Workplace Cultures

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Introduction: Studying Workplace Cultures

In the song *Factory*, released as part of the 1978 album *Darkness on the Edge of Town* album, Bruce Springsteen reflected the centrality of industrial work to many neighbourhoods, towns and cities across the United States at the time. One of Springsteen's bleakest albums, *Darkness* was released against the backdrop of the loss of around 22.3m US jobs between 1969 and 1976, with the closure of some 100,000 manufacturing plants between 1963 and 1982.[1] The Freehold, NJ, native drew heavily on the experiences of his family and hometown, which had experienced the closure of the A. & M. Karagheusian Company's rug factory.[2] *Factory* reflected the ambiguous nature of industrial work; it underpins both economic and social survival while threatening life and limb. Springsteen's factory is also a highly gendered space; a masculine world of industrial labour. Springsteen's factory presents the industrial worker, like those in Sherry Lee Linkon and John Russo's memorable study of Youngstown, *Steeltown USA*, as both 'powerful and powerless'.[3] Above all, the workplace culture of the factory is situated at the heart of community and family.

Springsteen's song-writing has been filtered through the formative experiences of his working-class New Jersey youth, reflecting the fragility of the economy upon which his parents, family and neighbourhood relied. He witnessed the outflow of capital and people from the area he grew up in, the decline of the Jersey seashore, and the simmering racial tensions and the 1970 Asbury Park 'riot'.[4] As Springsteen has revealed, his mother, a legal secretary, was the main breadwinner while his father moved from one insecure manual job to another. So when the mature Springsteen came to read Dale Maharidge and Michael Williamson's 1985 *Journey to Nowhere: The Saga of the New Underclass*, prompting him to pen his ballad *Youngstown*, he already had an empathy with the subject matter. Springsteen's canon of work – spanning a 40 year career – is replete with references to the conflicted nature of work and to the centrality of working culture. His songs have provided the soundtrack to profound change in American society and the workplace. The youthful Springsteen captured

the autoworker seeking to reassert his individuality and skill by reconstructing cars to race in the street after the daily alienation of the assembly line (*Born to Run, Racing in the Street*). Into middle age Springsteen's songs reflected the struggles faced by many across the industrial heartlands of America confronted by plant closures and the outflow of capital and people (*Born in the USA*, *My Hometown*, and *Youngstown*).[5] Springsteen's indignation at these closures – and the 2007 financial crisis and property foreclosures – were channeled into his furious 2012 *Death to My Hometown*; a song laying bare the havoc and ruination visited on former industrial communities across the US, while evoking the rhetoric of the 'robber barons'.

[INSERT FIGURE 4.1 HERE]

For Springsteen, this malaise is key to contemporary US cultural and political struggles: " I believe there's a price being paid for not addressing the real cost of the deindustrialization and globalization that has occurred in the United States for the past 35, 40 years and how it's deeply affected people's lives and deeply hurt people to where they want someone who says they have a solution."[6] Springsteen's *oeuvre* touches on central themes within this chapter of the changing nature of work and workplace culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Though Springsteen's voice is unmistakably American, his treatment of workplace alienation, uncertainty, and industrial closures resonate across time and place. The conflicted nature of work and of industrial loss theme appear in popular culture in other nations: in Scotland, for example, from the songs of Matt McGinn to the Proclaimers and Runrig; and in France, from the music of Renaud to Franck Magloire's novel, *Ouvrière*.[7] They speak to the first of the chapter's themes, that of the changing nature of work and workplace cultures. The chapter focuses on the *zeitgeist* of the loss of industrial jobs, the erosion of workplace identities, and the 'precarity' of the jobs that replaced these. Secondly, it addresses another theme in Springsteen's songs – the contested nature of the workplace and the alienation of workers. Finally, the chapter considers the cultural significance of industrial closures.

Why does deindustrialisation merit so much attention in the study of twentieth and twenty-first century workplace culture? In 1921, around 60 per cent of the US and UK workforces were occupied in manual labour, with administrative, professional and service jobs accounting for roughly 25 per cent of those employed. By the turn of the twenty-first century, this was reversed; manual labour in the UK and US economies accounted for 31 per cent, with professional, public administration and service jobs providing 69 per cent, of

employment. A similar pattern of transformation in employment was seen in France, Germany, and Italy.[8]   In 1950, manufacturing still accounted for the largest share of employment and GDP of any single sector within the economies of North America and Western Europe. By the twenty-first century, it had been largely replaced by the service sector in all but the lowest income economies.[9] Industrial work and culture was central to many national economies and societies worldwide. Why does nostalgia for industrial culture persist when it was often dangerous and dirty work? As one former foundry worker at Harvester International's Louisville plant in Kentucky put it: 'When Harvester shut down, I was devastated but yet – God I was so happy. It was just such a hell but, yet, it was my income, it was my life. Every emotion that you can feel I went through it […] I'm glad that I don't still work there, but, man, I wish I still worked there.'[10]

To understand the significance of deindustrialisation – initially coined to describe the Allies post-war stripping of Germany's industrial power but popularised from the 1970s to describe closures in mature industrial economies – it needs to be located within the wider context of workplace struggle overtime.[11] What does the act of deindustrialisation involve? Economists have typically explained deindustrialisation in terms of the transition from an industrial to a service economy in the northern hemisphere, with globalisation moving such jobs to the global south.[12]   However, a burgeoning literature has captured the significance of the profound social and cultural legacy of deindustrialisation; in Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott's memorable words, looking 'beyond the body counts' of job losses.[13] As Johoda et al remarked in their influential 1938 study of the Austrian textile town of Marienthal: 'When we try to formulate more exactly the psychological effects of unemployment, we lose the full, poignant, emotional feeling that this word brings to people.'[14] The loss of workplace culture is of profound importance to that.   The full poignancy brings us on to appreciating a deeper understanding of workplace culture.

Deindustrialisation was neither a new phenomenon nor was it localised. In the last twenty years, scholars have illustrated the damaging effects of British and Dutch colonialism on indigenous textiles manufacturing in eighteenth and nineteenth century India and Indonesia.[15]   This process was reversed in the twentieth century Jute industry when the trade was relocated from Dundee, Scotland, to Kolkata, India.[16] Between 1922 and 1939, the New England economy lost 67%, 56%, 35%, and 31% of jobs in cotton textiles, textile machinery, boots and shoe manufacture, and woolen and worsted textiles. These jobs principally went to low wage producers in the US south.[17] Jefferson Cowie's 70-year study

of Radio Corporation of America, meanwhile, mapped RCA's capital relocation from Bloomington, Indiana, south to Memphis, Tennessee, and finally to Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. As Cowie observes, there is nothing new about capital flight in the bid to find cheaper and more compliant labour elsewhere. However, the pace of that has changed, facilitated by free trade agreements like NAFTA, further restricting the negotiating power of workers and trade unions to lobby government to prevent such practices.[18] This is part of a longer, global history of capital flight, and the offshoring of jobs; from Argentina, through the industrial heartlands of Canada, France, Germany, UK and US, and more recently the former Soviet bloc and China. In the 1990s alone, the collapse of industry in north eastern China left an estimated 30m workers unemployed, with the country's steel province, Hebei, expected to lose 60 per cent of its steel companies by 2020.[19]

The offshoring of such jobs has been linked to another key theme in this chapter, that of control over the labour process. As anthropologist Jane Collins has put it: 'spatially dispersed production regimes and casualized bonds between employers and workers erode the local conventions and practices that formerly structured and, to some extent, regulated employment.'[20] Deindustrialisation is part of longer-term contests over the labour process, weakening the moral bargaining power of workers.[21] Industrial jobs losses were also significant because of the scale of them. While these jobs could be dangerous, they were relatively well-paid and unionised, affording workers some benefits, and protection against arbitrary victimisation and industrial hazards. In Western Europe and North America, this was accompanied, especially from 1950-1975, by relative social security. Many of the jobs that have replaced them are non-unionised, poorly-paid, and precarious. The erosion of workplace rights from the 1970s in countries like the UK and US, as key industrial jobs were lost (and trade union membership fell), is now felt across most sectors of the economy.[22] As Barbara Garson after the 2007 financial crisis: 'Good jobs disappeared into bad jobs so deftly that hardly anyone has noticed the switcheroo. Soon enough the zombie jobs that replace the real ones will move among us as if they were normal.'[23]

For political economist Guy Standing, the replacement of 'industrial citizenship' with 'precarity' has become the modern *zeitgeist*. For Standing, as for Springsteen, this is inextricably linked with globalisation, which undermined the social gains extended from the workplace after WWII. Meanwhile historical sociologist Tim Strangleman views the persistence of 'industrial citizenship', of occupational culture, as a longer running theme, drawing a line between social identities after deindustrialization to

the experiences of crafts affected by the industrial revolution as outlined by the social historian E. P. Thompson.[24] For Strangleman, the disruption of relatively secure and protected employment with 'precarity' has contributed to a 'critical nostalgia' for industrial work and culture.[25]   So whilst deindustrialisation, and the 'precarity' of employment (and erosion of workplace culture and rights), are not the only significant themes in the twentieth and twenty-first century workplace, they are overriding and enduring ones.

Deindustrialisation has also exercised a profound effect because of its extension of cultural norms and signifiers beyond the workplace and worker into the fabric of the life of the community and society. In 1959, as Springsteen turned 10, American sociologist C. Wright Mills observed: 'Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both. Yet men do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction.'[26] The following year, Welsh cultural theorist Raymond Williams articulated the importance of understanding 'structures of feelings', 'as record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, changed conditions of our common life'.[27]   Mills and Williams made vital contributions to our understanding of how societal change was felt and experienced. Springsteen's songs reflect an appreciation of both, capturing at a crucial time the experience of workplace and wider social change. Springsteen's songs, like those of other songwriters, also reflect a 'cultural circuit' in which his upbringing then resonated with the shared experiences, and collective memory, of many who heard them subsequently permeating into popular culture.[28] Linkon and Russo brilliantly capture Springsteen's evocation of the destructive force of capital flight and offshoring, alongside the betrayal felt by individuals and communities in Youngstown, Ohio, as they watched their workplaces dismantled for scrap, their jobs exported, and their communities unravel.[29] In some countries, that collective loss has been translated into a national narrative and influenced political change. In Scotland, where industrial culture was absorbed as part of the DNA of the nation, deindustrialisation has been absorbed into the national story. This was encapsulated in The Proclaimers's 1987 song, 'Letter From America', combining the powerful themes of outward migration, deindustrialisation, and national decline.   With the contraction of such work, the lexicon of deindustrialisation was understandably absorbed into national narrative. When the iconic Ravenscraig steel mill closed, in 1992, one of the country's foremost bands, Runrig, captured the narratives of laid-off steelworkers and the changing politics of the country.[30]   While campaigning for a devolved Scottish parliament in the late 1990s, journalist Neal Acherson noted: 'Scotland's industrial landscape also became archaeology… These ways

of working had long ago become part of Scotland's self-definition. Now a third identity-question was added to "When was Scotland?" and "Who are we?" It was: "What do Scots do?"[31] Acherson, Runrig and the Proclaimers, were articulating the 'structures of feeling' of communities and individuals affected by deindustrialisation, bringing 'biography and history' together, and reflecting that in the national narrative. Here, workplace culture is explored against this backdrop of change. This chapter places deindustrialisation and capital relocation, the workplace spectre of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, within the longer term context of contests over control of the workplace, seen through occupational identity and culture. This chapter demonstrates that strong occupational cultures and networks endured over time within industrial jobs and crafts. This could be equally true of certain firms, sometimes linked to specific sectors (such as aluminium production), which exercised a profound impact on culture within the workplace and community.

Workplace culture:

Sociologists Paul Chalfont and Emily LaBeff characterise culture as 'everything that is socially learned and shared by a group of people in a society'.[32] In this chapter, workplace culture is considered as organic, manufactured, and contested. Occupational culture could be shaped by the nature of work as a result of the physical and locational challenges – such as in the case of mining, fishing, or in sectors like aluminium production or logging – by industrial politics, trade unions, and craft practices. Organisational norms and behaviours, as well as systems and rules, also shaped workplace culture. This was, as in the case of the examples of scientific management methods, through supervision, and time and productivity targets, including rewards, or changes in working culture, as through the Human Relations (HR) school. In other companies, it could be through industrial welfarism, or 'paternalism'. Large organisations have exercised a profound effect not just on those who work within them but on society at large. Organisations are not simply the repositories of wider cultural attitudes in host societies but consciously shape attitudes through the appropriations of symbols and values, and their manipulation of these.[33] Workplace culture also emerged through craft practices and trade unions. Culture in the workplace was complex and contested, affected by the type of work, location, gender, ethnicity, and race.

Whilst Springsteen's voices are unmistakably American, a similar story was reflected elsewhere. The uncertainty that Springsteen captured in the voices of working people around

him as he grew up reflected earlier sentiments that social historian Edward Palmer Thompson sought to capture in his history of the transformative effects of industrialisation on working people in eighteenth and nineteenth century England, *The Making of the English Working Class*. Thompson's work explored the experiences of those most affected by the industrial revolution from obscurity in a narrative that privileged and promoted technological progress driven by prescient entrepreneurs:

> I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the obsolete hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded follower of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying. Their hostility to the new industrialism may have been backward-looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been fantasies. Their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not. Their aspirations were valid in terms of their own experience: and, if they were casualties of history, they remain, condemned in their own lives, as casualties.[34]

Thompson wrote this while teaching in adult education, in the late 1950s, in areas that were experiencing the effects of industrial contraction in textiles and coal mining.[35] For the trades of the English industrial revolution and west Yorkshire workers affected by industrial change, as for Springsteen's car worker or unemployed Ohio steel workers, the themes of alienation and struggle recur within occupational culture and identity. As Strangleman has observed of industrial identity and deindustrialisation over the long durée, through his revisiting of Thompson:

> We can conceive of industrial workers seeing their livelihoods destroyed by industrial change, new technology and market forces as inhabiting a similar space to Thompson's 'poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the obsolete hand-loom weaver, the "utopian" artisan'. Their latter-day equivalents might be the 'poor redundant steelworker, the obsolete textile operative and the laid-off coalminer'. Thompson was describing the experience of disembedding and the attempt to resist this process, or possibly to re-embed the newly detaching market economy in a moral order, albeit a modified one.[36]

Here, complexity in workplace relations and culture has been overlain periodically in Europe, Japan, and Latin America, by the political economic contexts of authoritarian political regimes. For example, fascist Italy initially adopted a more laissez-faire approach to labour policy. This

was superseded after the mid-1920s, with the 1927 Labour Charter, with an emphasis on controlling all aspects of public life, the setting of standards on working conditions, accompanied by Fordist methods as part of Fascist drives for a modern economy.[37] In Nazi Germany, the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (representing employers and employees) supplanted trade unions by imposing the illusion of cooperation; as Catherine Epstein observes: 'In practice, however, employers always retained the upper hand.'[38] With the exception of some reflections on apartheid South Africa, this chapter eschews analysis of workplace culture within authoritarian regimes given the wider social implications and context.

Workplace culture did not always begin and end at the factory gates. In the case of certain occupational communities, such as mining, 'anticipatory socialisation' – 'the sense of the proximity to industry and the labour of others' – situated inherited craft or occupational traditions at the heart of the family.[39] In his account of a childhood in the Welsh coalfields, Einion Evans recalled: 'I was conversant with the pit vocabulary since my childhood. . . I knew about the underground locations and the tools, and also the names of some of the men'.[40]

[INSERT FIGURE 4.2 HERE]

For Scottish miner, Tam Coulter: 'Ma maternal and paternal grandparents were mine workers. Ma mother worked on the surface . . . when she was a young girl. Then she went to a different job after that but she did work on the pit top . . . [I] left school on the Friday, started on Saturday, because ma dad worked in the pit, and the procedure then was, yir dad got you a job'.[41] For Evans, occupational culture bled into the community, it was absorbed as a child until the spatial and physical specifics of mining became intuitive. For Coulter, mining culture was blended with genealogy. Domestic socialisation and parental discipline extended to the colliery, and vice versa. This initiation continued when Coulter started at the pit: '… yer dad got you a job that was helping to support the household plus the fact, if the manager couldnae hold, fire, sort you out, he told yer dad. And so the pressure came on him and ma dad said tae me, "Ye' so and so that ye' are, ah've worked so many years in this pit never had nae bother until you started."'[42]

[INSERT FIGURE 4.3 HERE]

Similar sentiments were evident across the British coalfields.[43] Coal mining exhibited strong traditions and structures in the coalfields of Western Europe, and in the coal mines of Appalachia, too.[44] In mining, such socialisation was embodied by spatial awareness and experience underground. Historian Joy Parr notes: 'Our bodies are the instruments through which we become aware of the world beyond our skin, the archives in which we

store that knowledge and the laboratories in which we retool our senses and practices to changing circumstances. Bodies, in these senses, are historically malleable and contextually specific.'[45] As Scottish miners leader Michael McGahey put it: 'Well, o' course, the point aboot it is one must recognize the na'ure of the industry. . . Because they know and recognize they're in a struggle wi' Mother Nature, and she does nae give her treasures verra kindly. And in the struggle wi' Mother Nature they're dependent on one another…'[46] The physical dangers, and embodiment, of mining were embedded into occupational culture. The nature of that work, the industrial politics arising from coalfield contests over control, informed a sense of collective behaviour and the 'moral economy' of such communities.[47] This embodiment, and reliance on workmates, is illustrated through the remarks of Scottish mine manager, Bill Marshall: 'Now to compromise safety, the guys, I was talking about, working on top of a conveyor, they werenae stupid. They knew the dangers and eliminated them with their skills. The skill of their eyes, their hands, and to watch what was going on around them. . . It was just a culture, a feeling you have…'[48] Marshall's testimony makes equally apparent the importance of physicality and masculinity:

> As an under-manager myself, I always tried to be straight with men. I was a hands-on guy. If there was a bad roof or something, I wasnae feart of getting mucked aboot 'cos I wouldnae ask anybody to do what I wouldnae do maesel'. That was ma' culture. So I put maesel' in harm's way a few times . . . You got guys who relied on different ways of doing it—they delegated. But when it got hot, I didnae delegate, I was there. That was my way, but I'm no the kind of guy that says, "No, I want you to go and do it. You use your judgment to do what you need to do and I'll stand back."

Such a strong occupational identity and culture was reflected in a distinct sense of status by miners and managers in the British coalfields.[49] Coulter evoked this powerfully, while illustrating the distinctions within mining communities:

> Once you were a producer, ah think it's maybe like something similar tae the animal kingdom, now the lion has tae get the grub first. Ah think once yi' wir a producer and handing in, contributing more tae the household, you got maybe a wee bit better treated than a younger brother or whatever, you know or a sister. . . We thought we were the best in the world. We were the elite.[50]

Such testimonies reflected the gendering of the 'other'; mining culture in Britain was stridently masculine, enforced after the 1842 Mines and Collieries Act, ending women and

children's employment underground. While Coulter acknowledged that his mother worked at the pithead picking coal on the tables, underground was a male sphere. Similarly retired miner Alec Mills stated: 'I was a coal miner and proud of it. A man's man, a miner's man'.[51] For Bill Marshall, his fellow managers who failed to demonstrate their physical claims were symbolically emasculated: 'I know other under-managers, a couple, who really got money for doing nothing, nothing—they just sat back and let it happen… And there was one of them and he was reviled by the men… He had an office underground and the men used to go up and piss on his door . . .'[52] Similar distinctions were visible in the testimonies of British engineering managers between those who had come up from the occupational traditions of the shopfloor and those who had joined the firm directly at a managerial grade.[53]

The role of women within mining communities varied. In Britain, women were legally prohibited from underground work they worked on coal sorting tables, and in colliery canteens and offices. They were also central to the pursuit of industrial struggle.[54] France and Sweden restricted women from working underground in coal and iron mines in 1874 and 1900 respectively. In Japan, as late as 1920, there were 66,000 female miners until a ban was introduced in 1933, and then again between 1939 and 1947, and in India until 1928, with a brief return between 1939 and 1947.[55] In the US, women were employed underground in Appalachian mines, and fought prominently both within the workplace and community for recognition.[56] In 1982, at a moment when mining was in serious decline, there were 2,500 US female coal miners.[57] US female coal miners' narratives also reflect an 'anticipatory socialisation' into coal mining, as well as the embodiment of the working environment. Pennsylvania miner Ethel Smith, who started working with her father underground at the age of 15, remembered, 'My dad never said anything special to me about being a girl. He'd just say, "Let's go children"'… My dad had worked us children at so much, at so many hard things, that it just seemed like another job to me'.[58] Nevertheless, as another US female miner, Alice Crawford, recalled, mine supervisors where she worked used her workload to try and increase productivity amongst male miners by challenging their masculinity. These attempts at control failed, as Crawford's male colleagues respected her as a worker and refused to be drawn in to attempts to undermine solidarity.[59] Above all, in these narratives of mining communities, one finds the distinction between insiders and outsiders.

The endurance of these divisions continued into the twenty-first century and could be seen in the distinction between those that worked in the industry and those that had not. In mining, this physical reliance on workmates translated into strong ties of loyalty, often

expressed in military metaphors: 'Ah think . . . because of the nature of work and the nature of lifestyle we could at least hold our own . . . because we're hardy buggers and we fought, ah dare say something like soldiers'.[60] For Scottish miners Carl Martin and Rob Clelland, these social networks and loyalties, forged underground, endured throughout their lives. For Martin, 'Miners are a different breed… If I had my life over again I'd still like to be a miner 'cause as I say, you'll get companionship amongst miners'.[61] Clelland reminisced: 'Once ah wis in the pit ma social friendships or whatever you want tae call them just snowballed, you know. It was a big deal tae me'.[62] Such loyalties masked variations and divisions too. In certain parts of the Scottish coalfields, sectarian religious differences and traditions could be evident on a daily basis.[63] In South African mines, racial segregation was embedded in colonial South Africa's mining regulations before apartheid. These regulations privileged the safety of white mine workers over their African counterparts from 1911.[64]

Similarly occupational socialization played an important role in the shipyards of the Clyde (Scotland) and Tyne (England).[65] Shipyard traditions were strongly linked to extended social networks and status. In Northern Ireland, and on the Clyde (into the 1960s), jobs in the industry often operated a religious bar, with Catholics prevented from working in certain shipyards and trades.[66] In contrast, on the interwar Clyde docks, Irish Catholics and Presbyterian Highland Scots made alliances; solidarities built out of shared experiences of land agitation movements in rural Ireland and the Highlands and Islands.[67] In European and North American steel making, 'anticipatory socialization' was also evident.[68] Anthropologist Christine Walley evokes this, and the impact of deindustrialisation, around Chicago's steel mills:

Early one morning when I was fourteen years old, my mom entered my bedroom and shook me awake. "Don't worry", she said quietly, "it'll be OK. They called the ore boat back, but it'll be all right." I wondered why we should be worrying about an 'oar boat' being called somewhere but drowsily accepted her reassurances and went back to sleep. In retrospect, I imagine my mother on that chilly March morning both trying to reassure me and seeking comfort to face what was ahead, even as she couldn't quite bring herself to tell me what happened. The real news was that the recall of the ore freighter from the middle of Lake Michigan meant that Wisconsin Steel, the mill in Southeast Chicago where my father worked as a shear operator, had shut down.[69]

The loss of occupational status attending closures was abundantly evident amongst UK and US steelworkers; as encapsulated in the words of one Scottish steelworker: 'How do you tell fifty year old steelworkers to sell tartan scarves to Americans?'[70] Like coal

mining, so in steel, workplace loyalties afforded greater protection against dilution of trades while providing flashpoints with managerial prerogatives. These traditions and status were suffused with a strong sense of masculinity. In the more mixed occupational environment of Lancashire textile towns, socialisation was equally evident; as Elizabeth Roberts observed, children had it 'transmitted to them': 'a working class culture, a complete design for living and a set of rules to be learned about "proper" behaviour'.[71]

On the British railways, the craft traditions, strong company identities (prior to nationalisation) and patrician management left their mark in distinctive occupational cultures. Here too socialisation and familial networks played an important role in the career path on the railways. Similarly, specific craft traditions were highly embedded. Nationalisation forged an equally strong organisational identity and culture throughout the rail network. When that was threatened, with outsiders bought in to manage, this led to clashes between different occupational cultures.[72] This mirrors clashes in the coal industry between 'outsider' and 'insider' managers.[73]

Strong organizational cultures can be read both as a continuance of earlier traditions but also a reflection of the failures of coercion, and of the adaptation to the realities of the fight for control over the labour process. Some employers explicitly recruited through families, using the discipline of the family to regulate the pattern of behaviour of young workers. The motivations were not exclusively motivated by the wish to control, or respond to growing labour power during periods of the twentieth century, but in some cases by a wish on the part of some employers to encourage more cordial relations influenced by their religious and or moral beliefs. These were often reinforced within a strong organisational narrative. The embedding of organisational and occupational culture within communities added to the sense of loss of these workplaces.

The ecological reach of the workplace extended into surrounding communities, whether out of necessity – such as the logging towns of the Pacific North West or in the copper belt of Zambia – or the initiatives of companies to embed themselves into the firmament of local society (through company housing, school boards, sporting clubs, and the metering of time by the factory whistle or horn).[74] These workplaces and occupational communities also illustrated divisions along ethnic, gender, and racial lines. Company control and ecological reach even took the form of naming company towns after corporate patriarchs; such as Arvida, Québec, named after Arthur Vining Davis, the founder of the Aluminium

Company of Canada's US parent company Alcoa, or Henry Ford's 'Fordlandia' in the heart of the Amazon.[75] Such was the case in the strong organisational narratives evident in the aluminum industry. The global aluminium industry provides illustrations of the ecological reach of company culture into communities and divisions; what historian Brad Cross has characterised as an 'aluminium civilization'.[76] In these occupational settlements companies policed their workforce and socialized their families. This was intrinsically linked to the requirement for stability in industrial relations, where a 24hour stoppage could cause thousands in damage of electro-metallurgical equipment. The reliance on proximity to hydro-electric power for smelting meant that most aluminum companies built company towns in remote areas – such as the Scottish Highlands, the Vallée de la Maurienne in the French Alps, Saguenay in Québec, and Kitimat in British Columbia. Similarly their upstream mining operations in Ghana, Guyana, and Jamaica, were often remote. Workplace paternalism and hierarchies were reflected in the socio-spatial divisions of the company villages of French company Alais, Froges et Camargue (subsequently Aluminium Pechiney), and the British Aluminium Company (BACo), in the French Alps and the Scottish Highlands respectively.[77] In Arvida, Alcan smelter management was dominated by Anglo-Scots Canadians with French Canadians mostly occupying shopfloor positions. In the community socio-spatial divisions reflected ethnic and religious distinctions between "Anglo" presbyterians and Francophone Roman Catholics.[78] In MacKenzie-Wismar, British Guiana (Guyana), and in Gold Coast (Ghana), Alcan and BACo respectively strictly policed racial divisions, separating Guyanese and Ghanian bauxite miners, from predominantly Anglo-Saxon white management.[79]

Differences between company cultures also led to heightened social tensions; as Sandy Walker, an engineer at the Lochaber smelter in the Scottish Highlands, recalled after BACo's merger with Alcan:

That's when the divide came and it was a massive divide, massive. I don't blame the people who Alcan employed as managers, it's probably just what they were told to do as the ethos of managing a plant, but however, it destroyed the whole community, aspect, of being employed there … whether that was being dictated to from Canada I don't know, but any thoughts of… paternalism that was all gone … you were just literally a number then…[80]

Where occupational regimes shaped workplace culture for coal, steel, and shipbuilding, workplace culture, in aluminum, association with the firm, played a larger role. The 'structures of feeling', arising from occupational networks, were sharply exposed when it

came to the closure of plants with strong identities, expressed in terms of betrayal and the breaking of a social and moral contract. As Johnson Controls employee Danny Mann observed after the closure of its Kentucky works: 'There was no loyalty in corporations at all. I knew that, but you would expect a little bit of, you know, kindness or understanding. I work with my hands for a living. I'm a blue-collar worker and I'm proud of being that. If it wasn't for blue collar this country couldn't be what it is.'[81] A similar sense of betrayal, arising from a strong sense of workplace culture forged by company culture and narratives, was evident amongst employees at industrial workplaces in Europe and North America.[82]

Workers, and communities, sometimes sought to contest company control. Cultural resistance in a range of rural and urban environments may be manifested in a range of forms from sabotage to evasion, as well as in language.[83] In BACo's Highland settlements, workers and local communities both accepted and contested the Company's attempts at control. Employees subverted the Company's use of a language of rights and loyalty during industrial disputes, as well as over closures and environmental impact.[84]

Companies' attempts at embedding organisational workplace rules and norms reflected long running attempts to ensure compliance and control over the labour process, as well as social engineering. This was paticularly visible in the scientific management and the human relations movements from the early twentieth century, as well as in some of the underlying reasoning behind 'welfare capitalism'.

'Cooperation in industry': cultivating the 'human face' of industrial capitalism

In May 1921, John D. Rockefeller wrote to his industrial relations advisor about his new ideas for enlightening workplace relations:

I finally adopted a title COOPERATION IN INDUSTRY. The word 'Cooperation' does not suggest to my mind as it does to yours, a relationship with Profit Sharing… I felt it a safe title to use and really a safer one than DEMOCRACY IN INDUSTRY, which to my mind would more generally be regarded as indicating control rather cooperation by Labor with Capital.[85]

Historian Howard Gitelman concluded that Rockefeller's support for the Human Relations School was not, 'as he claimed "a fair deal for the working man"', but rather: 'His interest in employee representation can most charitably be characterized as one of industrial peace at any price, save unionization. He did not care for the workers or their welfare but only for their acquiescence'.[86] In their analysis of Mayo's influence on human relations, Kyle

Bruce and Chris Nyland refute the portrayal of the HR School as a benign attempt to overcome the crude control of scientific management initiatives: 'The Human Relations school was in fact a right-wing and decidedly undemocratic innovation that was developed in response to the demand from organized labour that workers be ceded an active and significant part in management decision making'.[87]

The HR School was a reaction to worker resistance to the imposition of scientific management methods. As measures to control time and workplace traditions in the nineteenth century had met with resistance, so in the twentieth, workers and trade unions opposed scientific management through strikes, industrial sabotage, and subterfuge.[88] As with later industrial action, female workers led these contests, such as in the Singer Strike of 1911 in Scotland or those against the Bedaux system at textile factories and Rover in the English Midlands in the 1930s.[89] Brazilian and Indian workers also led successful campaigns in the 1920s and 1930s to reject the imposition of scientific management methods.[90] Managerial attempts to changing working practices – and the deskilling and anomie associated – lay at the heart of the US steel strike of 1959, and auto-plant strikes and assembly-line guerrilla warfare in the US and UK between the 1960s and 1980s.[91] In Apartheid South Africa, companies deployed scientific management to erode control over the labour process, coupled with coercive racial laws and the surveillance of the state. Nevertheless, mining unions still mounted industrial resistance, and took a prominent role in the broader anti-apartheid movement.[92]

Like scientific management and the HR School, 'modern welfare capitalism', even if 'a kinder, gentler sort of paternalism' in the US was motivated by employers' priority to confront the labour power, notably in the interwar era, but as seen in Google 'play pens' in the twenty-first century, continued well after that. For firms like Kodak and Sears Roebuck: '… the Wagner Act, which along with labor's newfound strength, made it more difficult for employers to resort to force majeure when threatened by an organizing campaign. Coercion did not disappear, but large non-union companies had to rely on persuasion to carry more of the load.'[93] In interwar Chicago, welfare capitalism gained traction over trade unionism because of ethnic divisions. However, as the depression took hold, the experience of welfare capitalism raised expectations of social provision and informed CIO campaigns.[94] As it had been for Taylor, Ford, and Rockefeller between the wars, so workplace culture, as a touchstone of productivity and control over the production process, became a major preoccupation of a post-war generation of scholars, managers and policy-makers.[95] The growing voice of the

labour movement, and the social contract arising out of the war economies of Britain, Canada and US, and the postwar period in western Europe and North America, fuelled by the boom years, saw the integration of a range of legal frameworks and mechanisms for the governance of industrial relations. As ongoing industrial disputes demonstrated – over control over the assembly line, craft demarcations, and the attempts to assert managerial prerogative – this was an uneasy peace at times. Nevertheless, changing global economic conditions after the OPEC crises and Dollar devaluation, and a shift in the political economic climate in the UK and US with the elections of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in 1979 and 1980 respectively, and subsequently Brian Mulroney in Canada in 1984, saw an assault of employment rights and forcefully re-asserted employer prerogatives. These attacks also coincided with sharp contractions in traditional industrial sectors, programmes of public sector divestment and liberalisation, and deregulation of financial markets.[96] In Latin America, the dominance of military dictatorships and other draconian governments by the late 1960s drove trade unionists and labour activists underground or into exile. In some cases, such as Chile, this was accompanied by aggressive liberalisation of the economy.[97]

Ruination: the age of deindustrialisation.

Several years after the release of Springsteen's *Darkness*, in 1981, *New York Times* journalist Iver Petersen observed as a silent vigil of former autoworkers watched from their US made vehicles as their former workplace, Detroit's Dodge Main auto plant, was raised to the ground. Dodge Main was just one of the large car plants that lent Detroit the name of "Motor City". All the drivers witnessing the demolition had a different story to tell about their memories of working in the plant, each one intensely personal. A security guard on site, quizzed by Petersen, pointed out the significance of the event that was unfurling: 'There are people who walked in and out of these gates for thirty-five years. They come by and point and say, "I worked at that window up there," then they pick up [a] brick or a piece of stone and go away.' Historian Steven High has underlined the wider significance of these events:

  These autoworkers had spent their lives working in the assembly plant and in the process had forged strong attachments to people and place. Workplace communities were remembered strongly that frigid day. The story unfolding outside the gate at Dodge Main has been repeated in towns and cities across North America, we live in a "post-industrial" age, or so we are told. Mill and factory work no longer defines North American society and it is fast losing its saliency at the regional and local levels.[98]

The response of former Dodge Main workers to the demolition of the plant reveals the acute loss of such jobs to an area already blighted by such closures. These losses fell disproportionately on Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin, with manufacturing employment dropping by 19 per cent between 1979 and 1986 alone.[99] The profound economic and cultural effects of these closures are to be seen to this day in cities like Detroit, Flint, and Youngstown.[100]

These 'body counts' belied the profound impacts of deindustrialisation, not just on individuals and communities but on society at large, in a material and symbolic sense. As historian Christopher Lasch has put it: 'the hope that political action would humanize industrial society was replaced by surviving the wreckage'.[101] 'Survivors', psychologist Hank Greenspan notes, were left 'confronting the reality of being 'disposable en masse', with any sense of 'predictable history gone'.[102] Nevertheless workplace networks also provided a well-spring of resistance to closures, some of which such as the Upper Clydeside Shipbuilders work-in of 1971, was the inspiration for other plant occupations in Scotland and elsewhere, such as the predominantly female work-in at Lee Jeans Greenock plant in 1981, and the workforce at Caterpillar's in 1986.[103] Into the twenty-first century, French workers at Rayon works threatened with closure in Ardennes and at Moulinex's plants in Normandy, engaged in bold direct action; as the protagonist in *Ouvrière* remarks: 'we don't die so easily'.[104]

[INSERT FIGURE 4.4 HERE]

Notwithstanding the risks of industrial work, their occupational cultures provided a modicum of security if ultimately the illusion of permanence. Those jobs contrasted with the precarious, frequently non-unionised, and unskilled employment that replaced them. Frequently, these jobs were subject to far greater surveillance by employers and a lack of recourse to employee rights, such as in the 'panoptican' world of the call centre or warehouses where employees were tracked and timed using GPS technology. As in workplaces of the past, employees in twenty-first century call centres have contested that control.[105] Addressing the American Sociological Association conference in 2008, Arne Kalleberg identified the 'global challenge' of the 'precarity' of work as a 'core contemporary concern within politics, the media, and among researchers', with 'uncertain and unpredictable

work' contrasting 'with the relative security that characterized the three decades following World War II'. [106]

[INSERT FIGURE 4.5 HERE]

Conclusion

Bruce Springsteen's canon of work represents what Mills defined as the 'sociological imagination'; 'history and biography and the relations between the two'.[107] Springsteen captures the 'structures of feeling' arising from the replacement of relatively secure employment and rights associated with unionisation (a social contract) and strong occupational cultures with 'precarity'. Whilst these changes have been associated with the economies of North America and Western Europe since the 1970s, this is a much longer global history. However, the literature covering the experiences of industrial dislocation in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, is scant. Deindustrialisation was part of longer historical attempts to reduce labour costs, elude regulation, and assert control. Capital flight exposed as fleeting the organisational cultures often intended to gain greater managerial prerogative over the workplace. However, workers were not passive parties. They subverted corporate narratives in their fights against closures and over environmental legacy. In the parlance of the 'moral economy', workers and communities sought to defend 'traditional rights or customs'.[108] The persistence of occupational cultures demonstrates a 'critical nostalgia', in the face of a sense of powerlessness and abandonment. And yet that nostalgia for solidaristic action and network has belied ethnic, gender and racial divisions. The social and cultural effects and sense of dislocation of deindustrialisation endure.

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