Paisley residents, including former mill workers. There is significant potential for the museum to provide a new accessible and inclusive space which former mill workers, can see their lived histories – deindustrialisation and its legacy – reflected in the exhibitions. The inclusion of working-class history in an 'authorised' institutional museum setting is crucial in asserting authority and giving

⁸⁸ Michael Frisch, 'De-, Re', and Post-Industrialisation: industrial heritage as contested memorial terrain', *Journal of Folklore Research*, vo.35, no.3, (1998), p.241.

⁸⁹ O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', p.43.

⁹⁰ O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', p.43.

⁹¹ O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', p.43.

legitimacy to working class people's life experiences as they are important, meaningful, and worthy of representation. Moreover, the presentation in a formal museum setting helps to secure its legacy, protecting against the threat that it will be erased from the collective memory if there is not an active effort to keep its memory alive through memorialisation.

Community-led Museums

The act of remembering the past does not only take place in well-funded civic museums. Beyond the realm of the authorised heritage sector, there is a growing catalogue of community-led heritage projects which are inclined towards a social history approach. The burgeoning growth of these community-led initiatives since the early 2000s has been described by McIvor as 'a hundred flowers blossomed, and a vibrant counterculture coexisted that ran against the tide of the Authorised Heritage Discourse'.⁹² In recent years, the growth of community-led heritage has been evident in Glasgow, through initiatives like the Govanhill Open Museum and the Fairfield Shipyard Heritage Centre which have both been driven by community activists to provide accessible, local spaces which captures the multifaceted nature of a community and an industrial social history. Furthermore, in Manchester, the People's History Museum has worked to provide space dedicated to community-led heritage projects to display their exhibitions with exhibitions hosted throughout 2019 including 'Disrupt? Peterloo and Protest', 'The Most Radical Street in Manchester?', and 'Nothing About Us Without Us'. In the case of the 'Nothing About Us Without Us', the exhibition was curated and produced by disability equality activists and reflected the history of disabled activism as well as critically examining how disabled people have been represented through history.⁹³

⁹² McIvor, "Where is Red Clydeside?""", p.59.

⁹³ People's History Museum, 'People's history Museum opens community-led exhibition', (1 April 2019). Available here: <https://phm.org.uk/peoples-history-museum-opens-community-led-exhibition/>. Accessed on 18 January 2022.

Johnstone Museum

An illuminating example is provided by the Johnstone History Museum which serves as the primary institution which works to preserve and share the history of Stoddard Carpets. The museum opened in April 2008, and it is a small, volunteer-run museum which is located inside the Morrisons supermarket in Johnstone, the neighbouring town, around two miles north-east of Carpetfields. The inception of the museum was a collaboration between Morrisons supermarket, Johnstone History Society and the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Johnstone History Society approached Morrisons, once it was aware of their intention to build a new supermarket in the town, to ask if they would be willing to provide space for a small local history museum. Following this agreement in principle, the Johnstone History Society worked with local councillors to secure an estimated £30,000 of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund which provided the necessary financial support for the museum to be established.

It is conveniently located within the Morrisons supermarket which helps to democratise history as the museum is accessible and visible. The pool of volunteers who manage the museum are comprised of enthusiastic local historians who are members of the Johnstone History Society. However, as a result of its limited funding, space, and its reliance on the commitment and time of volunteers, the museum's exhibitions are limited in their scope. In the museum's one room, it makes efficient use of its space to present thirteen different displays, primarily presented on wall-mounted pin-boards, covering a wide range of topics from 'Coal Mines in Johnstone' to 'Johnstone's Canal' to 'Johnstone and World War One'. The museum does have a section on 'textiles', yet the focus is primarily on the William Paton & Sons cotton mill which closed in 2003, following a lineage with Johnstone which could be traced back over 230 years to the late eighteenth century. Unfortunately, there is little information on Stoddard Carpets displayed in the museum or on its website. When I first visited the museum in July 2019, I was extremely grateful for the help given by the volunteers, with a special mention to Iain Murray who was particularly enthusiastic and helpful in his efforts to unearth material relating to Stoddard Carpets in their makeshift archive. It is perhaps surprising that Stoddard Carpets does not feature more prominently in the Johnstone History Museum as

although situated in the neighbouring village of Elderslie, Stoddard's was one of the largest and most notable employers in the locality for over a century, before the closure of the Carpetfield site in 2003. Yet it is difficult to be critical of a museum which is solely reliant on the dedication of volunteers, and the generosity of visitors to donate to support their work and enable the museum to remain open. Moreover, the museum is explicitly a local history museum for Johnstone as the museum's website states: 'The Museum exhibits trace the history of the town from its inception though the rise and fall of the textile industry and on to the various engineering businesses.'⁹⁴ And, ultimately, Stoddard Carpets – albeit important to Johnstone – was not located in Johnstone.

Paisley Thread Mill Museum

Only a few miles west of Johnstone, located in a small area of the Mile End Mill, is the Paisley Thread Mill Museum. The Thread Mill Museum shares the experience of textile manufacture in Paisley from its origins in 1722 to the closure of Paisley's last mill in 1993, through fifteen display cases. It seeks to, as stated in the museum's mission statement, 'preserve the social and industrial heritage of the Paisley and Renfrewshire Thread Mills for the education and enjoyment of all by collecting and displaying material relating to the thread industry'.⁹⁵ The museum relies on a small but dedicated pool of dedicated volunteers, and therefore it is only 'staffed' on a Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. The museum requires £3,000 in donations annually from members of the public to remain open. Such reliance on volunteers and donations to stay open contributes to the sense that the Thread Mill Museum operates in a precarious environment and without strong, embedded roots as it has no stable, guaranteed income. This became a pertinent and pressing concern in August 2021, when, following a period of forced closure because of the Coronavirus pandemic, the museum was forced to make an urgent additional appeal to the public for donations following a shortfall in finance.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ 'Overview', Johnstone History Museum. Accessed on 7 October 2021. Available here: <http://www.johnstonehistory.org/>.

⁹⁵ Paisley Thread Mill Museum. Accessed on 8 November 2021. Available here: <https://paisleythreadmill.co.uk/about/>.

⁹⁶ Lauren Gilmour, 'Paisley Mill Museum launches plea for donations as it fights for survival', *The Renfrewshire Gazette*, (25 August 2021), p.6.

The Thread Mill Museum is overtly a social history museum: it seeks to reflect the lived experience of mill workers. In accordance with Smith's authorised heritage framework, the Paisley Thread Mill Museum provides an illuminating example of a bottom-up, volunteer-run social history museum which acts as a subaltern form of heritage as it showcases and engages with working-class history. The museum seeks to be accessible and inclusive by making the material displayed in the collections relevant to the lived experiences of the town's mill workers. It aims to connect with those who were invested in the labour process in Anchor Mill – either directly, or indirectly through their parents, siblings, or partners.

A key objective of the museum is to engage with anyone who visits: it does not seek to make heritage and museums the preserve of only middle-class intellectuals. However, arguably the museum's location is problematic. It is situated within a private building which is used as commercial office space for a wide variety of businesses. In this respect, it is dislocated and separate from the community as it lacks a visible town-centre presence. This has contributed to a lack of awareness of the Mill Museum among former mill-workers, as expressed by Maureen Taggart who only learned of the museum by chance, when visiting Mile End Mill for an appointment: 'I've been in there [Mile End Mill]. What did I go there fur? I cannae remember wit I was up there for. But I saw they had a wee memory place that wis to do with the Mill, a wee kind of museum-y part.'⁹⁷

The Thread Mill Museum has tried to increase its accessibility, inclusivity, and visibility in the local community by engaging in crucial community outreach work with a touring exhibition which was delivered to schools, care homes, and hospices, focused on the history of textile mills in Renfrewshire.⁹⁸ The act of localising history and bringing it to people is an innovative and inclusive way to disseminate the museum's collection and dispel any mystique around museums. In Glasgow, the 'Open Museum' project worked with local community groups to bring exhibitions

⁹⁷ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed on 29 July 2019 by Rory Stride.

⁹⁸ 'A Family of Threads', Paisley Thread Mill Museum. Available here: <https://afamilyofthreads.info/>. Accessed on 8 November 2021.

and items from the collection to non-museum settings with high public footfall such as community centres, libraries, hospitals, shopping centres and care homes.⁹⁹ In addition, the project coordinated loaning items of significance to local history to aid with education and for reminiscence purposes. O'Neill outlined the rationale which informed the creation of Glasgow's Open Museum: '[it was] based on the ideal that all citizens share ownership of the collection and have a right to access it: if the main museums were off-putting for a range of reasons, then it was logical to provide a museum service in which they were comfortable.'¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, The Thread Mill Museum provides a home for the Paisley People's Archive which is a community project which is focused on developing a rich archive of materials relating to the social and industrial history of Paisley. The archive has been developed in conjunction with heritage professionals at the Scottish Oral History Centre, led by Dr Sue Morrison, gradually built through the collection of photographs, video footage, and oral history interviews with men and women formerly employed in Anchor Mill and Ferguslie Mill.¹⁰¹ In addition, the project has also developed heritage trail booklets for both the Anchor Mill and Ferguslie Mill sites, accompanied by accessible, detailed yet concise, videos to accompany the walking trails.¹⁰² Most recently, the Paisley People's Archive has worked on a National Lottery funded project to create a virtual replica of the thirty-acre Ferguslie Mills site, as it would have looked in 1920. This is a hugely innovative project which is seeking to keep alive the memory of Ferguslie Mills. However, it does seem perverse that rather than saving the Ferguslie Mills site from demolition in the early 1990s, significant investment and innovation has been used to create a visual, but intangible, reconstruction of the site as a means of heritage preservation.

⁹⁹ Mark O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', *Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol.12, no.1, (2006), p.39.

¹⁰⁰ O'Neill, 'Museums and Identity in Glasgow', p.40.

¹⁰¹ 'About', Paisley People's Archive. Available here: <https://www.paisleypeoplesarchive.org/>. Accessed on 12 November 2021.

¹⁰² 'Heritage Trails', Paisley People's Archive. Available here: <https://www.paisleypeoplesarchive.org/>. Accessed on 12 November 2021.

One criticism of both the Johnstone History Museum and the Thread Mill Museum is the lack of oral history in their exhibitions. Since the 1970s, oral history has been a key tool in social history to capture the perspective of marginalised communities – such as working-class women – and help to reorient the dominant narratives of history. It is important to note that they operate with very little finance, but the recorder and playback facilities are relatively inexpensive piece of equipment which could enrich the collection of the museums immeasurably by centring the voice and words of those with lived experiences of working in the carpet factory or the thread mill. Nonetheless, both institutions are crucial to challenging the authorised heritage discourse as their democratic approach removes barriers to accessing history and provides a space in which the everyday lived experiences of working-class people are placed central to the story of modern Scotland.

Sma' Shot Day

In Paisley's cultural calendar, the annual Sma' Shot Day celebrations, marked on the first Saturday in July, is one of the highlights. It has been described by Intangible Cultural Heritage Scotland as 'one of the oldest workers' festivals in the world'.¹⁰³. The celebration traces its lineage to a famous industrial dispute in July 1856 relating to the cost of the 'sma' shot' stitch which was used in the manufacture of the Paisley pattern shawls. The 'sma' shot' was key to the assembly of the shawls as it bound them together, yet the mill owners were unwilling to pay for the sma' shot thread as it was unseen. Their refusal to pay for the sma' shot thread placed the burden of payment with the weavers who staunchly opposed the proposed a change which would have been detrimental to their income. Traditionally, the Paisley weavers would go on holiday, heading south-west for the Ayrshire coast with their families on the first Saturday in July. The weaver's victory in 1856 occurred just three days before their annual July holiday. Before departing the town to enjoy their holiday, thousands of weavers marched through Paisley, carrying banners, playing instruments, and singing songs.

¹⁰³ 'Sma' Shot Day', Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Scotland. Available here: <http://ichscotland.org/wiki/sma-shot-day>. Accessed on 4 November 2021.

Interestingly, Sma' Shot Day was not celebrated for almost seventy years, between 1918 and 1986.¹⁰⁴ There is no definite explanation as to why the celebration ceased to be commemorated in this period, although it has been posited that the introduction of a five-day week made Sma' Shot Day a redundant event as it had previously been celebrated as an official Trades Holiday.¹⁰⁵ Its resurrection in 1986 is notable because at this point, the town's textile industry was experiencing accelerated deindustrialisation, with the Ferguslie Mill already closed and the Anchor Mill being significantly downsized. Therefore, its resurrection in 1986 acted as a cultural tool which recognised the past, stimulated local pride, and forged community unity, whilst showcasing and celebrating the town's textile heritage as an act of defiance and resistance in response to its increasing invisibility in the town as the mills closed and workers experienced redundancy. Sma' Shot Day appears to have acted as a powerful force which strengthened community social bonds in the face of the economic and social destruction inflicted on the town in the form of deindustrialisation.

Today, the event attracts thousands from across Renfrewshire, to the streets of Paisley to follow the procession which is led by a drummer playing a replica of the Charleston Drum which was used in the nineteenth century to summon weavers to the street to engage in protest, followed by effigies of 'corks', the historic colloquial term for mill owners. The following procession is comprised of primary school children, community groups, local politicians, and local trade union branches. It is common for school children to role play as weavers and their family members, carry banners memorialising some of the historic Paisley weavers' branches, such as the Ferguslie Weavers, and hoist placards supporting the historic demands of the weavers. Once the parade has marched through Paisley, the event culminates with the 'Burning of the Cork' ritual which sees the burning of an effigy of a mill owner at County Square.

¹⁰⁴ 'A Famous Victory for the Workers', Available here: <https://paisley.is/discover/a-famous-victory-for-the-workers/>. Accessed on 16 January 2022.

¹⁰⁵ 'A Famous Victory for the Workers', Available here: <https://paisley.is/discover/a-famous-victory-for-the-workers/>. Accessed on 16 January 2022.

Figure 5.5: The ‘Burning of the Cork’ ceremony at County Square, Paisley.

[THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN REMOVED FOR
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Source: Alexander Cunningham, ‘Ignited: Burning of the Cork’, 6 July 2018.

When compared with similar festivals to commemorate and celebrate labour history across the UK, most prominently the Durham Miners Gala and the Tolpuddle Martyrs festival, Sma' Shot Day is less overtly political with a greater emphasis placed on family and community. For example, at the Durham Miners Gala the programme of speakers from the main stage is comprised of national Labour politicians and national trade union leaders. In the past, Harold Wilson, Neil Kinnock, Ed Miliband, and Jeremy Corbyn have all addressed the 'Big Meeting' in Durham whilst Leader of the Labour Party. Moreover, the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival, near Dorchester, regularly features speeches from the General Secretary of the TUC, the Leader of the Labour Party, and notable left-wing folk singers such as Billy Bragg. In addition to being interpreted as important community events in Durham and Dorchester, these festivals have a national appeal, attracting attendance from socialists and trade unionists across the United Kingdom.

A notable difference between the Durham Miners' Gala and Sma' Shot Day is the nature of their emergence. For example, the Miners' Gala is an organic event which emerged in the late nineteenth century amidst burgeoning trade union membership across the Durham coalfield. In Durham, there is a sense that heritage is being celebrated through engaging with some traditions and rituals which have developed throughout its history, such as the carrying of colliery banners through the town, whilst seeking to critically engage with some of the most pressing and difficult issues facing trade unions and left-wing politics in modern Britain. In this respect, the Gala serves in tandem as firstly, a heritage event which memorialises and celebrates the region's mining heritage, and secondly, a discursive arena for critically analysing and problematising issues being faced by working-class communities today. This dual purpose is captured by the Durham Miners Association's maxim: 'The past we inherit, the future we build.' In contrast, Sma' Shot Day emerged as a tradition to commemorate and celebrate the specific event of the weaver's victory over the mill owners in July 1856. This has developed to, in recent times, a premeditated re-enactment of the weaver's procession through Paisley town centre. In many ways, this performance is a static form of heritage which seeks to recreate the past, through

reacting and performance, rather than reinterpreting the past, or critically evaluating how the past can inform the future.

Moreover, 'The Big Meeting' at Durham tends to be outward looking in its approach, exalting international socialist principles. These principles were illuminated when in 2011, the Durham Miners' Association invited two Chilean miners, Carlos Barrios Contrera and Carlos Bugueno Alfara, who survived underground for sixty-nine days, following the collapse of the San Jose mine, in northern Chile, as guests of honour.¹⁰⁶ The view of the Miners' Gala as an event which was confident in promoting international solidarity was emphasised at the 2015 gathering when then Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, used the main platform to express a shift in the Labour Party's position on migration policy, as he outlined: 'There is no way forward in blaming migrants and minorities for our problems; the only way forward is unity in struggle.'¹⁰⁷ It was a clear message which disavowed the divisive politics of racial prejudice whilst promoting international class solidarity. In contrast, Sma' Shot Day has a more local, community atmosphere. It does not attract the attention of national politicians or trade unionists, with only a small proportion of the event allocated for contributions to be delivered by a couple of local trade union activists.

Most activities included in the programme for Sma' Shot Day are focused on making the event an accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable experience for families. For example, the schedule for 2019 Sma' Shot Day featured children's face painting, children's paper craft activities, calligraphy lessons, and storytelling sessions. Maureen Taggart, who worked in various jobs in Anchor Mill in the early 1970s, and still lives in Paisley, described her view on Sma' Shot Day when asked if she continues to attend the celebrations: 'I do, yes. [...] Aye, well it was, I think the weather stayed quite nice for it. It had been raining the day before and it wis a bit of a... The kids like it and aww the different food and things like that.'¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁶ 'Chilean mine survivors will be guests at Durham gala', *The Guardian*, 8 July 2011, p.22.

¹⁰⁷ Kieran Dodds, "'The Past we inherit, the Future we build': Lessons from the Durham Miners' Gala', *New Socialist*, 12 July 2017. Available here: <https://newsocialist.org.uk/lessons-from-dmg/>. Accessed on 4 November 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Maureen Taggart, Interviewed on 29 July 2019 by Rory Stride.

perception of school children as being central to Sma' Shot Day was described by Barbara Anderson, former cheese-winder at Ferguslie Mill:

It [Sma' Shot Day] does it justice. It really and truly does. And tae see the wee kiddies up on the stage acting through the part of the weavers, do you know what I mean? When they worked for a shilling and a wee tanner here. You know, the way the kid dae it, you know I've watched it all, I've been there and watched it. And I think tae myself "Oh goodness. I'm so proud of the kids." I really and truly am. I'll not go deep into it because I'll start crying again [laughter] But aye, there's a lot of talent and it does... It's lovely tae see.¹⁰⁹

There is a sense that the central inclusion of the children in the events of Sma' Shot Day is essential to both its purpose and its success. For locals, the day provides an opportunity for the town to keep the memory of the 1856 weavers' revolt alive and central in collective consciousness, therefore the use of school children helps to solidify the succession of the cultural memory by educating the next generation of the event through their immersive participation in the celebrations. The role of school children frames the event as an accessible, inclusive cultural event which unites the community in their commemoration of the weaver's victory, rather than a political event which may limit its appeal. However, the approach taken with Sma' Shot Day has helped to embed the popular memory of the 1856 weaver's revolt on residents of Paisley, contributing to keeping the story of the events 'alive' and relevant.

The Sma' Shot Day celebrations are a crucial act of intangible cultural heritage which memorialises the weaver's iconic victory over their bosses in 1856. The recreation of the weaver's march through Paisley, led by the Charleston drummer, is theatrical, contributing to a positive atmosphere in the streets as people wait for the arrival of the procession. The performance climaxes with the most dramatic act: the burning of the cork. This event captures the pantomime atmosphere as children and parents joyously cheer the villain of this piece of theatre: the mill managers. The inclusion of many school children, both formally in the procession and informally through attending the various activities which are hosted as part of the day,

¹⁰⁹ Barbara Anderson, Interviewed on 27 January 2021 by Rory Stride.

contribute to the feeling that the event is a benign community celebration akin to a community fair, rather than a political celebration of a historic victory for workers who effectively organised against their bosses, and won. However, the celebrations are solely focused on this one event rather than acting as a holistic critical, cultural reflection of Paisley's industrial heritage. It seems to be a lost opportunity to more actively challenge the authorised heritage discourse that former mill workers experiences are not included in the programme of events and there is no scope for exploring the Sma' Shot dispute within the wider context of the mills. However, in the context of the continuing gradual erosion of physical, tangible aspects of industrial history, a process Tovar describes as 'the oblivion of workers' cultural heritage', Sma' Shot Day, as a form of intangible cultural heritage, is more pertinent and important than ever as a celebration of local identity rooted in the narrative of working-class struggle.¹¹⁰ From its re-emergence in 1986, to securing its status as the centrepiece in Paisley's cultural calendar, Sma' Shot Day has clearly been a powerful force of intangible heritage which has had an anchoring effect on the town's residents, helping to construct the town's identity and community pride, whilst securing the town's status as a former global centre of textile production.

Cultural Representations

In representing the past, popular culture in the form of plays, movies, and television are important tools in constructing the hegemonic popular narratives of the past. In studying the erasure of women's work on the Home Front during World War One, Summerfield developed the framework of the 'cultural circuit' which she used to explain how the hegemonic narratives in relation to episodes in history are influenced by the public discourse which is consumed through depiction of these events in popular culture. She highlighted the example of oral history research conducted by Thomson who interviewed ANZAC veterans of World War One shortly after the release of the film 'Gallipoli'. In the oral history interviews, Thomson found that the veterans were retelling, with great detail, scenes from the

¹¹⁰ Francisco Jose Tovar, et al, 'A tale of two cities: working class identity, industrial relations and community in declining textile and shoe industries in Spain', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol.17, no.4, (2011), p.339.

film 'Gallipoli' as if it was a first-hand experience they were articulating from their own memory, which highlighted the high degree to which personal memories are influenced by popular culture.¹¹¹ In the case of women's work during World War One, Summerfield found that women did not have a cultural reference point which reflected their lived experiences. For example, Summerfield highlighted that in the eighty episodes of *Dad's Army* between 1968 and 1977, women only feature in subsidiary roles as wives and girlfriends, with the only one exception being an episode in 1970 which focused exclusively on Women Home Guard Auxiliaries.¹¹² In turn, this made it difficult for women to articulate their experiences as their memory appeared to contradict cultural representations of the Home Guard. Moreover, these women feared being challenged, mocked, or accused of falsehoods if they shared their experiences as they would be perceived as unrecognisable as they are not represented in popular culture representations of that episode of history.¹¹³

Therefore, it is critical to examine how working-class women who worked in the textile industry have been represented in popular culture depictions of everyday lives in industrial communities in west-central Scotland. In the second half of the twentieth century, the lives of working-class people in communities have been the central character in popular cultural depictions of everyday life in Scotland, including a focus on their industrial working lives. Some examples have been critically acclaimed in cultural circuits and achieved international success, whilst other examples have experienced strong regional support. Arguably the most notable example was the portrayal of the Stoddards Carpetfield site, which was captured by Scottish playwright, John Byrne, in his trilogy of plays, *The Slab Boys*.¹¹⁴ These plays were set in the fictional carpet manufactures, A. F Stobo & Co in Paisley, acting as a synonym for A. F. Stoddard & Company based in Elderslie, where playwright John Byrne worked. The trilogy is set in the late 1950s and focuses specifically on the experience of three main protagonists, apprentice designers named

¹¹¹ Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Journal of the Social History Society*, vol.1, no.1, (2004), p.68.

¹¹² Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', p.87.

¹¹³ Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', p.87.

¹¹⁴ The Slab Boys Trilogy is comprised of three plays: 'The Slab Boys' (1978), 'Cuttin' a Rug' (1979), and 'Still Life' (1982). The trilogy is collected referred to as *The Slab Boys*.

Hector, Phil, and Spanky, as they go about their daily toil in the factory's 'the slab room', mixing colours for use in the design department. The play was an international success, enjoying a run as a Broadway production at the Playhouse Theatre in New York in 1983, starring celebrated actors Kevin Bacon and Sean Penn.

The Slab Boys depicts working-class culture in an industrial town in west-central Scotland during late 1950s/early 1960s.¹¹⁵ The trilogy provides a useful insight into workplace culture through its exploration of workers personal interactions with one another, but it does not seek to offer a critical analysis of work. Yet it does grapple with difficult, and often stigmatised, social issues which are encountered by working-class people daily as described by *Slab Boys* director, David Hayman: 'I think *Slab Boys* is a timeless piece. I think you could set it in any working-class culture, anywhere in the world and it would still resonate. People would still empathise with it because it's a universal story.'¹¹⁶ This was illuminated in the first of the trilogy which included subplots which explored taboo issues including Phil's mother being hospitalised in an asylum after experiencing poor mental health; one of the factory's tea-ladies, Sadie, discussing her recovery from a mastectomy; and revelations that Hector had previously attempted suicide.

In the cultural circuit, the success of *The Slab Boys* helped to embed Stoddard Carpets as one of the most well-known and celebrated institutions in Scottish industrial life. However, for a workplace which had a high proportion of women working in the manufacturing of carpets, it is notable that the two women in *The Slab Boys* are portrayed in a stereotypical and sexist manner, reflecting the endemic misogynistic social attitudes in west-central Scotland in the early 1970s when the play was written. The most prominent woman featured in the play is Lucille Bentley, who works as a sketcher in the design department. In the playwriting, the primary function of the character of Lucille appears to be as a woman to cause a competitive challenge for the men working in the slab room as she is regularly lauded for her attractiveness and draws the interest of all the slab boys who wish to take her on a

¹¹⁵ John Byrne, *The Slab Boys*, (London: Penguin Press, 1987).

¹¹⁶ Citizens Theatre, 'John Byrne and David Hayman on *The Slab Boys*', Youtube video, 5:16. Accessed on 24 January 2022. Available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djiDhvO6f00>.

date. Yet, Lucille's character remains superficial with the play never seeking to uncover more of her life story, with the focus of her character fixated on her attractive appearance. Moreover, the second woman in the play, Sadie, is depicted as an older matriarchal figure who passes on nuggets of wisdom to the young slab boys and Lucille, whilst occupying a lowly paid hospitality job as the factory tea lady. This is a surprising artistic decision given Byrne's first-hand experience working in Stoddard Carpets as he would have been familiar with the high proportion of women who worked in manual industrial jobs in the carpet factory.

In Glasgow, the city's long industrial heritage in the collective consciousness is intrinsically linked with male heavy industry because of the city's celebrated shipbuilding industry and iconic heavy engineering works such as the St Rollox railway works, the Parkhead Forge, and Weirs Pumps. This hegemonic conception of industrial heritage has been reflected in cultural representations of working-class lives in Glasgow throughout the twentieth century, resulting in very few cultural representations of working-class women. However, the most notable example is the play, *The Steamie*, which centres around a group of working-class women in Glasgow washing their clothes in a public washhouse (colloquially known as a steamie) on Hogmanay 1950.¹¹⁷ The original production was performed at the Crawfurd Theatre in the north-west of Glasgow in 1987 before being adapted into a televised format which was aired on Scottish Television (STV) on Hogmanay 1988. The narrative of the play centres on the conversations and camaraderie of the women who are in the steamie and in this sense the plot is mundane as there is no dramatic action, but the success of the play is how it explores the intersubjectivity between the four women protagonists. Interestingly, the playwright Tony Roper stated that all major theatres in Scotland had previously rejected the script because "nothing happened in it".¹¹⁸ In *The Steamie*, Roper vividly captured the personality of working-class women in the 1950s and it resonated with Scottish audiences who could, for the first time, see people who looked like and sounded like themselves and

¹¹⁷ Tony Roper, *The Steamie*, (Kirkintiloch: Field Illeray Productions, 1987).

¹¹⁸ Brian Beacom, 'Tony Roper, Elaine C Smith and Dorothy Paul on 30 Years of theatrical hit "The Steamie"', *The Glasgow Herald*, (21 October 2017). Accessed on 28 January 2022. Available here: https://www.heraldsotland.com/life_style/arts_ents/15611698.tony-roper-elaine-c-smith-dorothy-paul-30-years-theatrical-hit-steamie/.

their mums, aunts, and grans reflected in the culture they were consuming. In the cultural circuit, *The Steamie* was empowering as it served to validate the everyday experience of working-class women as meaningful and worthy of recognition. Yet, this representation only explored one aspect of the dual domestic and public spheres which working-class women inhabited during the 1950s. The play is constrained to one location, the washroom, situating these women in a public space but performing their labour-intensive domestic duties, reflective of the patriarchal society of the 1950s in which women were tasked, overwhelmingly, with the double burden of unpaid domestic labour – such as washing, cleaning, cooking – in addition to their paid employment during significant spells of their lives. The dialogue between the protagonists is authentic with the women speaking in a thick Glaswegian vernacular and centres around their shared experiences, focusing on their children, their husbands, and local community gossip. However, the lack of discussion about their experience of employment and their workforce seems like a clear omission.

Following the success of *The Steamie*, working-class life in Glasgow was again the crucible for one of the set-piece events to mark Glasgow's year as European City of Culture, Bill Bryden's production, *The Ship*. Uniquely, *The Ship*, was not performed in a theatre but was hosted in the disused engine shed of the former Harland & Wolf shipyard in Govan, situated on the south-west banks of the upper Clyde. This was a dramatic, immersive, and innovative piece of art with the audience witnessing the construction of a ship which was then 'launched' at the end of the performance. The setting was 1950s Glasgow and the narrative focused on the shipbuilders' anxieties that this ship would be the last that they would construct before the shipyard closed. It depicted working-class life in Glasgow during the 1950s exclusively from the perspective of industrial working men. Notably, contrary to the narrative of the play, at the time of its production less than one mile from the Harland & Wolff engine shed, shipbuilding in Govan had only recently received a significant investment in funding which contributed to the continuation of shipbuilding in Govan into the twenty-first century. Following the takeover of Govan Shipbuilders by Norwegian group Kvaerner, an estimated £30 million was invested into Fairfield shipyard,

Govan and between 1991 and 2000, the yard manufactured nineteen vessels.¹¹⁹ In his reflection on the performance, Bellamy stated: ‘The setting was evocative and the special effects impressive, with part of the stage set being “launched” as the finale, but essentially the play was pure wallowing in nostalgia.’¹²⁰

Towards the end of the play, a foreman laments: ‘It’s no just the yards, it’s the people. What are folk gonnae do? We can’t all make computers or brassieres or witever it is they get up tae in these new industrial estates.’¹²¹ In response, the shipyard manager quips: ‘Aye, you can write your memoirs: ‘From Launch to Lingerie: The Life of George Baird’.¹²² This is a revealing piece of dialogue in the distinction that is made between heavy engineering, such as shipbuilding, which is classified as a skilled, meaningful form of work, and work in the textile industry, such as a lingerie factory, which is classified as mundane and low skilled. The statement that ‘we can’t all make computers or brassieres’ is not classifying the making of brassieres to be too skilled and intensive for ‘everyone’ to do, but rather a critical and condescending statement that work in a lingerie factory would be demeaning, unskilled and not sufficiently remunerated to be an enjoyable place of work for skilled shipyard workers who considered themselves as members of the labour aristocracy. It is clear, whether conscious or unconscious, there is a sexist implication that working in a lingerie factory is women’s work and therefore the work and remuneration would not be benefitting of the status of a former shipyard worker. The play was performed in 1990 but it is impossible to decipher if this exchange was reflective of playwright, Bill Brydon’s unconscious beliefs or if it was a piece of dialogue written in an attempt to provide an authentic, reflective discussion of the prevailing attitudes of working-class men in late 1950s Glasgow. Ultimately, *The Ship* was a nostalgic meditation on the loss of shipbuilding in

¹¹⁹ Kvaerne Govan Ltd, ‘Scottish Built Ships’, Caledonian Maritime Research Trust. Accessed on 12 January 2022. Available here: <https://www.clydeships.co.uk/>.

¹²⁰ Martin Bellamy, ‘Shipbuilding and cultural identity on Clydeside’, *Maritime Research*, vol.8, no.1, (2006), p.24.

¹²¹ Meridian, ‘Glasgow – European Capital of Culture’, (21 September 1990). Produced by BBC World Service, 28:56. Accessed on 14 January 2022. Available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p03m0sxv>.

¹²² Meridian, ‘Glasgow– European Capital of Culture’, (21 September 1990).’

Glasgow, which aimed to situate the industry's decline within a wider economic shift as the region experienced deepening deindustrialisation.

Whilst *The Ship* was heralded as one of the defining, centrepiece cultural events of Glasgow's year as European City of Culture, in the east-end of the city a significantly smaller production about women textile workers garnered attention in working-class communities and among leftist activists. *The Last Threads* was a play written by a Glasgow weaver, Ann Kerr, who worked in one of the city's last remaining weaving factories.¹²³ The play is set in 1986 in the William Hollins weaving mill in the city's Bridgeton district, a traditionally industrial working-class community, with the women's toilet and the factory canteen serving as the two primary locations within the factory. The play centres around the experience of working-class women weavers in the period surrounding an announcement by company executives that the factory is facing imminent closure. Throughout the play the narrative dialogue reflects the camaraderie, intensity, and anxieties of work in an industrial factory which is on the precipice of closure and notably, the dialogue is written in the Glaswegian vernacular. In doing so, Kerr provides an accurate representation of how working-class women in weaving mills across Glasgow conversed with one another, adding an additional layer of authenticity to the depiction of the weaving shed. Of course, Ann Kerr's experience of working as a weaver in the William Hollins weaving factory provides strong legitimacy to her representation of the factory as she is an 'insider' with first-hand experience, rather than an 'outsider' playwright who had to reconstruct the atmosphere, culture, and dialogue of weavers based on secondary information. Below is a short extract from *The Last Threads* where the women are discussing how to oppose the looming closure of William Hollins.

¹²³ Ann Kerr, *The Last Threads: Life in a Glasgow Weaving Mill*, (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1990).

Act Two, Scene Three:

Jackie: (*She shouts in anger.*) Yir right, why bother. There's only about, whit, a hunnir an' fifty losin' their joabs, flung on the scrap heap. Disn'ae matter a shit. (*She sits down. She is drained and apologetically looks up at her friends.*) I'm sorry Fae, I didn'ae mean tae shout at yi. It's jist... I'm that bloody sick about it aw. Maybe I would feel better if we went doon fightin'.

Janette: I think you're talkin' a lot of good sense, Jackie.

Jackie: (*She laughs.*) Thanks, Janette.

Janette: Yi never know. If we put up a fight, they might keep the mill open.

Fae: I think it's a wee bit late fur that, Janette.

Jackie: Maybe. But I think we start usin that "Backbone" Bella spoke about. Bella talked wae pride about her generation. The gumption they hud. Whose gonni talk about us wae pride??? We owe it tae Bella an' the likes ae her tae use wur good Scottish tongue.

Margaret: And wursel's

Ginty: Hear, hear!!!!

ALL: Hear, hear!!!!

Fae: Whit wiz it Bella called it? Self respect, pride, aye, we'll show the swines.

Margaret: Well, in ma humble opinion. I think they wanted shot ae us Glesca Weavers.

Fae: A, c'mon, Maggie, I think yir missin' the beam there!

Jackie: Naw, haud the ba'!!! She might hiv a point there. Sister, the chair is yours.

Margaret: Thank you. Well, as I was sayin', (*She clears her throat.*) William Hollins became merr ae an English firm wae they conglomerations/

Jackie: Amalgamations!!

Margaret: O.K, smart arse. Anyway, where ur aw the heid offices noo?

Jackie: England?

Margaret: Where ur aw the looms going'?

Ginty: England?

Margaret: I'm certainly not the brightest among yiz, an' there's a lot ae stuff I don't know, but, diz it no make yi wonder? (*They all nod in agreement.*) I know I'm only back a couple a weeks but I'm part a the mill!

Ginty: We aw ur!!

Fae: I've never thought about it, but see, when yi put it like that, yi're right. It jist shows how yi take somethin' fur granted. Here I've been part ae the mill, and aw yooz, fur maist ae ma life an' never thought about it twice. Christ, whit a time tae realise it!!! They've took somethin' away fae me, an' I jist fun oot I hud it. (*She begins to cry.*)

Jackie: Aye, they're takin' something' away fae us, aw right! Somethin' that's oors. An' we've the right tae keep it. William Hollins is the last mill in Glesca. Why should we gie them it on a silver platter?

Ginty: Aye, why should we?

Margaret: That's right! Lets gie the bastards a run fur their money.

Source: Ann Kerr, *The Last Threads: Life in a Glasgow Weaving Mill*, (Glasgow: Clydeside Press, 1990), pp.61-63.

The decision by Kerr to use the Glaswegian vernacular serves as a conscious and direct challenge to the authorised heritage discourse as it serves to provide an authentic, relatable representation of working-class women, and in doing so, contributing to a democratisation of culture. Despite Glasgow's status as European City of Culture the performance of *The Last Threads* did not receive coverage in the culture sections of the major newspapers. However, the play received positive coverage in *The Glasgow Keelie*, an independent, radical publication which emerged from the Workers' City activist group which offered a critical, anti-capitalist opposition to the cultural regeneration associated with Glasgow's position of European City of Culture 1990. *The Glasgow Keelie* reported on the annual May Day celebrations in Glasgow, which was concluded by an evening performance of *The Last Threads*: 'Ann Kerr's bawdy and hard-hitting play, *The Last Threads*, about the end of the weaving industry in Glasgow. Performed by Ann and other ex-mill workers with help from Dorothy Paul and Alien Arts. It went down a storm with the audience, which included many old Calton and Bridgeton weavers.'¹²⁴

The Last Threads emerged in the context of the countercultural Worker's City movement which critically opposed Glasgow's status as European City of Culture 1990. In contrast, *The Ship* was one of the centrepiece cultural events which was

¹²⁴ 'The Dear Green Place', *The Glasgow Keelie*, No.2, (May 1990), p.1. Accessed on 8 January 2021. Available here: <http://www.workerscity.org/>.

officially commissioned for the European City of Culture. It was written by the acclaimed Scottish playwright Bill Bryden and was generally positively reviewed by middle-class culture critics due to its artistically immersive stage design. In this sense, *The Ship* existed within the authorised heritage discourse as at its heart, it presented a narrative that correlated with what the organisers of Glasgow 1990 wished to present to the world: Glasgow is a city with a proud industrial history but throughout the second half of the twentieth century, whilst the city had experienced significant industrial loss, it had successfully transitioned to be a modern, post-industrial city. In stark contrast, *The Last Threads* was written by a working-class woman, Ann Kerr, who was a weaver – not a professional artist. The target audience was not art critics in London-based broadsheet newspapers. The success of *The Last Threads* was in achieving resonance with working-class communities, particularly in the east-end of Glasgow like Bridgeton, Calton, and Dalmarnock, which had long, deep connections with the textile industry. *The Last Threads* challenged the authorised heritage discourse as it presented a version of Glasgow that did not align with the carefully crafted vision that Glasgow 1990 sought to present to the world. It was a cultural antidote to *The Ship*. Rather than wallow in nostalgia, the play presented the reality of working-class communities across Glasgow in 1990: women engaged in the labour process in the textile industry, fighting to oppose factory closures and faced with the reality of redundancy.

Into the twenty-first century, on television *River City* and *Still Game* have secured their status as the most successful and popular television programmes based in Scotland. Since debuting on BBC Scotland in 2002, *Still Game* was won six BAFTA Scotland awards, as well as being nominated in the ‘Best Sitcom’ category at the prestigious, internationally renowned Rose D’or awards. In the same period, *River City*, Scotland’s only soap opera, has secured four BAFTA Scotland nominations and won one Scottish Variety Award. These programmes are set in fictional areas of Glasgow - Craighlang (*Still Game*) and Shieldinch (*River City*) – and construct their community identity from the industrial heritage of Clydeside, particularly from shipbuilding. In *River City*, the most notable example is the local pub, named ‘The Tall Ship’, a reference to the city’s heritage of shipbuilding on the river Clyde. In

studying the enduring legacy of shipbuilding in the cultural identity of Clydeside, Bellamy highlighted *River City* as a prominent example, describing: ‘Turn on your television and you can watch River City, a soap opera set in an old shipbuilding community. It features a boatyard; one of its main characters is an ex-shipyard worker and the first episode quoted from Jimmy Reid’s famous UCS speech.’¹²⁵

In *Still Game*, the references are more subtle as the sitcom’s main characters are pensioners and therefore there is little direct conversation or references to their working lives. Yet one vivid example is portrayed when Winston attempts to help protagonists, Jack and Victor, redecorate their neighbour Isa’s flat. In the bathroom, Winston attempts to fix a leak in the shower and upon inspecting the shower facet, he states: ‘It’s nae big deal that. See aww that there is just a coupling. It’s just became uncoupled. Panic merchants. [points to himself] Thirty-five years a Clyde fitter.’¹²⁶ In describing himself as an experienced ‘Clyde fitter’, Winston is referring to his extensive experience ‘fitting out’ ships during his working life in the shipyards along the river Clyde. Furthermore, another subtle connection to shipbuilding is evident in the local pub, The Clansman, where the walls are decorated with numerous, non-descript black-and-white photographs of ships under construction, ships being launched, empty graving docks, and shipyard cranes. Therefore, it is unsurprising that in his study of shipbuilding and the cultivation of cultural identity, Bellamy concluded: ‘There are certainly many small communities around the world whose identity is entirely wrapped up with the local shipyard. But there appears to be no other major industrial centre than Clydeside where shipbuilding played such an important role in creating a cultural identity or where the industry inspired such a great flowering of shipyard art and literature.’¹²⁷

Moreover, the rendering of Craighlang as an industrial community is deepened in latter series as the show developed. When the future of The Clansman is threatened by a local property developer, Jack and Victor befriend the property developer,

¹²⁵ Bellamy, ‘Shipbuilding and cultural identity on Clydeside’, p.26.

¹²⁶ *Still Game*, series 5 episode 2, ‘Fresh Lick’, Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill. First aired: 26 June 2006, BBC Two.

¹²⁷ Bellamy, ‘Shipbuilding and Cultural Identity on Clydeside’, p.29.

Chris, to persuade him against demolishing the pub.¹²⁸ In response, Chris explains that he plans to build a row of cottages on the site of the pub in memory of his mum, Jenny Turnbull, who lived in one of the miner's cottages which previously occupied the site. Initially, this small storyline may appear inconsequential, but it is crucially important in the layering of Craighlang, adding greater authenticity and depth to the fictional town's narrative as it provides longevity to its industrial heritage.

In both programmes, the writers have made a concerted effort to integrate male-dominated industrial work such as shipbuilding and coalmining to obtain credibility in their portrayal of the "real Glasgow". Yet, there is no reference to the garment factories, textile mills, or women who worked in the textile industry. In this sense, cultural representations of Glasgow - and more broadly west-central Scotland - have contributed to a forced erasure of working-class women's history as textile workers who had agency and an identity beyond the traditional domestic sphere as mothers, wives, grans, sisters, and aunts. There is an acute awareness, and concern, about the textile industry in greater Glasgow being subject to forced forgetting in the public consciousness due to the industry being dominated by women. This was captured by Alison Anderson when reflecting on how the textile industry is remembered:

It's something I talk tae mines about but it's definitely noo something that I think will be spoke about. It's away noo and I think it has been forgotten unfortunately. Maybe because it was more like a, it wisnae a male dominated thing. I'm noo sayin' that in a sexist thing but it wis woman that worked in it. But as you say, the coal industry, aww that industry there is still talked about but the textile industry, naa.¹²⁹

In contrast to Glasgow, the textile industry has been incorporated as a central feature of life in dramatized depictions of England. This is most notable in *Coronation Street*, consistently one of the most popular soap operas in Britain since it was first televised in 1960. The programme depicts an archetypal imagined working-class town of Weatherfield, located on the outskirts of Manchester – loosely based on Salford - with its cobbled streets, red-brick terrace housing, a pub which acts as the

¹²⁸ *Still Game*, series 4 episode 6, 'Who's the Daddy', Ford Kiernan and Greg Hemphill. First aired: 26 August 2005, BBC Two.

¹²⁹ Alison Anderson, Interviewed on 16 July 2019 by Rory Stride.

primary social locus of the community, and a local convenience store.¹³⁰ In addition, across the lifetime of *Coronation Street*, the show featured several textile factories which served as a key employer for the local residents, situating it at the centre of the imagined community. In the years between 1976 and 1989, Baldwin's Casual was the primary textile company in Weatherfield where many of the most prominent women were employed as machine operators, such as Ida Clough, Vera Duckworth, and Ivy Tilsley. In 1990, following the closure of Baldwin's Casuals, a new textile company was integrated into *Coronation Street*, Ingram's Textiles but the venture only lasted one year. Since 1998, a lingerie factory, Underworld, has secured its status as the textile institution in Weatherfield, acting as a significant source of employment for residents, particularly among the programme's most senior, recognisable women including Janice Battersby, Fiz Brown, and Sally Webster. The inside of the factory is commonly utilised as a filming location in the programme, and although there is no critical analysis of the labour process or working conditions, it provides a rare and illuminating depiction of women working as machinists in a textile factory. It is striking because it is uncommon for depictions of working-class women in British dramas, sitcoms, and soap operas to explore and display their identity and livelihoods beyond their domestic sphere.

On a smaller scale, the BBC drama *Clocking Off* provides another notable example which explores the lives of working-class women who are employed in a textile factory, which, like *Coronation Street*, is based in Manchester. The programme was commissioned for four series which aired between 2000 and 2003. Despite lacking the longevity of the indefatigable *Coronation Street*, *Clocking Off* received positive response from critics, winning a BAFTA for Best Drama Series in 2001.¹³¹ The Mackintosh bed linen textile factory served as the locus of the drama with the concept centred on the premise that outside of the workplace people who you think you know well are often living hidden lives. The narrative of the programme shifts from character to character in each episode, individually exploring their lives when they 'clock out' of their work in the textile factory. Although the textile factory is the

¹³⁰ *Coronation Street*, created by Tony Warren. First aired on 9 December 1960 by ITV.

¹³¹ BBC News, 'The 2001 Bafta award winners', (13 May 2001). Accessed on 7 February 2022. Available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/1328946.stm>.

locus of the drama, it provides a useful, contained environment around which the narrative of each character can be developed and explored. In some respects, the fact that the workplace is a textile factory is irrelevant as *Clocking Out* does not focus on the women's working lives in the textile factory but rather, the premise of the programme is centred around their lives outside of the factory. Yet, in another respect, the decision by writer Paul Abbot to choose a textile factory as the workplace setting is instructive of the reality that the textile industry is perceived as a symbol of the archetypal industrial workplace in Manchester – especially for women – and therefore, is an appropriate setting as it provides depth to the drama, adding authenticity and legitimacy to its narrative.

In Manchester, the textile industry is the industrial icon of the city, akin to Glasgow's indissoluble link with shipbuilding, due to the city's long lineage with the industry stretching back to the late eighteenth century when Richard Arkwright opened the first steam powered textile mill in the city and throughout the nineteenth century when Manchester secured its status as 'Cottonopolis'. In this respect, the textile industry is more deeply embedded in the cultural heritage and identity of Manchester than is experienced in Glasgow, where shipbuilding and the other male dominated forms of heavy engineering remain the prevailing symbol of the city's industrial heritage, whilst the textile industry has been relegated to an ancillary industry of low skill and low status, and therefore unworthy of being reflected in the authorised cultural circuit.

These cultural representations reveal how deeply embedded the hegemonic narrative that industrial work in Glasgow was overwhelmingly male-dominated and was centred around shipbuilding and other forms of heavy engineering. The cultural circuit reinforces this hegemonic narrative with one notable exception. Ann Kerr's *The Last Threads* acts as a necessary, albeit solitary, counterweight which challenged the authorised heritage discourse of Glasgow by highlighting that in 1990, working-class women across Glasgow were still working in the textile industry and facing the reality of accelerating deindustrialisation as factory after factory was served notices of closure. In the context of Scottish industrial heritage, the cultural circuit has

contributed to the erasure of working-class women's role as industrial workers in the textile sector and their experiences of deindustrialisation in the sector, which was particularly heightened during the 1990s. Summerfield stated 'Ordinary people who have memories that do not fit publicly available accounts have difficulty finding words and concepts with which to compose their memories, whether in anecdotal snapshots or extended narratives.'¹³² Working-class textile workers in Clydeside have all too rarely witnessed their lived experience be being reflected in the popular culture. Critically, this has contributed significantly to former textile workers subconsciously delegitimising and devaluing their status as industrial workers who experienced the same trauma of deindustrialisation as male industrial workers in coalmines, shipyards, and steelworks across the west-central Scotland during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored how 'the past' is represented in relation to the textile industry, working-class women who dominated the sector, and experience of deindustrialisation within hegemonic conceptualisations of Scotland as an industrial nation. The chapter started by assessing the redevelopment of the Anchor Mill, including the Domestic Finishing Mill and the Mile End Mill, and how they serve as important, tangible symbols of the town's textile heritage. The celebration of the Domestic Finishing Mill and Mile End Mill are framed through the authorised heritage discourse: their value rooted in their monumentality, their beauty, and their longevity, rather than as important sites where generations of working-class people engaged in the labour process, contributing to the industry that has, in many respects, defined the town's identity for the last two centuries. It is notable that Ferguslie Mill experienced a very different fortune to Anchor Mill despite being similarly lauded as a building of national significance, recognised for its impressive, distinct architecture, and supported by the local heritage organisation, the Old Paisley Society. In the oral history testimonies, there was a clear expression that the demolition of Ferguslie Mill, whilst Anchor Mill has largely been redeveloped, has

¹³² Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure', p.92.

contributed to a forced forgetting. Gradually, the distinct history of Ferguslie Mill has been eroded from the dominant narrative of the Paisley thread industry. In the absence of a formal heritage institution to share the history of Ferguslie Mills, its invisibility has resulted in Anchor Mills subsuming the larger history of the town as a centre for thread manufacture as its continuing visibility in the townscape is perceived as the defining symbol of the town's identity.

In Paisley, the redeveloped mills stand as monuments which root the town to its industrial heritage. In this spirit, the Job Centre which sits on the site of the former D&H Cohen, latterly Claremont Garments, clothing factory, serves as a legacy to the tens of thousands of jobs in textile manufacturing which have been lost in Glasgow. In the case of Bairdwear and D&H Cohen, their manufacturing facilities were perfunctory, purpose built, utilitarian factory buildings. Following their closures, in relation to the authorised heritage discourse, these were not monumental, important buildings of national significance that needed to be protected and redeveloped. This reveals an inherent issue with the authorised heritage discourse as it assigns value to the tangible place - the physical structure – and does not recognise the importance of space. In the case of D&H Cohen, the redevelopment of the site was not sympathetic, failing to make any reference to the site as an important location in Glasgow industrial history: a place of meaning for tens of thousands of women who worked in the garment factory. It is possible to pursue regeneration whilst paying homage to the history of the site, recognising its status as a Glasgow institution which made a significant contribution to its local communities, Pollokshaws and Shawlands, during its existence. For example, the renaming of the new streets in the development on the former D&H Cohen's site or the inclusion of a small, community space which paid homage to Cohen's factory are examples of small, low-cost initiatives that would have provided for a more sympathetic, inclusive regeneration rooted in the history of local community.

In relation to cultural regeneration, Glasgow's role as European City of Culture in 1990 is considered as a seminal moment as it mainstreamed the concept of using culture as a tool for regenerating deindustrialising, economical depressed urban

areas. In essence, Glasgow 1990 aimed to cleanse the city's damaged reputation, rebranding Glasgow as a destination city: a must-visit thriving cultural hub. In doing so, the city did not embrace a 'messy heritage' approach of celebrating the more contentious, unpleasant aspects of its history which created notable, fervent dissent which coalesced its support around the Workers City collective. Also, it was problematic in its erasure of industrial Glasgow which it firmly cast as being in 'the past' despite the city's economy continuing to have a substantial industrial base, as illuminated by its still significant textile industry, the Kvaerner shipyard in Govan and the GEC Marconi Marine shipyard in Scotstoun. Although, it is unarguable that Glasgow 1990 did permanently recast outsiders' perceptions of the city, securing its status as a city celebrated for its variety of cultural institutions and its nightlife. In Paisley, its bid for UK City of Culture 2021, inspired by the memory of Glasgow 1990, aimed to shift its reputation as an economically depressed, deindustrialising town grappling with complex social issues. Yet, its approach was open to the same critiques aimed at Glasgow almost three decades earlier, most prominently, its focus on shifting external perspectives on the town, rather than improving the lives for the town's residents, including its former mill workers. In this approach, the Paisley 2021 bid failed to mainstream the town's profoundly complex and difficult experience of deindustrialisation, or the lived experience of the tens of thousands of workers employed at Anchor Mills and Ferguslie Mills throughout the second half of the twentieth century. Rather, the history of Anchor Mills and Ferguslie Mills were situated in the context of Paisley's more extensive textile heritage and within the celebration of the philanthropic contribution of the mill-owning Coats and Clarks families to Paisley.

One central component of the Paisley 2021 Bid was the significant redevelopment of the town's primary civic institution, the Paisley Museum. The Museum is not due to reopen until 2025 which makes it difficult to assess how it represents Paisley's modern industrial heritage: the textile industry in the twentieth century, women's working lives in the mills, and narratives of deindustrialisation and its ongoing impact. In Glasgow, the People's Palace serves as the dedicated social history museum for the city, funded by Glasgow City Council, which has challenged the

authorised heritage discourse by celebrating subaltern forms of heritage, most prominently the lived experiences of working-class Glaswegians throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. In more recent times, the debates surrounding its funding and future viability reflects the sense that, despite being a much loved and critical institution, aspects of the museum have become outdated, and it does not provide space for exploring the decimation of the city's textile industry from the 1990s onwards and the impact on the women who worked in the factories when they closed. This is particularly surprising given the proximity, literally a stone's throw, between the People's Palace and the iconic former Templeton's carpet-making factory.

In response to the lack of representation in civic museums, community museums, led by volunteers, have aimed to reshape the narrative, providing space for representation and critical analysis of the textile industry. In Paisley, the Thread Mill Museum, situated in the Mile End Mill provides a small exhibition space with old machinery and glass cabinets displaying Coats related ephemera. It is an important community space which memorialises the Anchor Mills and Ferguslie Mills, but it is limited in scope and critical engagement, serving more as a potted history of the mills with glimpses into the labour process of the mid twentieth century. Moreover, the Thread Mill Museum has developed guided walking tours of both Anchor Mills and Ferguslie Mills, as well as hosting its own archive. The museum's focus on democratising history through making the study of the past more accessible and inclusive is a critical act which challenges the authorised heritage discourse by seeking to reshape hegemonic understandings of the role of working-class women in Scottish society and their centrality to the industrial economy throughout the twentieth century. Furthermore, Sma' Shot Day serves as an important act of intangible cultural heritage and its resurrection in 1986, after almost seventy years, has resulted in the day occupying a key date in Paisley's cultural calendar, as it provides an outlet for expressing community solidarity and municipal pride.

The construction of hegemonic conceptions of the past are then reflected in cultural representations on stage and on the screen, and ultimately, these hegemonic

conceptions are reinforced and entrenched through the cultural circuit. Therefore, cultural representations of working-class life and industrial employment in the west of Scotland have marginalised the role of women in industrial work throughout the second half of the twentieth century. This was best captured during Glasgow's reign as European City of Culture in 1990 when *The Ship*, a play centred around the decline of shipbuilding in Glasgow during the 1950s, was a largescale production, serving as the centrepiece for Glasgow 1990, whilst in the east-end of Glasgow, *The Last Threads*, centred around the closure of the William Hollins weaving mill, was a grassroots production, written by a former weaver who was made unemployed when the William Hollins mill closed in 1986. Moreover, on television, popular Scottish programmes such as *River City* and *Still Game* have relied on using shipbuilding as a connection to render its imagined communities as authentic, credible portrayals of the 'real Glasgow'.

The hegemonic narrative of Scotland's industrial history has not sufficiently, or accurately, represented the important role of the textile industry as part of this story due to the industry being primarily dominated by women workers. The popular conception of Scotland as an industrial nation has centred around men and their employment in coalmining, shipbuilding, and steelworks, with these sectors serving as the symbolic industrial bastions. There has been an enduring sense that the textile industry, as it was dominated by women, was not a significant industry. Yet, as previously mentioned, Manchester's reputation as an industrial city is rooted in its nickname as 'Cottonopolis': it was a textile city. It is true that even in Paisley where the buildings of the town's thread industry are venerated for their architectural significance and aesthetic beauty as they dominate the townscape, there is little focus on the experience of the working lives of women who worked in the mills and navigated the complex and challenging experience of deindustrialisation. Therefore, in west-central Scotland, the textile industry, and the experience of women who worked in the industry, has been marginalised and treated as peripheral and subsidiary to the big three of coalmining, shipbuilding, and steelworks.

This is reflected in the cultural institutions which have not adequately mainstreamed the textile industry and women workers working lives into their exhibitions, and this has been reinforced through cultural representations, where shipbuilding occupying a protected, sacred position as the icon of industrial employment in Glasgow. Cultural representations reflect society and can lock-in hegemonic conceptions, but culture can be a platform to challenge the authorised heritage discourse by sharing a subaltern form of history to a popular audience. For example, *The Steamie* served to validate working-class women's everyday experience by casting their lives as meaningful and worthy of recognition. In this respect, it seems that a significant cultural performance, on stage on screen, could act as an important tool in reshaping popular conceptions of Scotland as an industrial nation in the twentieth century by providing a compelling depiction of working-class women's work in the textile industry. An adaptation of Ann Kerr's *The Last Threads* or a dramatisation of the jobs crisis in the textile industry, most acutely experienced in the clothing sector, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, are interesting and useful points of reference. Fundamentally, there is an urgent need to reorient our understanding of Scotland's industrial heritage to a more complex, more nuanced approach which is gender inclusive. This means recognising the role of women in the hegemonic narrative of Scotland's modern industrial heritage throughout the twentieth century, particularly in relation to the textile industry, and ensuring that the main civic museums reflect this more complicated, messier form of heritage.

CONCLUSION

In May 1999, the Scottish Parliament was reconvened for the first time since March 1707, with the newly elected 129 MSPs settling into their new role as democratically elected representatives for the nation's devolved parliament. One year later, Scotland was in the midst of a jobs crisis in the textile sector with 3,000 jobs lost between March 1999 and May 2000. In Paisley, Coats Viyella closed the historic Anchor Mill site, only to open a new thread manufacturing plant in Transylvania, Romania, whilst Claremont Garments extended its manufacturing network to Morocco after closing its factory in Pollokshaws on the southside of Glasgow. Almost a quarter of a century later, deindustrialisation continues to occupy a significant place in the popular, and political, discourse in Scotland with its impacts continuing to resonate in industrial communities across the country. In May 2023, six weeks after being elected First Minister of Scotland, Humza Yousaf delivered a keynote speech at the All-Energy Conference in Glasgow which outlined his plans to deliver a just transition for the oil and gas sector as Scotland seeks to reach net zero emissions. Speaking to the delegates in attendance at the Scottish Exhibition Centre, he asserted: 'I understand the impact that deindustrialisation had on many parts of Scotland in the 1970s and 1980s, and that impact is still felt by many former mining and steel communities to this very day.'¹ In doing so, Yousaf follows a well walked path, treading in the footsteps of his predecessor, Nicola Sturgeon, who, as Gibbs highlighted, cited her experience of witnessing the impact of deindustrialisation on communities in Ayrshire during the 1980s as a formative experience which shaped her commitment to ensure the same fate was not suffered by oil communities in Aberdeenshire.² Indeed, Sturgeon has also publicly stated that Margaret Thatcher, and her politics,

¹ David Bol, 'Yousaf warns against shutting down North Sea oil and gas sector', *The Herald*, (10 May 2023). Available here: <https://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/23512710.yousaf-warns-shutting-north-sea-oil-gas-sector/> Accessed on 12 May 2023.

² Ewan Gibbs, 'How has deindustrialisation shaped debates about Scottish independence?', *Economics Observatory*, (10 February 2022). Available here: <https://www.economicsobservatory.com/how-has-deindustrialisation-shaped-debates-about-scottish-independence>. Accessed on 8 May 2022.

were a primary motivation for her own political activism and decision to join the Scottish National Party.³

The enduring centrality of deindustrialisation to the political discourse among politicians on the centre-left is not exclusive to the Scottish National Party. For example, Richard Leonard, who led the Scottish Labour Party between 2017 and 2021, had forged an impressive career in the labour movement serving as Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress and working as a senior industrial officer for the GMB Union, prior to entering elected politics. In a profile piece with *The Scotsman*, he discussed his memories of growing up in east Yorkshire, as the son of a tailor, and witnessing the intensive deindustrialisation that ravaged industrial communities across Yorkshire throughout the 1970s and 1980s.⁴ This is revealing of the significance of deindustrialisation to both the communities grappling with its toxic legacies, and the position that deindustrialisation occupies within the Scottish national consciousness. In the communities that both the SNP and Labour consider their base - across the west of Scotland, throughout the central belt, and around the main urban centres of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee – the enduring impact of deindustrialisation is tangible and remains an everyday reality.

In their rhetoric, all three politicians – Yousaf, Sturgeon, and Leonard - deploy an orthodox definition of deindustrialisation, reflecting the hegemonic conception which is embedded in the Scottish national consciousness. It narrowly defines deindustrialisation as impacting male dominated industries, such as coalmining and steelworks during the 1970s and 1980s, whilst reinforcing the perception that the process is solely attributable to Margaret Thatcher. This is peculiar given that, arguably, the most ubiquitous image of deindustrialisation in Scotland was the closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks in 1992, followed by the demolition of its

³ ‘Sturgeon Tells SUBC: “Thatcher Motivated Me”’, *Sky News*, (8 April 2015). Available here: <https://news.sky.com/story/sturgeon-tells-subc-thatcher-motivated-me-10364432> Accessed on 2 May 2022.

⁴ ‘Interview: Scottish Labour leader Richard Leonard’, *The Scotsman*, (4 March 2018). Available here: <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/interview-scottish-labour-leader-richard-leonard-335536>. Accessed on 20 May 2022.

iconic cooling towers in 1996, several years after Thatcher had resigned as Prime Minister.

This example illuminates one of the fundamental issues that this thesis has attempted to address. We must shift the discourse away from these narrowly defined, orthodox and outdated conceptions of deindustrialisation and embrace a more amorphous, inclusive definition: one which reflects deindustrialisation's fluid, evolving nature, which embraces all workers experiences, including women's. In terms of time period, as has been highlighted by Tomlinson, among other scholars, deindustrialisation did not start with the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979, and nor did it end when she left Downing Street for the final time on 28 November 1990.⁵ Indeed, Britain's industrial employment peaked in 1955, with the number of people engaged in industrial work declining significantly from the late 1950s onwards, around a decade earlier than other European countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden.⁶ In the textile industry, as this thesis has exemplified, the most intensive phase of deindustrialisation experienced by the sector occurred during the late 1990s and early 2000s. In this respect, it is critical that deindustrialisation is not considered as 'finished'. There is no definite end point as industries do not disappear overnight. For example, forty years since the Miner's Strike in 1984/1985, organised in opposition to planned widespread closures of collieries, yet the last operating deep coal mine in Britain, Kellingley colliery in North Yorkshire did not close until December 2015.⁷ Seven years later, in December 2022, the UK Government announced, to significant controversy, the approval of the first new coalmine in Britain in thirty years. This new coalmine is to be located in Whitehaven, Cumbria, and it is estimated that it will produce around 3 million tonnes of coking coal per year for steelmaking.⁸ Of course, the proportion of the population

⁵ Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization Not Decline', *Twentieth Century British History*, pp.76-99.

⁶ Tomlinson, 'De-industrialization Not Decline', *Twentieth Century British History*, p.78.

⁷ Terry Macalister, 'Kellingley colliery closure: "shabby end" for a once mighty industry', *The Guardian*, (18 December 2015). Available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/18/kellingley-colliery-shabby-end-for-an-industry>. Accessed on 22 March 2023.

⁸ Fiona Harvey, 'UK's first new coalmine for 30 years gets go-ahead in Cumbria', *The Guardian*, (7 December 2022). Available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/dec/07/uk-first-new-coalmine-for-30-years-gets-go-ahead-in-cumbria>. Accessed on 22 March 2023.

engaged in industrial employment is a small percentage compared to its peak rates in the 1950s, or levels during the 1970s, but across the country, there remains tens of thousands of Scots engaged in industrial work.

The primary objective of this thesis was to give much needed attention to women's experiences of deindustrialisation in Scotland through the lens of the textile industry as it was the one major industrial sector that women dominated in terms of employment. It has been encouraging that in recent years, there has been a growing scholarship in the field of deindustrialisation studies which is critically examining women worker's experiences. Notable contributions include Clark's study of the women-led factory occupation movement in Scotland during the early 1980s; Bonfiglioli's seminal study of the textile industry in the Balkans; Blyton and Jenkins study of the Burberry factory in south Wales; Clarke's study of the women workers at the Moulinex factory in northern France; and Laframboise's focus on deindustrialisation in Montreal's garment industry. However, there remains so much untapped potential to explore women's experiences of industrial work, and the legacies of deindustrialisation.

In his study of the women-led factory occupations, Clark grapples with the differing levels of popular knowledge between the UCS work-in in 1971 and the factory occupations at Lee Jeans, Loveable Bra, and Plessey Capacitators that followed a decade later. In his summation, Clark states: 'The question that follows is why the occupations of 1981 and 1982 are not regarded similarly. In attempting to answer, the main conclusion I have arrived at is because the workers and their leaders were predominantly women.'⁹ In the context of the deindustrialisation of the textile industry, it is difficult to contest Clark's conclusion when comparing the differential attitude of the Labour Government to the jobs crisis in the women dominated textile industry and the challenges facing the male dominated car industry. This was best captured with the UK Government providing a £129 million rescue package for the Rover car plant in March 2000, whilst pledging less than one-tenth of that amount, £10 million, to support the textile industry which had lost 40,000 jobs alone in

⁹ Clark, 'Fighting Deindustrialisation: Scottish Women's Factory Occupations', p.218.

1999.¹⁰ It is the case that the situation facing the textile industry was complicated by the end of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement which contributed to a seismic shift to the industry's fundamental structures as companies offshored their production, relocating to nations in the global South and the former Eastern bloc. It would have been impossible for a single national Government to stem the flood of textile closures experienced during the late 1990s following the end of the MFA, however, there was an indifference in the UK Government's response. They viewed the textile closures as an inevitability, which were part of a global trend, and considered that any attempts to stop these closures would have been relatively futile. This fostered anger among many women textile workers who, although they did not blame the Labour Government for the closures, workers concluded that the Labour Government were facilitating the closures through their inactivity: their lack of substantial support, or political will, to save their textile jobs.

I do believe that the fact that the majority of the workers in the textile industry were women is an important factor which explains why their experiences are largely situated outside of hegemonic conceptions of deindustrialisation in Britain. In the words of Bairdwear worker Ruby Murray: 'We'll never get the industry saved in Britain without government intervention. And there has been no intervention because we're women.'¹¹ However, it is evident that there are several other factors which have contributed to this sense of erasure, including the period in which the jobs crisis occurred and the relative lack of visibility that the textile industry commanded. Firstly, popular conceptions of deindustrialisation are intrinsically associated with the 1980s and Margaret Thatcher's tenure as Prime Minister. In popular discourse, deindustrialisation is often discussed as an event, rather than a long, enduring process, which situates the end of the 1980s as being a definite end point for deindustrialisation. Although it should be acknowledged that this has shifted in recent years as the result of academic research permeating into the mainstream discourse which has helped to increase recognition of deindustrialisation as a prolonged process with lasting impacts.

¹⁰ Jo Dillon, 'Sacked M&S women's fury', *The Independent on Sunday*, (26 March 2000), p.4.

¹¹ Mel Steel, 'Material Witness: Gender', *The Guardian*, (16 May 2000), p.6.

As this thesis has highlighted, there was no lack of media coverage, or political debate, around the jobs crisis in the textile sector and the deluge of plant closures which defined the sector during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Yet, it is evident that this reality has failed to resonate in the public imagination to the same degree as other seismic industrial closures in Scotland such as the closure of the Linwood car plant in 1981; the closure of the Gartcosh steelworks in 1986; or the closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks in 1992. I would argue that this is, at least partly, attributable to the late 1990s and early 2000s being defined by change and modernity. The late 1990s saw Labour return to Government after eighteen years in opposition, led by the nation's youngest Prime Minister in modern history. As Prime Minister, Tony Blair spoke of a 'New Britain' as he articulated his vision for a modern, progressive future, stating: 'Modernisation is not the enemy of justice, but its ally. Progress and justice are the two rocks upon which the New Britain is raised to the heights.'¹² This was followed with a referendum on Scottish devolution, leading to the creation of the new devolved Scottish Parliament in 1999. In the new year, the celebration of the Millennium was captured by a collective national optimism, positivity, and hope for a better future. The experience of the intense deindustrialisation in the textile industry presents a problem as it counters the popular conception of the late 1990s and early 2000s as an era of modernity and progress. This was significant deindustrialisation occurring in the proclaimed era of modernity, under a centrist Labour Government – not the Conservatives. In this respect, because it does not neatly align with the hegemonic historical narrative, it exists as a subaltern form of history which has hitherto been marginalised in the popular narrative of deindustrialisation.

Secondly, the textile industry was marked, to some degree, by its relative invisibility. This is particularly true in the clothing sector which commonly operated on the periphery, with utilitarian factories established in non-descript industrial estates, dislocated from the local community. There is a counter argument that Victorian

¹² Michael White, 'Britain can be a beacon to the world, says Blair', *The Guardian*, (1 October 1997). Available here: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1997/oct/01/speeches.michaelwhite>. Accessed on 25 June 2022.

thread mills, such as the Domestic Finishing Mill and the Mile End Mill at the Anchor Mills site in Paisley, are iconic industrial buildings which are synonymous with the textile industry. However, this point is contestable. They may be iconic structures, but they are distinct when compared to other industries as they were recognised for their aesthetic beauty, their architecture, and their grandeur, rather than being celebrated as an industrial workplace or an evocative monument to the textile industry. In stark contrast, the shipyard cranes on Clyde served as monumental expressions of Glasgow's deep-rooted shipbuilding identity, dominating the city's skyline, acting as a powerful, visible symbol of the city's industrial economy. This issue has been explored by Conlon in his study of memory and industrial archaeology on the Clydeside, as he examined the collective anxiety caused by the removal of the cantilever cranes from the shipyard in Govan.¹³ In the steel industry, the gargantuan cooling towers provided a domineering, omnipresent backdrop which loomed over steel towns across the country. In mining communities, often long after the closure of a coalmine, the pit headstocks have been preserved to allow them to serve as a visible, evocative monument to the industry and the miners who spent their working lives down the pit. In this respect, the textile industry (with the notable exception of the thread mills) lacked the visible ruination, or symbolic demolition, which contributed to a tangible sense of deindustrialisation and the emergence of community folklore in industrial communities that has been passed down the generations regarding their village, town, or districts' distinct experience of the loss of industrial work. Most textile jobs lost in Scotland during the intensive deindustrialisation of the late 1990s and early 2000s at companies such as Bairdwear, Dewhirst, Claremont Garments, and Levis, among others, occurred unceremoniously in unremarkable, perfunctory factory buildings in industrial estates. The lack of iconic, powerful imagery related to deindustrialisation in the textile industry has contributed to its erasure as it has not been deeply embedded in the popular consciousness in a manner similar to the 1971 UCS work-in, the demolition of the Ravenscraig steelworks in 1996; or the visible ruination of the iconic Provan

¹³ Martin Conlon, 'Giants of the Clyde: Memory and Post-industrial Archaeology on Clydeside', MPhil History thesis [unpublished], (2019).

gasworks in north Glasgow, which have been abandoned and derelict since being decommissioned in 2012.

Ultimately, this thesis aimed to redress this by providing a comprehensive critical analysis of the circumstances which led to intensive deindustrialisation in the textile sector during the late 1990s and 2000s, whilst situating this within the industry's broader experience of contraction and decline from the 1970s onwards. The job crisis experienced in the late 1990s is an example of trade-induced deindustrialisation in which companies engaged in capital flight to offshore their production in response to the end of the Multi Fibre Arrangement. These companies engaged in a race to the bottom on wages, regulation, and worker's rights, as they aimed to undercut their competitors by exploiting low wage economies in the global South and former Eastern bloc. In addition, the industry's over-reliance on Marks & Spencer caused a structural weakness with too many companies being vulnerable as their success was over-reliant on the retailer's performance on the high street. The thesis has shown that the approach of both the Conservative Government between 1979 and 1997, and the Labour Government from 1997 onwards facilitated the mass offshoring of the textile industry as their passivity allowed for another layer of Britain's industrial economy to be peeled off and discarded overseas.

Furthermore, this thesis has highlighted the significance of work to women in the textile industry, with their working lives occupying a central part of their identity. This serves to dispel any enduring belief that women only engaged in paid employment as a result of financial necessity. The oral testimony from workers reveals the pleasure, pride, and sense of purpose that women derived from their working lives. In critically analysing women's working lives, the thesis has, as Laframboise described, contributed to 'destabilising the male breadwinner in our conception of the industrial worker'.¹⁴ Into the last quarter of the twentieth century, the sexist notion of women's wages for paid employment being classed as 'pin-money' was, increasingly, inaccurate, and unrepresentative of the lived reality of

¹⁴ Laframboise, 'Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal's Garment Industry', p.12.

textile workers. The research by Harkness et al has shown that, by the 1990s, the notion of women's wages being pin-money was discredited with the empirical data revealing a much greater equalisation between the amount of money that men and women contributed to the household income in Britain.¹⁵ This was reflective in the oral testimonies too with workers' narratives discussing how the textile industry provided women with the opportunity to become the main earner in the household, or at least make a substantial contribution to the household income, through the piecework pay system, and the plentiful opportunities for enhanced overtime pay, earned by working shifts with unsocial hours, or weekend shifts. The criticality of women's wages to the household income was heightened during the recessions experienced by the British economy in the early 1980s and, once again, in the early 1990s, when a large number of male industrial workers were made unemployed, as deindustrialisation deepened in the historically male-dominated industries, such as coalmining, shipbuilding, and steelmaking, as women 'stepped up' to the traditionally male breadwinner role.¹⁶

Moreover, in the worst of times, when facing closure, Bairdwear's women workers displayed impressive commitment and resolve as they campaigned against Marks & Spencer's decision to end their contract with the company. The skills learned in the garment factories and thread mills did not leave women when they left the industry: their textile identities endured. They found alternative ways to express their identity and utilise their textile skills through starting their own business, engaging in recreational sewing, or doing craft projects with their grandchildren. Similar to the findings of Clarke in her study of women workers at Moulinex, textile workers commonly reflected on their positive memories in the workplace with reference to the social aspect of their work such as the friendships they made, and their memories of socialising with their fellow workers.¹⁷ Although, it is important to remember that the oral testimonies used in this research project are survivors' testimonies and therefore are, inherently, more likely to reflect positively on their working lives.

¹⁵ Harkness, Machin, and Waldfoegel, 'Evaluating the Pin Money Hypothesis', p.156.

¹⁶ McCarthy, *Double Lives*, p.353; McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*, p.103.

¹⁷ Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization', p.111

It was the objective of this thesis to broaden the knowledge of the deep, accelerated deindustrialisation experienced by the textile industry, particularly the clothing sector, in Scotland, and across Britain, during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Tomlinson has highlighted that ‘with the significant exception of textiles, most of the sectors making up industry were heavily male-dominated, so in a direct sense deindustrialization destroyed many more men’s jobs than women’s.’¹⁸ This is an empirical fact but it should not be used as an excuse to downplay the importance of studying women’s experiences of deindustrialisation. Indeed, in its next evolution, deindustrialisation studies should broaden its scope and explore more marginal experiences to enrich the field and help deepen our knowledge of the complicated and long-lasting, multifaceted legacies of industrial decline.

A fundamental question emerging from the thesis is how do we shift towards embracing a broader, more diverse, more inclusive form of deindustrialisation studies? There is no panacea. There is no easy blueprint that can be implemented across heritage institutions which will address any issues they have relating to their exhibition display on industrial employment, and the impact of deindustrialisation. We should embrace community, volunteer-led museums, such as the Paisley Mill Museum and Johnstone Museum, as these institutions are rooted in their community and they provide an opportunity for community members to shape the historical narrative and input into discussions over what is important, and what they wish to be displayed. This helps to democratise history and allow communities to have greater ownership over shaping the discourse of ‘the past’. However, it is important to recognise that community museums are limited in their resources, and they cannot solely be responsible for curating the entirety of a village, town, or city’s industrial heritage. Therefore, it is critical that our civic institutions are suitably funded by local government and national government to ensure they have the necessary resources to curate thoughtful, detailed, critical exhibitions which explore the multifaceted nature of deindustrialisation. This should include exploring the diversity of experiences of deindustrialisation, including among women workers. It is too often the case that exhibitions on significant industrial workplaces focus on the heyday of production in

¹⁸ Tomlinson, *De-industrialization Not Decline*, *Twentieth Century British History*, p.96.

the early-to-mid twentieth century with only a couple of sentences providing a summary on the last few decades, without any critical engagement of the circumstances leading to the closure.

Furthermore, it is crucial that we use the tools that we know are effective in making history more engaging, inclusive, and representative. Oral history is an empowering tool which democratises history through providing historically marginalised groups, including women, the opportunity to tell their own stories, in their own words. In Clarke's study of the closure of the Moulinex factory, my attention was drawn to the quote by Maguy Lalizel, a union official discussing workers bringing forward a criminal case against the last Managing Director of Moulinex, Patrick Puy, with Lalizel stating: 'For a long time people made out that the women of Moulinex were uneducated and untrained women. That's not true. Because the majority of Moulinex women had done a CAP-AFPI [a vocational qualification similar to a City and Guilds Certificate] ... So it was also about striking a blow against those received ideas.'¹⁹ This is a powerful, illuminating example of how oral history can be used to challenge, and refute, embedded elite narratives. This thesis makes a valuable contribution to countering some embedded narratives about the meaning, value, and significance of women's industrial work in Scotland during the second half of the twentieth century, as well as exploring the impact of deindustrialisation on women in the textile industry. It is important to state that in conducting the oral history interviews that there remains a significant level of self-marginalisation among women textile workers who struggle to comprehend why anyone, bar their direct family, would be interested in listening to memories of their working lives. This firmly reflects Stevens' experience of interviewing women industrial workers in Wales, as she described: 'A far bigger hurdle to overcome was the fact that many of the potential interviewees believed that they had little to contribute. They claimed their lives had been mundane and unremarkable.'²⁰ The shift to mainstreaming women's experiences into the hegemonic deindustrialisation discourse will help to

¹⁹ Clarke, 'Closing Time: Deindustrialization', p.121.

²⁰ Stevens, *Voices from the Factory Floor*, p1.

soften this self-marginalisation as women increasingly see, and hear, examples of their involvement in industrial work being respected and valued.

This thesis has highlighted the deeply embedded nature of the hegemonic conceptualisations of deindustrialisation, which have been reinforced by our popular culture. This has undoubtedly contributed to women's self-marginalisation of their working lives as they do not see their lives portrayed and reflected in the culture that they consume. Yet, they do see the working lives of industrial male workers receive attention and being used to render the identity of characters in some of the nation's most popular television dramas. It is a challenge to break this self-reinforcing cultural circuit in Scotland, which almost exclusively centres male workers experiences of deindustrialisation, but I am encouraged by the growing scholarship, and burgeoning public interest in women's history, and in my view, this will percolate through into cultural representations. Indeed, it is plausible to imagine a modern adaptation of Ann Kerr's *The Last Threads* being performed at one of Glasgow's theatres, or for the play to be aired on BBC Scotland. The recent documentary series, 'The Women Who Changed Modern Scotland' with Kirsty Wark on BBC Scotland is reflective of the growing popular interest in uncovering women's hidden histories. One of the episodes in the series focuses on the women-led factory occupation movements at Lee Jeans, Loveable Bra, and Plessey Capacitors in the early 1980s, and as Clark has highlighted, this was significant as it provided a platform to share this important story of working-class resistance, led by women workers, with a large audience, implanting the history into the public consciousness and helping to shape popular understandings of the contested nature of deindustrialisation.²¹

Finally, as the focus of attention shifts to the 'post-industrial', it is critical that we do not erase, or diminish, the working lives of those who continue to be engaged in industrial employment. Hodson has urged historians to embrace a 'a messy heritage' and I would urge historians, sociologists, and industrial archaeologists to embrace a

²¹ BBC Scotland, 'The Years That Changed Modern Scotland'. Available here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001jhb7/the-women-who-changed-modern-scotland-series-1-1-the-disruptors>. Accessed on: 8 June 2022; Clark, *Fighting Deindustrialization*, p.4.

messy reality.²² In communities labelled as ‘post-industrial’, you will find enclaves of industrial workers who continue to graft in jobs that have commonly been categorised as belonging to a previous era. On the Clyde, the shipyards at Govan and Scotstoun remain vibrant thanks to their seismic contract with multinational defence company BAE Systems, with a contract to build eight Type 26 frigates for the Ministry of Defence, directly supporting almost 2,000 jobs between the two shipyards.²³ In north Glasgow, Gibbs has highlighted the case of the Caledonian railway works in Springburn, which only closed for the final time on 26 July 2019, leaving over two hundred workers redundant and ending the area’s 160 year old lineage with the railway industry.²⁴ In Renfrewshire, on the same industrial estate that once housed the Bairdwear garment factory, Inchinnan Business Park, Rolls Royce operate a large manufacturing facility, producing turbine blades and aerofoils. Following the onset of the Covid pandemic, Rolls Royce slashed its workforce at the Inchinnan plant, halving the number of workers from 1,400 to around 700. However, despite this significant contraction, the company remains one of the area’s key industrial employers. Just south of Inchinnan, over the White Cart River, in Renfrew, you will find the headquarters of Altrad Babcock, formerly Doosan Babcock, one of the world’s largest engineering companies. In 2022, the Doosan Babcock site in Renfrew employed around 450 workers, however 70 workers were issued with redundancy notices following the takeover of the company by Altrad in early 2023, but the site continues to be operational with over 300 workers based at the plant.²⁵ These examples reflect the uneven nature of deindustrialisation, as well as illuminating the complex, and often contradictory, experience of communities as they transition from industrial to post-industrial.

²² Hodson, ‘Titanic Struggle’, *History Workshop Journal*, p.245.

²³ Chris McCall, ‘Job boost for Scottish shipbuilding as five more Type 26 frigates to be built on the Clyde’, *Daily Record*, (15 November 2022). Available here:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/jobs-boost-scottish-shipbuilding-five-28488072>

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²⁴ Gibbs, *Coal Country*, p.251.

²⁵ Norman Silvester, ‘75 jobs cut by engineering giant Babcock at its Renfrew base’, *Renfrewshire Gazette*, (23 February 2023). Available here: <https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/news/23340354.75-jobs-cut-engineering-giant-babcock-renfrew-base/>. Accessed on 6 May 2023.

I would reiterate the call from Hodson for historians and heritage professionals to embrace ‘messy heritage’ approach to deindustrialisation studies by exploring the diversity of experiences, considering disability, gender, race, and sexuality. The work of McIvor has been seminal in this respect through his focus on the impact of industrial work on the body, exploring workers experiences of industrial disease and disability during the mid-to-late twentieth century.²⁶ And, in the Canadian context, Laframboise has opened the conversation around racialised experiences in Montreal’s garment industry.²⁷ However, there are significant experiences which remain underexplored. In Glasgow, the organisation Colourful Heritage are doing important work in gathering, recording, reconstructing, and preserving the heritage of South Asian and Muslim communities in Scotland.²⁸ In the context of their work, an interesting avenue for future research would be exploring Scots Asian women’s experiences of industrial work, including in the textile sector, and deindustrialisation, in Scotland c.1970-2000.

This thesis has made a seminal contribution to the field of deindustrialisation studies by critically examining women’s experiences of work, and the loss of work, in the west of Scotland’s textile industry. It has, for the first-time, provided a forensic examination of the intensive period of deindustrialisation experienced in the textile industry in Scotland during the late 1990s and early 2000s, explaining the key driving factors which facilitated this situation. It has highlighted how the response of the UK Government revealed its embedded gendered conception of industrial work as they provided significantly less support, and expending notably less political capital, in its support of the predominantly female textile industry compared to its response to the offshoring of jobs in the male dominated car-manufacturing sector. This thesis has, for the first time, provided a systematic exploration and critical analysis of working-class women’s experience of deindustrialisation in Scotland by

²⁶ McIvor, *Jobs and Bodies*; Arthur McIvor, ‘Deindustrialization Embodied: Work, Health, and Disability in the United Kingdom since the Mid-Twentieth Century’, in Steven High, Lachlan MacKinnon and Andrew Perchard (eds.), *The Deindustrialized World: Confronting Ruination in Postindustrial Places*, (UBC Press: Vancouver, 2017), pp.25-45; Ronald Johnston and Arthur McIvor, *Lethal Work: A History of the Asbestos Tragedy in Scotland*, (Edinburgh, Tuckwell Press, 2000.).

²⁷ Lauren Laframboise, ‘Gendered Labour, Immigration, and Deindustrialization in Montreal’s Garment Industry’, MA (History) Thesis, Concordia University, (2021).

²⁸ Colourful Heritage. Available here: <https://www.colourfulheritage.com/>. Accessed on 7 May 2023.

adopting a more holistic approach to their working lives rather than being centred around one specific industrial dispute or a more narrowly defined time period.

This thesis has challenged the dominant conceptualisation of deindustrialisation by centring the experience of women workers in the textile industry. In moving to a broader, more amorphous, more inclusive conceptualisation of deindustrialisation which is not narrowly defined as male industrial employment during the 1970s and 1980s, we must recalibrate our understanding of what constitutes as industrial work, and who we class as an industrial worker. This thesis has shown the importance of resetting our assumptions when we imagine an industrial worker because a woman sewing machinist in Glasgow in the 1990s suffered the profound, and lasting, impacts of deindustrialisation to the same degree as a male steelworker in Lanarkshire during the 1980s, or a male coalminer in Fife during the 1970s. Their experiences will be distinct, shaped by geography, industry, and personal experiences, but in essence, they are survivors of deindustrialisation. In industrial communities across Scotland, deindustrialisation, in its half-life, continues to have a profoundly pervasive impact and it remains a key element of Scottish political discourse. Into the future, deindustrialisation will occupy a central position in informing our evolving conceptions and understandings of modern Scotland.

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APPENDIX I

Directory of Textile Companies in Glasgow, April 1985

All information derived from Glasgow District Council, 'A Guide to Clothing and Textile Producers in Glasgow', (Glasgow: City of Glasgow District Council Planning Department, 1986).

#	Company Name	Address	Area of City	Sector	Products	Number of Employees (April 1985)
1	Bairdwear	Cowlairs Industrial Estate, 24 Finlas Street	Possilpark	Women and Girl's Wear	Women's jackets, blouses, skirts, and suits	1,501 - 1,600
2	D & H Cohen	2 Coustonholm Road	Pollokshaws	Outerwear	Men's, youths and boys' trousers, jeans and shorts, ladies and children's skirts	1,201 - 1,300
3	F Miller Textiles	63 Raithburn Avenue	Castlemilk	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's wear	601 - 700
4	A & J Gelfer	30 Dora Street	Dalmarnock	Hats and Caps	Gents' headwear, ties and scarves	301 - 400
5	Campsie Knitwear	29 Camelon Street	Carntyne	Knitwear	Men, ladies and children's knitwear	301 - 400
6	Glenmore	Harriet Street	Rutherglen	Outerwear	Manufacture of duffle coats, blazers	251 - 275
7	Wm Hollins & Co	171 Boden Street	Bridgeton	Textiles	Natural fibre apparel fabrics	251 - 275
8	Robert Elliot	15 Dunivaig Road	Springboig	Workwear	Manufacture of jeans and trousers	176 - 200
9	Mansfield Hosiery Mills	15 Weardale Street	Springboig	Knitwear	Fully fashioned knitwear	176 - 200

10	Exquisite Form Brassiere	334 Halley Street	Yoker	Dresses, Lingerie and Infantswear	Ladies' undergarments, co-ordinates, and swimwear	151 - 175
11	Glen Har (Paige Group)	80 Kelvin Avenue	Maryhill	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladieswear	126 - 150
12	Jacobs & Turner	341 Argyle Street	City Centre	Outerwear	Ladies, gents and children's anoraks, casual jackets, ski suits and snowsuits	126 - 150
13	Silverin Fashions Ltd	33 Stockwell Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' outerwear	101 - 125
14	Polywarm Products	Cambuslang Road	Rutherglen	Textiles	Quilter	101 - 125
15	L S Bennet & Co	Woodhead Road	Nitshill	Outerwear	Children's and teenage light clothing manufacturers, jeans, trousers, skirts	76 - 100
16	Connal & Bannatyne	45 Finnieston Street	Finnieston	Outerwear	Children's light clothing, trousers, dresses, casual wear, ladies, and gents' sweatshirts	76 - 100
17	Tarak Manufacturing Co	61 Hydepark Street	Finnieston	Outerwear	Fashion skirts, trousers, jackets, suits, and duffle coats	76 - 100
18	Texstyle World	Farmeloan Estate	Rutherglen	Textiles	Curtain Manufacturer	76 - 100
19	S & J Harris	36 Corn Street	Port Dundas	Workwear	Uniform clothing	76 - 100
20	Remploy	46 Southcroft Road	Rutherglen	Workwear	Protective clothing	76 - 100
21	Glencroft Knitwear Company	128 Ingram Street	Merchant City	Knitwear	Knitwear manufacturers	51 - 75
22	S Yaffy	310 Main Street	Rutherglen	Weatherproof Outerwear	Men's rainwear and casualwear	51 - 75
23	Boswell	33 Stockwell Street	City Centre	Men and Boy's Wear	Gents and boys' trousers	51 - 75
24	M Kelly	62 Albion Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' skirts and kilts	51 - 75

25	J M Levenson	48 King Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Women and girls wear	51 - 75
26	P Zolkwer & Son	107 Coltness Lane	Springboig	Outerwear	Manufacture of school blazers, dress blazers and jackets, duffle coats for ladies, gents, and children	51 - 75
27	Neil Meiklejohn & Co	103 French Street	Dalmarnock	Workwear	Industrial overalls, coats, jackets, boilersuits, trousers, jeans, cotton, nylon and polyester aprons	51 - 75
28	Granton Commerical Accessories	26 Gallowgate	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Manufacture of belts, buttons, and buckles	51 - 75
29	Sunderland Sportswear	177 Trongate	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Sportswear	51 - 75
30	Clan Crest Textiles	45 Finnieston Street	Finnieston	Textiles	Textiles	26 - 50
31	John Cotton	157 Millerfield Road	Bridgeton	Textiles	Needle-loom felts: carpet underfelts, pipe insulation	26 - 50
32	Donald Blair & Co	Dalmarnock Trading Estate	Dalmarnock	Leather	Footwear	26 - 50
33	Keybags	42 Kelvin Avenue	Hillington	Leather	Leather goods	26 - 50
34	Ronson Fur Services	102 Brunswick Street	Merchant City	Fur	Manufacturer of all types of fur garments	26 - 50
35	Haven Products	473 Hillington Road	Hillington	Knitwear	Knitwear	26 - 50
36	R L Stark	61 Dykehead Street	Springboig	Knitwear	Knitwear	26 - 50
37	Ferguson and Rippon Ltd	45 Finnieston Street	Finnieston	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladieswear	26 - 50
38	H Annis & Co	26 Gallowgate	Merchant City	Weatherproof Outerwear	Protective clothing, foulweather and waterproof garments	26 - 50

39	Fletcher Campbell	48 King Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' jackets, coats and skirts	26 - 50
40	Kay Coats	179 Howard Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' coats, jackets, and rainwear	26 - 50
41	K R Clothing Manufacturing Co	143 Oxford Street	Laurieston	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's wear	26 - 50
42	Skirtex of Scotland	10 Possil Road	Port Dundas	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' skirts and slacks	26 - 50
43	Star Clothing Manufacturers	31 St Andrews Road	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's coats, jackets, trousers, and skirts	26 - 50
44	Glen Ski	45 Finnieston Street	Finnieston	Outerwear	Children's anoraks	26 - 50
45	Arthur Simmons	45 Finnieston Street	Finnieston	Outerwear	Children's outerwear (anoraks and snowsuits)	26 - 50
46	Safeline (Scotland)	77 Mauchline Street	Laurieston	Workwear	Industrial and safety workwear and outerwear, boilersuits, bib and brace, donkey jackets	26 - 50
47	Frank Usher	7 York Street	Broomielaw, City Centre	Dresses, Lingerie and Infantswear	Exclusive evening wear and day dresses	26 - 50
48	Harris & Samuel	48 King Street	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Clothing manufacturer	26 - 50
49	J B McAulay (L Gilbert Agencies)	64 Osborne Street	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Clothing	26 - 50
50	M & C McDade	23 McPhail Street	Bridgeton	Miscellaneous	Tie manufacturer	26 - 50
51	Tony Beal Ltd	55 Muirend Road	Muirend	Textiles	Tarpaulins and ropes	11 - 25
52	Kelvin Hemming Co	91 Dumbarton Road	Partick	Textiles	Household textiles	11 - 25
53	William Burns	27 Admiral Street	Kinning Park	Textiles	Jute sacks	11 - 25

54	Nimbus Umbrellas (Manufacturers)	93 Candleriggs	Merchant City	Textiles	Golf umbrellas	11 - 25
55	McLean Hosiery Manufacturing Co	48 King Street	Merchant City	Knitwear	Ladies, gents, and children's acrylic knitwear	11 - 25
56	E Tainish & Co	47 Old Wynd	City Centre	Leather	Kilt strips, travel goods, tool bags, belts, straps, school bags	11 - 25
57	C Cohen (Furrier)	24 Drury Street	City Centre	Fur	Manufacturer of all types of fur	11 - 25
58	Sky Jump Fashions	5 Wellington Street	City Centre	Weatherproof Outerwear	Rainwear, casualwear	11 - 25
59	Strides	22 King Street	Merchant City	Men and Boy's Wear	Gents' trousers	11 - 25
60	Kenda Knitwea	7 Water Row	Govan	Men and Boy's Wear	Boys, youths, and gents knitted outerwear	11 - 25
61	Scotgreat	33 Stockwell Street	City Centre	Men and Boy's Wear	Gents' suits	11 - 25
62	Anwar and Company	164 Howard Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's trousers, skirts, and blouses	11 - 25
63	Ben Royal (MFG) Co	5 Metropole Lane	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's raincoats and casual outerwear	11 - 25
64	Best Sellers	64 Osborne Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' skirts and slacks, polyester and wool mixture fabrics	11 - 25
65	Clyde Kilts	44 St Andrews Square	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's skirts, kilts, waistcoats, and scarves	11 - 25
66	Fazal and Sons	176 Gorbals Street	Gorbals	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's clothing manufacturer	11 - 25
67	M Hart	176 Woodhead Road	Nitshill	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's skirts and slacks	11 - 25

68	L'OR Clothing Manufacturers	91 Fordneuk Street	Bridgeton	Women and Girl's Wear	Kilt and skirt pleaters	11 - 25
69	M Saleem Clothing Manufacturers	31 St Andrews Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's blouses, ladies' skirts, jackets and trousers	11 - 25
70	Strathearn Skirts	Templeton Business Centre, Templeton Street	Bridgeton	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' skirts and kilts	11 - 25
71	G Fairley	74 York Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies, children's', and industrial wear	11 - 25
72	Five Star Clothing	73 Dunlop Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's fashions, rainwear suits and coats	11 - 25
73	Glengarry Skirts (Sco)	98 Holm Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladieswear	11 - 25
74	M Rashid & Co	164 Howard Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Women and girls' outerwear	11 - 25
75	Thomas Gordon & Sons	20 Renfrew Street	City Centre	Outerwear	Kilts, doublets, spats, tartan rose, dancers' jackets and vests, evening wear	11 - 25
76	Maurice Silver	7 Mordaunt Street	Bridgeton	Outerwear	Casual outerwear, anoraks, sports top, cagouls	11 - 25
77	Jamica Clothing Co	68 Parnie Street	Merchant City	Outerwear	Trouser manufacturer	11 - 25
78	Tasline Clothing Manufacturers	93 Candleriggs	Merchant City	Workwear	Industrial protective clothing and rainwear	11 - 25
79	Marion Donaldson	93 Candleriggs	Merchant City	Dresses, Lingerie and Infantswear	Design of ladies' dresses	11 - 25
80	Pod & Jois	4/1 30 Bell Street	Merchant City	Dresses, Lingerie and Infantswear	Ladies cocktail evening wear for special occasions	11 - 25

81	Renoir (Design Collections)	48 Albion Street	Merchant City	Dresses, Lingerie and Infantswear	Ladies' outerwear, dresses, skirts, blouses and light jackets	11 - 25
82	Bedi Deepchan	20 Renfrew Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Clothing manufacturer	11 - 25
83	Johnston Bros	73 Dunlop Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Clothing manufacturer	11 - 25
84	E G Mackay Tailors Ltd	12 Dixon Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Tailor	11 - 25
85	Regal Clothing	85 Queen Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Clothing	11 - 25
86	R S Clothing Manufacturer	30 Bell Street	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Clothing manufacturer	11 - 25
87	Street Gear Ltd	New Albion Estate, Halley Street	Yoker	Miscellaneous	Clothing manufacturer	11 - 25
88	Clarendon Carpets	Ashton Road	Hillhead	Textiles	Carpets	1 - 10
89	McSymon and Potter (Flagmakers)	37 Admiral Street	Kinning Park	Textiles	Flags, banners, bunting	1 - 10
90	S & S Tarpaulins Ltd	32 Stanley Street	Kinning Park	Textiles	Tarpaulins, canvas and pvc materials	1 - 10
91	W J Leach & Son	66 Bredisholm Road	Baillieston	Textiles	Tarpaulin	1 - 10
92	Jas. Stevenson (Flags)	75 Westmoreland Street	Govanhill	Textiles	Flags	1 - 10
93	Visual Communications	30 Bell Street	Merchant City	Textiles	Textile printers: printing onto -shirts and sportswear	1 - 10
94	Wm Watson Ltd	286 Broomloan Road	Ibrox	Textiles	Second-hand jute sacks	1 - 10
95	R T Wood & Co Ltd	18 - 36 Rockbank Street	Parkhead	Textiles	Industrial textiles: muslin, bookbinding	1 - 10

96	Johnsons (Carmyle) Industrial	265 Dalmarnock Road	Dalmarnock	Leather	Industrial leather gloves and clothing	1 - 10
97	McRostie of Glasgow	Templeton Business Centre, Templeton Street	Bridgeton	Leather	Manufacturer of carriage driving harness and heavy horse harness, saddlery	1 - 10
98	Robert Alford & Sons	84 Finnart Street	Bridgeton	Leather	Golf bags and luggage	1 - 10
99	Alice Belts	22 King Street	Merchant City	Leather	Belts	1 - 10
100	Osdin Manu Co	95 Niddrie Road	Queens Park	Leather	Leather, suede and assimilated furs manufacture	1 - 10
101	Skint	114 Union Street	City Centre	Leather	Custom made leatherwear	1 - 10
102	George Cooke Manufacturing Furrier	73 Robertson Street	City Centre	Fur	Fox fur jackets, mink coats and jackets	1 - 10
103	J B Crawford & Son	19 Queen Street	City Centre	Fur	Fur garments	1 - 10
104	M & E Edlin (Furs)	49 Virginia Street	Merchant City	Fur	Mink, misquash and coney jackets and coats	1 - 10
105	Fashioned Fur Co	71 Queen Street	City Centre	Fur	Fur garments	1 - 10
106	A S Fieldman	114 Union Street	City Centre	Fur	Manufacture and repairs to fur garments	1 - 10
107	Bernard Friar	19 Queen Street	City Centre	Fur	All types of fur garments	1 - 10
108	City Fur House	404 Sauchiehall Street	City Centre	Fur	Fur goods	1 - 10
109	N Hillman & Co Ltd	286 Clyde Street	Broomielaw, City Centre	Fur	Furrier	1 - 10
110	Brian Lynch Furriers Ltd	142 West Nile Street	City Centre	Fur	Furrier	1 - 10
111	B Sinclair	14 Mitchell Lane	City Centre	Fur	Furrier	1 - 10

112	Clan Mar Ltd	23 Wilson Street	Merchant City	Knitwear	Tartan manufacturers and tartan knitwear	1 - 10
113	Kid - Knit Manufacturing Co Ltd	24 - 26 Charlotte Street	Calton	Knitwear	Ladies and children's knitwear	1 - 10
114	Modern Clothing	3 - 7 Eastwood Avenue	Giffnock	Weatherproof Outerwear	Ladies and children's rainwear and jackets	1 - 10
115	Rally Klad Ltd	62 Albion Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies' kilts, skirts, blouses, jackets, dressing gowns and scarves	1 - 10
116	S A Brothers Ltd	31 St Andrews Street	Merchant City	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladies and children's clothes	1 - 10
117	E Dickson	60 Kingston Street	Laurieston	Women and Girl's Wear	Women and girls wear	1 - 10
118	Dunlop Clothing Manufacturing	73 Dunlop Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Ladieswear	1 - 10
119	A Varma & Sons Ltd	136 Renfield Street	City Centre	Women and Girl's Wear	Women's and girls' wear	1 - 10
120	M W & V S Getsels	19 Queen Street	City Centre	Outerwear	Ladies and gents bespoke tailored suits	1 - 10
121	M & G Regalia Co Ltd	76 Kilbirnie Street	Laurieston	Outerwear	Regalia, band uniforms, jewellery, jackets, skirts, and trousers	1 - 10
122	Nova Fashions	73 Dunlop Street	City Centre	Outerwear	School wear, ladies' coats and skirts, duffle coats	1 - 10
123	David Roberts Clothing	114 Union Street	City Centre	Outerwear	High fashion clothes, shirts, suits, trousers, jeans, uniforms for pubs and clubs	1 - 10
124	Norman Slater Tailoring	109 Trongate	Merchant City	Outerwear	Ladies and gents made to measure tailoring	1 - 10
125	Tightfit	195 Howard Street	City Centre	Outerwear	Ladies and gents' outerwear, also uniform contracts	1 - 10

126	Weatherwear	164 Howard Street	City Centre	Outerwear	Cotton jackets, slacks, skirts, quilted ladies, and gents' jackets	1 - 10
127	Helco	Templeton Business Centre, Templeton Street	Bridgeton	Workwear	Industrial overalls, land jackets, waterproofs and showerproof jackets and trousers	1 - 10
128	Chas. Hunter (Scotland) Ltd	Mansion Street	Cambuslang	Workwear	Industrial clothing and footwear	1 - 10
129	John Ross & Co (Clothierers)	98-100 Holm Street	City Centre	Hats and Caps	Hats, caps, and kilts	1 - 10
130	Club Ties Ltd	23 Greenhead Street	Bridgeton	Miscellaneous	Suppliers of club and company ties, specialist silk screen printing	1 - 10
131	D M Bowman	180 West Regent Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Tailor	1 - 10
132	Dunairn of Scotland	93 Candleriggs	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Clothing	1 - 10
133	E Gillespie of Glasgow	98 - 100 Holm Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Tartan slipper manufacturers	1 - 10
134	Wm Gray	584 Cathcart Road	Govanhill	Miscellaneous	Tailor	1 - 10
135	Mister McKenzie	162 Ingram Street	Merchant City	Miscellaneous	Light clothing manufacturer	1 - 10
136	ML Fashions	73 Dunlop Street	City Centre	Miscellaneous	Clothing	1 - 10
137	Roopsons Clothing & Quilting Co	342 Main Street	Rutherglen	Miscellaneous	Clothing	1 - 10
					Total Number Employed	7,282 - 9,775

