Workers' Identities in Transition: Deindustrialisation and Scottish Steelworkers

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Abstract

Deindustrialisation is often characterised as an ending, with sentiments of intangible loss and identity disintegration defining displaced workers' narratives of job loss. These experiences are important, yet workers do not cease to exist with the closure of their workplace. Despite this, little attention has been paid to the post-redundancy employment experiences of former heavy industry workers or the survivability of their specific occupational identities and work cultures. This article examines the post-redundancy employment of former Scottish steelworkers. Given their previous immersion in a distinctive occupational culture, a study of the post-redundancy employment experiences of these workers offers a window into the afterlives of deindustrialisation. Oral history is indispensable in prioritising working-class perspectives, therefore this article draws on seventeen newly conducted oral history interviews with former Scottish steelworkers who were made redundant in the early 1990s. In order to better understand the long-term impact of deindustrialisation, as well as gage the survivability of occupational identities and work cultures, this article examines the ways in which steelworkers' post-redundancy employment contrasted with steelmaking, focusing on the following thematic areas: the significance of work; trade unionism and collective values; masculinity and emasculation; occupational community and workplace culture.

Keywords

Deindustrialisation, occupational identities, work cultures, Scottish steelworkers, post-redundancy employment

Introduction

The intrinsic relationship between work and identity is a central theme within deindustrialisation literature. Sentiments of intangible loss and identity disintegration commonly define displaced workers' narratives of job loss precisely because work informs both personal and collective identity to such a large extent. As a collective endeavour work can shape the identity of entire communities or regions (Kirk et al. 2002). Strangleman (2008) argues that heavy industries exerted strong cultural influence over the communities in which they were embedded. Displacement from workplaces with such cohesive communities can shatter workers' sense of self and place. The toxic combination of neoliberalism and deindustrialisation has devastated working-class communities, cultures, and organisation. Crime, poverty, and ill-health increased in former occupation-dependent communities in Scotland as the social fabric unravelled with the closure of heavy industry (Farrall et al. 2017; McCrone 2012; Finlay 2004). The impact of deindustrialisation on these communities has been overwhelmingly negative, yet it remains difficult to fully capture its emotional disruption and aftereffects. Deindustrialisation is often characterised as an ending, and while narratives of job

loss are important, workers do not cease to exist with the closure of their workplace. Linkon has highlighted that deindustrialisation 'is not an event of the past' but is rather an 'active and significant part of the present' (2018, p. 1). As such, this article examines the post-redundancy employment experiences of former Scottish steelworkers and the survivability of their occupational identities and work cultures. In order to better understand the long-term impact of deindustrialisation, this article examines the ways in which steelworkers' post-redundancy employment contrasted with steelmaking, focusing on the following thematic areas: the significance of work; trade unionism and collective values; masculinity and emasculation; occupational community and workplace culture.

Steven High praised Tracy K'Meyer and Joy Hart's *I Saw it Coming: Worker Narratives of Plant Closings and Job Loss* for asking workers 'the why question': why they thought their plants had closed, why their work had meant so much to them, and why they felt the way they did about their new employment (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, High's back cover summary). In order to prioritise working-class perspectives, this article similarly sought to ask workers the 'why question'. Given their previous immersion in a distinctive occupational culture, a study of steelworkers' post-redundancy employment experiences offers a window into the aftereffects of deindustrialisation. However, a general lack of archival information which encapsulates the often-emotional narratives of deindustrialisation, compounded by the marginalisation of working-class experiences within dominant remembrances of the past, makes any attempt at reconstructing steelworkers' post-redundancy employment difficult. Oral history was therefore chosen as the primary research method given its effectiveness in the recovery of marginalised narratives and its ability to navigate the realms of emotion and meaning (Thompson 2017; Portelli 2012; Abrams 2016). In capturing complex and experiential narratives, oral history proves indispensable to understanding the significance of deindustrialisation for working-class people.

This article draws on seventeen oral history interviews conducted between 2016 and 2017 with former Scottish steelworkers. Interviewees were employed within British Steel during the 1980s and made redundant in the early 1990s: twelve of these are former Ravenscraig employees, four are former Clydesdale employees, and one was a former Dalzell employee. Given the demographics of Scottish heavy industry in the post-war period, interviewees were predominantly white working-class men. Dorothy Macready was an exception as the only woman interviewed, and described the post-redundancy experience of her late steelworker husband Jim Macready. As a closed shop all steelworkers had been trade union members, and five of them had held representative roles, such as Tommy Brennan, the overall trade union convenor for Ravenscraig. In the interview cohort were also two skilled tradesmen, two managers, and Ravenscraig's industrial chaplain. Given the focus upon employment transition, it was integral to identify interviewees who would have been young enough at the time of closure to seek reemployment rather than early retirement, therefore the majority of interviewees were in their fifties or sixties. Special attention was given to recruiting former Ravenscraig and Clydesdale steelworkers, as the plants' former position as major employers in central Scotland and relatively recent closures in the early 1990s increased the likelihood of identifying candidates for interview. Interviewees were recruited through a number of sources, including social media, local press, and retiree networks and interviewee referrals.

Former steelworkers entered a diverse range of post-redundancy-employment. Following a path common to other displaced industrial workers, some gained employment as production line workers, taxi drivers, cleaners and janitorial staff; others upskilled as mechanics or entered female-dominated public sector employment in social care or education. Unlike steelworkers,

the two interviewed managers did not experience a significant variation in employment post-redundancy, with both men easily transitioning into other managerial roles. Ian Harris accepted an offer from British Steel to transfer to Llanwern Steelworks, which allowed him to retain his role as strip mill manager, while Sam Thompson, the personnel and safety manager for Ravenscraig, was able to find identical managerial roles outside of steelmaking. Former steelworkers generally found their post-redundancy employment inferior to steelmaking: pay and conditions were eroded, social mobility stalled, trade unions were disempowered, occupational communities were destroyed, and workers were atomised. Although largely negative, interviewees' employment transitions did engender some positive outcomes, specifically in relation to a healthier working environment.

The Significance of Work

Deindustrialisation has sparked and contributed to a debate on the nature of work itself. Rifkin (1995), Beck (2000), Casey (1995), Bauman (1998), and Gorz (1999) contend that work has lost its ability to shape identity, declining in significance as a result of profound economic and technological change. This has been contested by scholars such as Strangleman (2012), Doogan (2009), Berman (2010), McIvor (2013), and Wall and Kirk (2011) who have stressed continuity. The post-redundancy experiences of former steelworkers align with this second interpretation. Though steelmaking was remembered as particularly meaningful employment, its loss did not precipitate a catastrophic break in the importance of work itself. Former steelworkers were able to derive meaning from their new employment and maintain a strong association between work and identity.

Steelmaking was remembered fondly, it was both enjoyable and meaningful, able to provide a deep sense of occupational pride. Steelworkers exhibited a great respect for steelmaking itself. Brian Cunningham spoke of the 'beauty of the Ravenscraig', a sentiment similarly expressed by Jim Reddiex, who described newly created steel as 'beautiful, perfect in shape'. Similar to shipbuilding, the centrality of steelmaking's description as meaningful work was the high level of end product tangibility; steel effectively supports civilisation, with almost every commodity either containing steel or requiring it in its creation. Interviewees understood the importance of their occupation:

> You couldn't get more important than making tubes for the North Sea oil... That steel that was made in Clydesdale and the tubes that were made in Clydesdale – that brought the oil out the ground, all over the world (H. Carlin Interview, 2017).

> They made the high-quality steel for rail tracks, they made the high-quality steel for offshore, they made the high-quality steel for the automotive industry (Cunningham Interview, 2017).

This tangibility contributed to a high level of occupational pride among steelworkers. Harry Carlin was 'proud to be a steelworker', while Jim McKeown directly attributed this pride to the end product: 'we were proud of what we were doing in there and proud of what we made'. High and Lewis' interviews with paper mill workers from Sturgeon Falls also revealed the relationship between a strong sense of occupational pride and tangibility of product, with one worker boasting: 'we were making a good product. It was well recognized in the market' (High & Lewis 2007, p. 95). Tangibility of end product provides a basis for meaningful work. The products of heavy industry have an obvious and tangible use value, which provides industrial

workers with a sense of pride in their creation. Brian Cunningham regarded steelmaking as 'noble', and appreciated that his new employment as a mechanic exhibited a similar level of tangibility:

> I mean you are making something, there is an end product there, it's going from that pile of coal and scrap and ore... there's something tangible at the end of it. When I get a truck and it's broke and I fix it, that's tangible, I done that, I achieved that today, that was a good day's work.

Brian considered himself lucky, suspecting that most former steelworkers moved into less meaningful employment.

Dorothy Macready, speaking on behalf of her late husband Jim, described how he was compelled to take less meaningful work. After losing his 'responsible job' as a steelworker Jim held many 'wee jobs' – working in a supermarket for instance – which lacked the prestige and tangibility of steelmaking. Jim eventually gained employment as a postman, allowing him to reassert an occupational pride: 'because he felt it was responsible'. The word 'responsible' is worthy of note, demonstrating that Jim clearly attached greater worth to employment which exhibited a tangible social value. James Carlin also lost a sense of meaning from his work as he moved into Wisemans Dairy:

> I didn't have the same respect obviously for the product... It was just as quick as you could get it done, as quick as you could get it out... if there was damage you weren't really too bothered... people didn't value their job down there, just purely because of the nature of the company and attitude of the company towards you, you just done your shift then you went home, that was it, there was no pride in the end product.

Interestingly, James regained a sense of occupational pride in his current employment in Warburtons, which, among his post-redundancy employment, has been the most comfortable and most familiar to Ravenscraig:

> It's the same process but rather than making steel you are making bread, it's unionised, guys look out for each other, you know what I mean, the health and safety is good, so there is a real team aspect to it... there is a real bond among guys down there and I suppose it is unity in the true aspect of the word, we are all the one big team.

For James, it was the presence of trade unions in Warburtons that fostered a return to a positive working environment. Enjoyable, meaningful work is related to both tangibility of product and a positive work culture, which is itself dependent upon strong trade unions.

Interviewees who moved into care or teaching expressed the most stable continuation of occupational pride. For Jim McKeown, teaching instilled a 'different' but 'equal' sense of pride to steelmaking: 'I like to see the kids that I have been teaching doing well, aye so you still took a pride, and I think it was kind of equal pride, but a different sense of pride'. James Coyle found his experience as a care worker in children's homes similarly satisfying. Although the work was emotionally strenuous, as many children came from 'very troubled backgrounds', James 'loved' the work and strove to make 'a lot of kids happy'. James remembered with pride when one of these children, as an adult, asked him to walk her down the aisle, which conveyed a

sense of fulfilment not possible through steelmaking. Harry Carlin also entered social care, specialising in elder care, where he spent his time meeting residents' needs – 'washing them, bathing them, dressing them, shaving them' – which he too found fulfilling:

> You knew that you done a good job because they would be looking and the wee face would smile when they seen you coming in, or take your hand, they couldn't speak, but they knew you were looking after them.

Harry took a great deal of pride in this work, believing it to be more important than steelmaking as 'you're dealing with human beings, not steel'. Interestingly, many residents were either themselves former heavy industry workers or had close family who were, which gave Harry a sense that he was directly helping people from his community. The move from steelmaking into social care may appear extreme, yet Harry likened his previous role as a trade union representative to that of a social worker: '[Steelworkers] treated you as a social worker, you know. If there were any marital problems they would come to you because they knew you were a good listener'. Harry was 'proud to be a social care worker' for the same reason he was a trade union representative, because he 'liked helping' people, and so the transition into social work came to him naturally.

Despite certain theorists claiming otherwise, the centrality of work to identity remained intact for former steelworkers following deindustrialisation. Ian Harris extolled the 'discipline' and 'rewarding' nature of work, which allows individuals to support themselves and their families. Frank Roy considered work critical to cultivating 'self-esteem… that's what your work is… it brings a worth and it brings a self-esteem'. Social psychologist Jahoda argues that individuals' 'deep-seated needs' are addressed through employment, such as the 'need to structure their day; [the] need [for] wider social experiences; [the] need to partake in collective purposes… [the] need to know where they stand in society in comparison with others in order to clarify their personal identity; and [the] need [for] regular activities' (1982, pp. 83-84). Interviewees understood work in a remarkably similar way:

> It is absolutely critical, you have got to have a structure in your life... you take that structure away from people, James, and it can have a devastating effect on them. You need a reason to go to your bed and get yourself up early. People reach for alcohol, or they end up snorting it or jagging themselves… then that filters down to the next generation and the next generation… Probably one of the most important things, definitely – gives you a focus, gives you a function, gives you a direction, and it can also give you a great deal of satisfaction: a good day's work, fantastic (Cunningham Interview, 2017)

Tommy Brennan expressed how work exposes individuals to wider and more diverse social interactions:

> It's character building, it helps a person find out who they are, it gives them the experience of meeting people, of mixing with people, of making conversation, all this is important to the individual – it brings people out of themselves.

The social aspect and sense of purpose provided by employment was important to Jim McKeown, who chose to postpone his retirement from teaching: 'I need to be doing something every day, I live in the house myself, I live myself, I couldn't imagine sitting watching Jeremy

Kyle all day, you know just doing that, I think I have got to be doing something, and I think work for me it is important'.

Former steelworkers work ethic-based identity survived deindustrialisation and continued to define identity. Brian Cunningham subscribed great importance to his work ethic, he had 'always worked', had 'never been workshy', stating: 'I always had a work ethic… so when I went to work, I went to work… and to this day I'm still the same believe it or not, fifty-five years of age, and I've got scars to prove it'. Similarly, Jim McKeown stated: 'You are supposed be at work to get paid, and I think that is my sense of identity'. A life full of work was a source of achievement. Tommy Brennan recalled with pride: 'I've only lost six weeks work in my whole life'. Equally, James Coyle attributed importance to his continuous employment: 'I've worked all my days… I was maybe idle for a week... I've always worked, always had a job'. The importance they subscribe to hard work and continuous employment mirrors Wight's *Workers Not Wasters* (1993), which identifies the centrality of fulltime paid employment to working-class masculinity. Like their work ethic, former steelworkers' working-class identity remained unbroken. Harry Carlin admitted that he lost a 'sort of identity' as he left steelmaking, but felt that his identity as a 'worker' overshadowed his 'steelworker' identity: 'at the end of the day, as I used to say, you are a worker, you're nothing else, that's your identity, you're a worker, a working-class person'. Although Harry's employment transition into social care was dramatic, it did not significantly alter his identity, he remained a member of the working class, defined by his role as a wage earner. Employment transition did not alter social class. Despite entering a diverse range of employment, all former steelworkers continued to describe themselves as working class, which Jim McKeown exemplified: 'I still see myself as working class, I'm still quite proud to be working class… I think that means something being working class'. Working-class identity was typically defined by a dependency on waged work – 'working for a living' – and interviewees, such as James Carlin, invariably stated their continued pride in their class identity: 'I'm working class, proud of my working-class roots and identity'. However, interviewees believed that positive representations of working-class identity have diminished. James Carlin felt that legacy of Thatcherism and its associated assault upon working-class institutions had transformed working-class identity, once a source of pride, into something 'dirty', which then compelled working-class people to disassociate from the term. This is explored in Savage's *Class Analysis and Social Transformation* which engages with the 'paradox of class', where, despite its continued structural importance, class appears to have declined as 'a self-conscious principle of social identity', allowing inequality to increase 'in a more naked way than before' (2000, p. xii, p. 159).

Whilst work remained central to former steelworker identity, they expressed doubt over whether it conveyed the same meaning for younger generations. Citing the rise of short-term employment Jim McKeown commented:

> Youngsters... change their work quite regularly, move from job to job, and I think that identity is lost... we were loyal and proud because we were there. I think if you only work for a place for six months in a short-term contact you are not going to take the same pride in the place... you can't develop a feeling for the place, a kind of loyalty to your brand or where you work.

These sentiments are similar to those expressed by Sennett in *The Corrosion of Character* and Bauman in *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*, who respectively claim that the formation of work-based identity is undermined by 'flexibility' and the disappearance of the 'steady, durable and continuous' career (Sennett 1998, p. 10; Bauman 1998, p. 27). However, James'

reflection on the youth's relationship with work was not informed by personal experience, and although some other interviewees shared this view, they were unanimous in stating the continued importance of work to their own identity. In *New Capitalism? The Transformation of Work*, Doogan highlights 'a substantial gap… between many public perceptions of change in the world of work and a more objective assessment of change and continuity in the labour market and the wider economy' (2009, p. 5). This suggests that while interviewees were perfectly able to describe their own experiences, their descriptions of younger generations relied on representations of work informed by the cultural circuit; perhaps indicating the need for a systematic study of younger workers' identity in relation to their employment. According to Strangleman, a great deal of the work in decline literature 'overstates or over-generalises' the situation. In doing so, these theorists undermine workers' 'collective and individual agency', casting them as 'passive victims of globalisation' and romanticising industrial work as highly stable in contrast to the 'permanent flux of the post-modern' (2007, pp. 96 & 100). Similarly, McIvor argues that although the introduction of disruptive technologies and concurrent deskilling and upskilling have transformed the nature of work, it still remains a 'deeply emotional experience', which continues to give workers a source of purpose and identity (2013, p. 75). The centrality of work was further reinforced by Wall and Kirk's *Work and Identity*, which, based upon interviews with railway workers, bank employees, and teachers, concluded that 'work remains central to our lives' (2011, p. 230). Despite what were at times very drastic employment transitions, former steelworkers' testimonies stress the continued importance of work to identity. Deindustrialisation took their job title, demolished their workplace and its associated culture, but it did not annihilate their work ethic or their sense of working-class identity.

Trade Unionism and Collective Values

The loss of a workplace defined by a powerful trade union and collective ethos was the 'biggest culture shock' for many steelworkers (Cunningham Interview, 2017). As a closed shop membership of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) was mandatory for employment within steelmaking, establishing a fully unionised workforce. The values of solidarity and trade unionism were integral components of steelworker identity, which though undermined by deindustrialisation, remained intact in their post-redundancy employment.

Steelworkers remembered the power of the ISTC within the workplace, recalling how it demanded respect from management and was quick to respond if workers' rights were infringed. Commitment to trade unionism and a readiness to defend working rights and workplace dignity featured strongly in steelworkers' testimonies. In most instances the overt power of the ISTC remained latent, with simply the possibility of collective action guaranteeing a certain level of conscientiousness from management. According to Harry Carlin this power encouraged respectful management: 'the union had a lot to play, the management respected you – and the workforce knew that'. Equally for Brian Cunningham the union's position fostered 'mutual respect', as its authority:

> Always put the management on notice… because there could be a consequence,
> a real significant consequence, and if you are a manager in that position and you
> cause a shut down or a walk out you need to make sure what you did was right...
> it bred a respect for the workforce... I think that was probably true in most
> nationalised industries… any place you had large groups of men who were
> unionised… I definitely missed the trade union environment… that you couldn't
> be bullied, or picked on, or threatened by your employer or your boss.

Managerial participants' shared and confirmed workers testimonies of respectful labour relations. Industrial relations manager Sam Thompson remembered the 'good relationship' with the union during negotiations and Strip Mill Manager Ian Harris described the normalcy in promoting 'common ground' and understanding.

Former steelworkers experienced a profound culture shock as they moved from steelmaking's closed shop into workplaces operating within the context of Thatcherite anti-trade union legislation. Moving into typically ununionized workplaces, the post-redundancy employment of displaced heavy industry workers is defined by a breakdown in mutually respectful labour relations and workers' bonds of solidarity (Hart & K'Meyer, 2009; Waddington et al. 2001). Jim Reddiex had described Ravenscraig's managers as 'enlightened' because of their fairness; steelworkers who entered employment where workers lacked collective strength discovered that management lost any sense of enlightenment as soon as the necessity for conciliatory labour relations disappeared. Where unions did maintain a presence it was generally weaker, with concerns often ignored by management. Tommy Johnston, who moved into janitorial work, commented: 'The union has absolutely no say… they are hopeless, they have no say whatsoever. If we go in with a complaint to management… they will just say "no, and what are you going to do about it?"'. The loss of a powerful trade union is a common theme among former heavy industry workers, and one of the most prominently missed elements of industrial employment (Milkman 1997; Waddington et al. 2001; Dudley 1994). James Carlin was astonished to discover that Wisemans Dairy actively suppressed trade union organising by threat of outright dismissal. Brian Cunningham found himself alone as the only union member as a mechanic, which he attributed to management's hard anti-union stance: 'If you joined a union you were sacked, you were out the door. They were quite open about that'. Authoritarian management and exploitive conditions often prevailed in the absence of a powerful union. James Carlin described Wiseman's management as 'almost dictatorial':

> It was completely foreign to me to go into a work environment where the manager was there, looking over you to see what you were doing: "come on do this faster", "you need to be quicker", you know that whole aspect of it – *clap* *clap* *clap* – "come on, get that done, and I'll be back in half an hour and if you've not got that done I'll be wanting to know why you've not got it done".

James contrasted this with Ravenscraig managers who afforded workers a degree of 'professionalism', rather than oppressive supervision. Management's abusive language and a general lack of respect was the 'biggest culture shock' for Brian Cunningham:

> That bosses can speak to you like that: "you can get yourself to fuck, get your tools and fuck off"... That would never have happened in the steel industry, that manager would have been sacked... there was a mutual respect between the workforce and the unions and the management.

Brian was well aware that this 'mutual respect' was not underpinned by benevolence, but rather necessity – as a means of avoiding potential disruption should the workforce be provoked; workers' treatment by management corresponds to their respective power in relation to management.

Peter Hamill's employment history – from steelmaking to light industry back to steelmaking again – illuminates the stark differences in conditions and trade union power between large and small-scale workplaces:

> When you worked for big firms, the union is strong, but see when you go into those wee firms... there was one man that was in charge of things and he owned the place and he decided what you were doing, you had to fight with him all the time... they treated people like dirt.

After twenty-five years in steelmaking Peter worked in a number of smaller industries for roughly sixteen years. These jobs were typically low paid and exploitative, with weak unions lending themselves to authoritarian supervision, usually administered by the owner. In one such company the owner taunted workers: 'I just bought a big machine, it will make him redundant, it will make him redundant, it will make him redundant'. Peter took it upon himself to unionise his co-workers, but struggled given their precarity. Unlike steelmaking these smaller enterprises were highly informal, often ignoring regulations entirely. Peter explained how this informality and small-scale nature jeopardised wages: 'we always thought, "will we get our wages or will we not get our wages", you know, and we went in one day and he says to us, "I've no money to pay you your wages"... the boy was a conman'. Peter eventually returned to steelmaking, which immediately saw a return of union visibility, high pay, regularity, and respectful labour management.

Deindustrialisation undoubtedly had a destructive effect upon trade union organisation, but it would be inaccurate to remove agency from displaced workers, to forget their ability to shape their new workplaces. Deindustrialisation did not weaken former steelworkers' attachment to trade union *values*. Former steelworkers strived to unionise their new workplaces, demonstrating how former heavy industry workers transmit their culture of trade unionism into their new employment. Despite lacking 'any great knowledge of employment law', James Carlin took on the role of shop steward, drawing on what he had seen as a steelworker and learning through experience he fought for co-workers who 'were getting disciplinaries and sacked'. Similarly, when Harry Carlin began work in elderly care homes it was wholly non-unionised and subject to an authoritarian manager – a fact he quickly changed by unionising his colleagues: 'I became the union man down there right away... when I went in I had to get them all in the union... [the workers] were all afraid you know... I said, "this is the way we will be doing it from now on"'. Harry directly challenged his manager's power, attacking their belittlement of workers: 'she had a great habit of saying she was going to sack people, I said, "you've not got the authority to sack anybody", I said, "the time I'm finished with you you're going to get sacked"'. Gilmour (2010) has also highlighted an example of culture transmission by describing how former shipbuilders brought their culture of trade unionism with them as they moved into Linwood car factory following the decline of shipbuilding. Yet values are largely irrelevant in the absence of power, and it must be admitted that deindustrialisation shattered organised workers' power. James Carlin's summary of the power balance of a non-union workplace – 'we never had any power, we never had any voice' – demonstrates the removal of all necessity for respect, reducing workplace dignity to the whim of management.

Masculinity and Emasculation

Work, specifically full-time waged employment, has been strongly associated with masculinity (Whitehead 2002; Goodwin 1999; Wight 1993). Traditionally, notions of 'being a man' have been entangled with breadwinner status. Not only has work been described as central to

masculinity, but certain types of work are commonly perceived to be more masculine than others. Steelmaking and heavy industry generally fall under this category, being traditionally styled as highly masculine forms of employment. It could therefore be supposed that the transition into female-dominated employment would impact steelworkers' masculinity, engendering some sense of emasculation. In *Masculinities and Culture*, Beynon (2002) discusses how ex-industrial workers 'felt demeaned' by occupying 'women's jobs'. Beynon highlights an ex-miner's testimony who found employment in a chicken packing factory, which lacked 'the technical challenges, dangers and male camaraderie' of mining; he did not consider it a 'proper job', but instead, 'a woman's job' (Beynon 2002, p. 88). Walkerdine and Jimenez (2012) explored masculinity and deindustrialisation by interviewing residents of a former steel-dependant town in Wales. Here, the closure of the steelworks engendered 'intergenerational trauma', where young men describe feelings of shame and embarrassment over their failure to attain traditionally masculine employment in steelmaking (2012, p. 10). Men who take work in the service sector were a source of shame for their former steelworker fathers, and were bullied by male and female peers, who questioned their sexuality and belittled their masculinity (2012). While some interviewed Ravenscraig and Clydesdale steelworkers identified steelmaking as 'macho' work, their sense of masculinity remained intact as they entered new employment, subscribing importance to work itself, rather than type of work.

Exploring the operation of masculinity within Clydeside heavy industries, Johnston and McIvor found a prevailing 'cult of toughness' which socialised young men into a macho work culture (2004, p. 138). Steelmaking was an almost exclusively male occupation, as Harry Carlin summarised: 'there was nae women that worked with us'. Frank Roy described the shop-floor culture as 'manly', which was both 'merciless', defined by quick and often savage humour – 'the joking was brutal, brutally funny' – and 'comradely', where men would support and cover for one another. Steelworkers' language was colourful and expressive, Harry Carlin remembers 'mad language all the time': 'the foreman never took any great thing if you swore at him because he swore at you, tell you to 'f-off' haha! But that was the way it was, shop-floor talk, that's what you used to call it'. Steelmaking had a strong intergenerational aspect, which interviewees remembered fondly. Young workers entering the steelworks were inducted into and socialised by the culture of older workers, which for Brian Cunningham provided 'a good schooling and a good grounding': 'honestly it was terrific, and you had all different levels different ages, boys 18, 19, to guys in their 60s... You had that bond with the union, that camaraderie, that standing up for yourselves'. Relationships formed 'a big family type environment' according to James Carlin, where 'the older guys tended to look out for the younger ones'. James described the fatherly aspect of older workers:

> I was the youngest... I can remember a couple of times I went in with a hangover and you know they, they used to give me a hard time, they would say to me, "you should be ashamed of yourself", and all that sort of stuff, "coming in in that state" you know, so I suppose a lot of father like figures as well and they looked after me.

Jim McKeown enjoyed the educational aspect of the intergenerational environment: 'it was an education... the university of life – they taught you a lot of things other than steelmaking, it was enjoyable'. Steelworkers' masculinities also reinforced their trade union culture, encouraging a readiness to defend working rights. Disrespectful or threatening language from management was received with little tolerance from union officials:

> McCard was our shop steward at the time and we were at a meeting, it was a dispute, and the [HR] guy threatened him… he says, "if you don't get these men back to work Mr. McCard you're gonna go out here without a job", and big McCard says to him, "if I go out here without a job you're going out here in a stretcher son, and I ain't fucking kidding you on" (Cunningham Interview, 2017).

Interviewees' readiness to defend themselves relates to Johnston and McIvor's point concerning the possible 'synergies between class and masculine values', where, 'being a man in the Clydeside heavy industries also involved standing up for your rights against authoritarian management' (2004, p. 140).

Despite the familial environment and culture of solidarity, steelmaking could often be ruthless. Older workers enforced workplace cultural norms on younger workers, and deviation from these behaviours could result in ridicule or ostracism. Andrew Kane described the intolerance some workers held for anything designated as effeminate:

> Your hands were like leather. And [my brother] says to me one time, "can you not put hand cream on your hands?" And I burst out laughing and he says "what you laughing at?" There was a guy that started one time and at the end of the shift he combed his hair, and he was called a 'poof' after that... imagine me taking hand cream in!

Respect for senior steelworkers was paramount, which often represented a steep learning curve for young men:

> For younger guys, you need to grow up fast, really fast, you go in there and you think you are good with your mouth and you think you are a bit of a tough guy, trust me, you find out how tough you are (Cunningham Interview, 2017).

Although jokes were predominately 'good natured, good bantered', there were 'lines you didn't cross' (Cunningham Interview, 2017). Brian Cunningham described how fights would break out if younger workers were perceived to lack respect for their elders, or in response to sexual comments regarding family members: 'I seen a wee guy getting punched right across the table because he made a comment about a guy's daughter'. Jim McKeown recalled how this atmosphere could be difficult at times:

> The one thing you didn't show was any weakness... as a young fellow you are in the shower and the next thing your clothes get thrown in beside you, and you just laughed it off because if you didn't they would do it again sort of thing. Or maybe you went down for the toilet or something, burned paper, newspapers go underneath the door and set on fire, that kind of thing you know – "for a laugh" – you know, and you didn't react because if you reacted you would make it worse... pranks we would call it, sometimes it was hard, but there was a kind of macho feel aye, real macho feel.

It is important to consider that a number of interviewees did not identify with the characterisation of steelmaking as particularly macho. Unlike a marker such as social class, which was readily understood and talked about, the idea of a job being either masculine or feminine was widely rejected. Interviewees worked to earn money to support their families and

because they enjoyed working. Tommy Johnston 'never ever looked at it that way', simply viewing it as 'an everyday job'. James Carlin 'struggle[ed] to sort of grasp the meaning of the word macho'. Rejecting any comparison of his former and current employment in terms of being more or less masculine James went on to describe how the dangers inherent in steelmaking can actually make men feel very vulnerable: 'there was a guy that actually fell into a ladle [of molten metal], it was obviously horrific for the guys that witnessed it and for any of the guys family members, but, see on the back of that accident, I don't think that guys felt macho'. James' recollection is similar to Johnston and McIvor's statement that heavy industry has the potential to emasculate workers through occupational accidents and disability (2004, pp. 135-152).

Changes to workplace culture and language were noted by former steelworkers who transitioned into female dominated employment. Tommy Johnston illustrates the temporary 'culture shock':

> From the steelworks where it's all men, 'who's got the porn the night'... to go working with all women, that was a culture shock for a while, till you got used to it, you know, you're not allowed to swear and things like that, where up in the Ravenscraig steelworks, or any environment where men are, there will be cursing all the time and telling jokes and all that, talking about football.

Harry Carlin also expressed the need to sanitise his language, as a social care worker he adopted a more 'hoity-toity' professional tone, which he attributed to both the more public facing side of his work and the presence of female colleagues: 'It was a different culture... the language that we use, shop-floor language, it was a wee bit hoity-toity... You had to change dramatically in your language... you're dealing with families'. The need to maintain a tough façade and tolerate co-workers' pranks was the 'biggest thing' Jim McKeown noticed missing in teaching, where relations were more 'professional, more respectful'. Despite noting these cultural differences, former steelworkers who transitioned into female-dominated employment reported no sense of emasculation whatsoever. Employment, irrespective of its gendered reputation, was seen as a vital component of workers' identity. Wight (1993) has outlined the social value of paid employment over unemployment within working-class communities, as such, emasculation emerges from a lack of work, not necessarily the type of work. McDowell has questioned the premise that men are emasculated by traditionally non-male employment. She explored the masculinity of young men employed in the service sector, which, apparently immune to the supposed crisis of masculinity, 'emphasised the heroic struggle necessary to overcome consumer resistance in selling occupations, or the camaraderie of the long hours/hard work culture of the burger bar' (McDowell 2002, p. 51). McDowell's interviews with school leavers from the early 2000s, many of whom occupy 'low-level entry jobs', did not uncover endemic emasculation, instead, 'waged work' remained the 'central element' of 'acceptable and respected masculine identity' (McDowell 2003, p. 236).

Similarly, Cross and Bagilhole interviewed men in traditionally female-dominated employment, where, contrary to any sense of emasculation, these men were 'actively maintaining traditional male values' and would remark upon how they outperformed their female colleagues, who they supposed lacked professionalism and commitment to quality work (Cross & Bagilhole 2002, p. 221). Rather than recoil under the gendered reputation of his work, one former miner from this study, now a nurse, simply stated that 'a job is a job' (Cross & Bagilhole 2002, p. 116). Former steelworkers also held the outlook that 'a job is a job', with importance given to continuous employment, rather than type of employment. Rather than

emasculation, former steelworkers continued to express a stable work-based identity and masculinity. Given the fact that women have been marginalised into precarious, non-unionised and low paid employment, the sense of emasculation described by other industrial workers who enter female-dominated employment relates more to the exploitive working conditions of typical 'women's work', rather than the supposed shame of working a job considered effeminate.

Occupational Community

Steelworks are often publicly remembered as strongholds of labour militancy, but former steelworkers' recollections of steelmaking conjure a powerful sense of occupation-based community identity, a form of belonging which compliments but also goes beyond the scope of organised workers and powerful unions. Brown (1985) contends that heavy industry workers report a greater sense of occupational identity than other workers as their typically long period of service allows them time to develop occupational bonds. This is further reinforced by heavy industry's propensity to foster occupational communities through its position as the primary source of employment within a given locality (Brown 1985). Highlighting the cultural similarities between coalfields in Poland, Turkey and the UK, Kirk et al. state that work 'marks a region's potential distinctiveness', producing 'culturally distinct traditions that shape everyday life', citing the existence of miners' welfare associations, union halls and work-based bands or sporting clubs across cultures (2002, pp. 6-7). Similarly, Strangleman argues that heavy industry imprinted a 'distinctive cultural pattern' upon regions – influencing 'culture, class, language, attitude and gender relations' (2008, np). Displacement from workplaces with such cohesive communities can shatter workers' sense of identity, as was the case with former Ravenscraig and Clydesdale steelworkers.

Intersecting throughout former steelworkers' narratives, 'camaraderie' was consistently used to describe workplace culture. Interviewees fondly remembered the comradely shop-floor culture, strong sense of community, and constant 'banter'. This culture was embedded into steelworkers themselves, it 'moulded character', and was 'something that [got] into [their] blood' (Cunningham Interview, 2017; Thompson Interview, 2017). Peter Hamill particularly enjoyed steelmaking's characteristic humour, commenting that 'every single day you got a good laugh'. The heavy unionisation of the workplace encouraged a culture of solidarity and co-operation. Harry Carlin states: 'I loved it, I liked the camaraderie, you know, working with the people there. I was heavily involved in the unions with the men, and I loved it, absolutely loved it'. Being 'part of something' was an important aspect of steelmaking, instilling pride and purpose as well as fostering a culture where 'all looked after each other and all looked out for each other' (McKeown Interview, 2017). Steelmaking tended to be concentrated within families, informally passing from parent to child; it was not uncommon for fathers, sons, uncles and cousins to work side-by-side. This interfamily aspect of steelmaking, exemplified by Tommy Brennan – 'I worked in the Craig, my brother worked in the Craig, my two sons worked in the Craig, my brother's three sons worked in the Craig' – encouraged even greater bonds between workers, blurring the lines between the workplace and the family. Steelmaking was felt to be part of workers' heritage, central to their identity, which James Carlin illustrates:

> That's what I wanted to be, because I came from that sort of history, that lineage
> within my family, we were all steelworkers, we worked in heavy industry, and
> I was desperate to leave school and get into the steelworks.

Displaced workers within the secondary literature also describe their former workplaces through 'metaphors of home and family', emphasising strong bonds of community (High 2003, p. 44). High's examination of the closure of Sturgeon Falls paper mill especially conveys the 'closeness of social relations' and importance of the workplace within occupation-dependent communities (2018, p. 273). In Hart and K'Meyer's *I Saw It Coming*, former manufacturing workers expressed similar sentiments. The comparison to a family atmosphere was evoked by Charlie Noyes: 'it was just like being part of a big family, an extended family' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, p. 60). While Phil Nalley recalled the comradely nature of the workplace: 'a camaraderie and loyalty... we trusted each other and we would take care of each other's family' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, p. 39).

Steelmaking was a highly socially embedded occupation with a strong occupational community which afforded steelworkers a large degree of social capital. A vibrant community social life shaped steelworkers and their families' lives, structured through a range of formal and informal voluntary associations and recreational clubs which catered for hobbies, sports, socialising, and politics. The variety of social opportunities was extolled by Brian Cunningham:

> The social side of it was terrific... we used to do overnight stays, dinner dances, we used to do mid-week breaks for the golf... obviously you had your anniversaries, weddings, engagements, so the social side of it was really good.

The regularity of socialising fortified a sense of community, as Ian Harris described: 'My wife knew my workmates, knew their families... you got invited to everything, so you were at the fishing club dance, the bowling club dance – I was in the golf club so I was at the golf club dance, the football dance, everything'. Workplace social clubs, like the Clydesdale Club or Ravenscraig's Jerviston House, acted as focal points for occupational community. Harry Carlin recalled the popularity of the Clydesdale Club: 'a massive club, very well attended, right up to the redundancy. It opened every night – there used to at one time have a debating society in it. They had their football teams... Aye that was a good club, everybody loved the Clydesdale Club'. The shift structure of steelmaking was a key foundation of steelworkers' cohesive social life, which Frank Roy linked to steelworkers' strong sense of occupational identity:

> It *was* your identity. And the reason why it was your total identity was because the lifestyle, because we worked a thing called a continental shift pattern, which was dayshift, backshift, nightshift... So you knew weeks in advance, months in advance, what shift you were... your social life was round your days off… you had a diary in your head where you knew your shifts.

Regular shifts and group time off supplied stability which allowed steelworkers to structure their social life in advance. Workers on the same shift pattern planned social outings together to fill regular intervals, as Tommy Johnston outlines:

> The camaraderie was excellent... if you were nightshift, you are away golfing during the day with all your pals. They used to have golf sections, football teams, fishing clubs, so you were either playing football in the afternoon, golfing in the afternoon, or away fishing... a big community.

May and Morrison's interviews with displaced KEMET Electronics Corporation workers also revealed a fondness for regular shift patterns, as it allowed workers to 'lead more predictable, patterned lives' – especially important to those with families (2003, p. 171).

The World Health Organisation defines social capital as 'the quality of social relationships within societies or communities, including community networks, civic engagement, sense of belonging and norms of cooperation and trust' (2011, p. 3), which has been linked to positive mental health (Almedom 2005). Steelworkers had access to a great deal of social capital by virtue of the various voluntary associations, social clubs, educational programmes, and political groups associated with their workplace. The duality of a large workforce, which was both highly organised and defined by a strong sense of social embeddedness, allowed steelworkers to easily mobilise their collective influence and organise initiatives which benefited their community. Jim Reddiex described a scheme where Ravenscraig workers collectively deposited their money into a bank and used the accumulated interest to purchase yearly Christmas presents for local disadvantaged children. Brian Cunningham remembered a similar scheme where workers raised money for two ambulances for the Law Hospital. The strength of steelmaking unions also increased workers' access to social capital in terms of education. In Clydesdale, Harry Carlin and fellow trade unionists established an open learning space to address steelworkers' lack of formal education: 'We started a sort of open learning thing down there, it was an office, where men could go in, wanted to improve their English and their maths and things like that.' Social capital and social embeddedness have also been associated with increased political participation (Klandermans & Stekelenburg 2010). Indeed, steelmaking cultivated a politicised workforce, with union politics encouraging participation in the wider labour movement. Brian Cunningham verbalised the richness of political activity:

> I've always been politically motivated... that was the steelworks, I grew up in that environment... trade unions are political animals... that always filtered down... there was always something on the go.

The material basis of steelworkers' working-class culture was demolished alongside the steelworks itself. Deindustrialisation in Scotland was rapid and pervasive. According to Finlay 'there was no transitional phase', with the 'economic and social transformation of Scotland' comparable in speed to 'former soviet nations' (2004, p. 386). James Carlin had seen steelmaking as part of his heritage, a gateway into the labour movement and central to his working-class identity. Deindustrialisation ruptured this identity, provoking a sense of placelessness:

> I just couldn't settle, I couldn't settle, you know what I mean, it was always in my head about the steelworks... that will be 25 years until the plant actually closed, and I have always classed myself as a steelworker, I don't know why.

The tendency of closure to uproot and destroy workers' sense of place and identity has been referenced by High, who describes how displaced US workers label themselves 'gypsies' – deindustrialisation had uprooted them, compelling them to move from place to place in search of transitory employment (2003, p. 65). Employment transition disrupted interviewees' previously vibrant social lives, with their new employment lacking steelmaking's interwoven social aspect. The end of the continental shift pattern made socialising difficult for Tommy Johnston: 'It started just fading away. After a year, I stopped playing football, I stopped playing golf'. Tommy added that annual leave in steelmaking, due to its collective structure, provided more opportunities for socialising than janitorial work: 'I've been off work for five weeks, I'm

bored out my skull; I mean if I had been off five weeks in Ravenscraig I'd be away golfing, away fishing, away playing five asides'. In Ravenscraig Brian Cunningham had regularly socialised with colleagues, with social outings common and simple to organise given workers' regular intervals of free time. This culture was lacking in his new employment, where social events were typically limited to sparsely attended Christmas dinners.

Dudley states that 'bonds of solidarity' are common within factory environments, which encourage workers to 'band together to express their collective opposition' (1994, p. 115). These bonds were noticeably absent from steelworkers' post-redundancy employment. James Carlin found Wisemans Dairy isolating: 'there was no camaraderie, there was no team aspect to it, you were an individual and you stayed an individual till the day you went home'. The combination of exploitive working conditions, authoritarian management, and lack of a union created a tense environment:

> The culture was completely different, it wasn't uncommon for you to see fights among guys down there... there were people starting on a Monday and walking out on a Wednesday, they just couldn't handle it... Managers were getting attacked and everything in there... they spoke to you different, they had no respect for you; you were at their beck and call.

James Coyle's time in children's care homes also lacked steelmaking's sense of community: 'I missed the banter, the day-to-day banter with individuals – the repertoire with the guys'. Enjoying both the emphasis on teamwork and the social side of steelmaking, Jim McKeown found teaching very individualized, with little sense of community during or beyond work: 'In Ravenscraig you knew everybody... in the school I can maybe walk into the staffroom and sit down, somebody walks past; I don't know who it is'. The 'cultural environment' of Jim's workplace had 'totally changed', finding a 'kind of falseness' among teachers which was alien to the more 'genuine' character of steelworkers. Teachers were less likely to confront issues directly, opting instead to suppress their emotions and play 'politics': 'teachers don't like to see themselves as being weak in any way, so they never admit, they never come for help... [in Ravenscraig] if there was something wrong it was out in the open, it was dealt with'. It was steelworkers' lack of such pretention which Jim particularly missed: 'I miss the people... that sort of rawness, that sort of rough and ready, the sort of straight to the point people'. Displaced Welsh and Yorkshire miners also mourned the loss of their social life and culture, finding their post-redundancy employment lacking mining's characteristic 'comradeship' (Witt 1990, p. 35). Perchard found similar sentiments among former Scottish miners, concluding that mining's demise had 'left profound psychological scars in coalfield communities', rupturing culture and identity (2013, p. 78). In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam outlines the deterioration of social capital in North American society, citing a decline in voluntary associations (2000). In a similar way, the erasure of Scottish heavy industry prompted the virtual disappearance of highly socially integrated workplaces, which contributed to a decline in social capital among working-class people.

The loss of both employment in steelmaking and the structure provided by the ISTC, in tandem with a reduction of free time, weakened many interviewees' connection to the labour movement, diminishing their political participation. Tommy Johnston explains:

> I've left the Labour Party... Didn't have the time, whereas [in Ravenscraig] we were off during the week you could go to Labour Party meetings... but when

> you are working Monday to Friday... you couldn't get going anywhere so it just
> fell away.

Former active Labour Party members thought that the party had undergone a demise, which they attributed to the destruction of heavy industry. Interviewees such as Harry Carlin believed that the Labour Party had lost touch with its working-class constituents: 'The Labour Party changed... it *was* a working-class environment, and you *were* represented by working-class people. The mines went, the steelworks have went, so it's not the same environment'. Linking deindustrialisation to the erosion of working-class leadership in the Labour Party, Sam Thompson stated:

> I think is going down the tubes the Labour Party, and that is because of heavy
> industry... we don't have people coming through that were militants... having
> the ability to lead people... it's taken away Labour traditions there is no doubt
> about that, there is not any leadership.

Although employment transition diminished political participation, it had no bearing on general political outlook, which remained strongly left wing. This runs counter to the experience of some deindustrialised US workers, who adopted an individualised outlook in response to deindustrialisation. Carlie Noyes' recurring experience of job loss, for instance, eroded his sense of trust in collective action: 'There's nobody out there you can trust... don't never put all your trust in a union' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009, p. 138). In contrast, former Scottish steelworkers continued to express faith in trade unionism and collective action – with deindustrialisation fortifying commitment rather than weakening it.

Yet the end of steelmaking alienated former steelworkers from one another, terminating decade's long workplace relationships and shattering their sense of occupational community. For Dudley, it is this destruction of the 'social structure' which represents the most 'devastating' aspect of deindustrialisation (1994, p. 134). This was strongly articulated by former KEMET electronics workers, who felt grief over the loss of the family atmosphere and social connections which had defined their workplace (May & Morrison, 2003). Jim McHale, a tool-and-die maker interviewed by High, aptly summarised the emotional disruption of deindustrialisation: 'you're in a little world. Then you leave that world' (2003, p. 41). Reflecting the same tone, Jim McKeown described losing a part of himself, a feeling he believed was even more pronounced among the older generation of steelworkers:

> There was bit of me missing, because a lot of those people, even though they
> are living round about, I've never seen them again... I think a lot of the older
> ones, who knew they weren't going to work again, when you meet them a
> couple of times they seemed – a part of their soul was missing.

Frank Shannon, who was part of this older generation agreed, stating that many lost their sense of purpose, living a life defined by loneliness: 'I know a lot [of] people that didn't last a year, dead... maybe drink, gambling... work was their life... it was devastating'. Transition from a workplace with a strong sense of occupational community can shatter workers sense of self; or as Brian Cunningham stated: 'You take dignity away from people and what are you left with? You're left with a shell'. The impact of closure of a major workplace reverberates throughout the entire local community. Interviewed on behalf of her late steelworker husband Jim, Dorothy Macready spoke of how the closure of the steelworks fundamentally altered the day-to-day structure of language within former steel town, Motherwell:

> It knocked the heart out of Motherwell, when the Craig closed. The first
> conversation you had when Ravenscraig was working was: "what shift is Jim?"
> ... and you would say, "oh he's night shift, he's day shift". When it closed it
> was: "Has your Jim got a job yet?" Conversations changed.

Deindustrialisation has left major social, political, economic and cultural scars across working-class communities. Identity disintegration became a fact of life for many former steelworkers in Lanarkshire's deindustrialised communities: 'Some guys it devastated. Some guys would never recover from it, some guys retired from it, I know one guy who committed suicide' (Cummingham Interview, 2017). Just as radioactive material loses its toxicity very slowly over time, Linkon (2018) has labelled these long-term scars the half-life of deindustrialisation. Deindustrialisation 'is not an event of the past', but is rather an 'active and significant part of the present', as the half-life of deindustrialisation 'generates psychological and social forms of disease', made manifest in the 'high rates of various illnesses as well as alcoholism, drug abuse, and suicide' that plague deindustrialised communities as they 'struggle with questions about their identities and their place in a global economy that has devalued workers and their labor' (Linkon 2018, p. 1). Ravenscraig's Industrial Chaplin, Rev. John Potter, shared this interpretation in his description of the impact of the closure:

> It wasn't a thing that happened, it *is* happening. The aftermath of the demise of
> heavy industry in a place like Lanarkshire has a long term effect on individuals
> and the community… a community that is still paying the price.

For Rev. Potter, 'it was not just the individual that was redundant, it was communities'; for them the 'loss of identity was a significant blow', with communities like Lanarkshire 'struggling to find a new purpose and identity' amidst the ruins of heavy industry.

Smokestack Nostalgia?

Industrial workers are often castigated as remembering their industry through a rose-tinted lens, guilty of first degree smokestack nostalgia. Considering that heavy industry in general has a notorious history of destroying workers' health and crippling their bodies this must be addressed (Johnston & McIvor 2000, 2007; McIvor 2017). Oral historians can often jeopardise their interviewees' agency, as well as the reliability of oral history methodology itself, by an overzealous fixation upon nostalgia and its impact upon interviewees' ability to accurately depict historical events. The idea that steelworkers' were blinded by rosy nostalgia, painting an overly positive version of steelmaking and suppressing its inherent harshness is inaccurate. Alongside the positive social aspect and strong sense of collectivism described above, the adverse health effects and persistent danger of steelmaking were spoken about openly and honestly, and were strongly condemned. Many former industrial workers share stories of recovered health and improved workplace safety after leaving heavy industry, which McIvor has usefully termed 'escape narratives' (Hart & K'Meyer 2009; McIvor 2017, p. 37).

Steelmaking was remembered as uncomfortable, performed in a dirty environment under intense heat. Andrew Kane recalled how steelworkers 'took a sweat towel' to work and were supplied with 'salt tablets' to prevent dehydration. Dirt defined Jim McKeown's memory of steelmaking, coating everything: 'your clothes were always dirty in there, everything was always dirty, always had that – that Ravenscraig smell'. 'Day and night' was a common parallel used to differentiate the radical environmental change in workplace standards. For Harry Carlin

the difference between the steelworks – 'dirty, warm and hot' – and the 'lovely and clean' elderly care homes was absolute. Most interviewees entered more hygienic and comfortable employment, with the differences expressed most strongly by those, like Harry, who entered the public sector. Steelmaking was not simply uncomfortable, but exceptionally dangerous. Former steelworkers were able to indicate their now faded scars and burns, yet many spoke of the still present mental scars of witnessing co-workers killed on site. A typical working day could switch from 'mundane, repetitive, monotonous, to absolute terror', as Brian Cunningham stated: 'when it went wrong, it went spectacularly wrong'. Jim McKeown partially lost sight in one eye when drip water from the roof 'mixed with steel and exploded', lodging 'a wee piece of metal' in his eye. James Carlin lost part of his finger, which 'was quite commonplace at that time'. Brian survived various accidents, including narrowly avoiding a falling ladle of molten metal. Yet he confessed that other workers were not as lucky, that 'a lot of the guys paid the ultimate price in there, lot of guys lost their life in that place'. Exposure to death took a toll on steelworkers. Peter Hamill recalled witnessing his first occupational fatality:

> I remember the first one that got killed... for some morbid reason everybody ran over, and they are round about this boy, he's got – the wee nurse is there – and he's got a cover on him, he had been feeding a rope in and it had whiplashed him, cut him, killed him.

Tommy Johnston, a shop steward, experienced his 'lowest point in Ravenscraig' when one of his union members was 'strangled in a conveyor belt'. The prominence of danger and death was thankfully missing in Tommy's new employment as a janitor: 'If I made a mistake in the crane, putting the hot metal in, I could have killed about 6 people, whereas you're a school janitor now, all you have got to worry about is kids shouting back at you and calling you names... totally night and day'. Like Tommy, most interviewees transitioned into safer employment, exiting an industry which had killed and disabled so many of their co-workers. Alongside immediate injury or death, long-term employment within steelmaking jeopardised workers' health. Interviewees recalled how the air was 'rife' with toxic gasses and dust. This dust, rendered visible when rays of light pierced the factory roof, was what Andrew Kane 'hated most' about steelmaking: 'The sun used to shine through and you could see all this – all swirling around – all the stuff you were breathing... it was disgusting... it was as opposite to healthy as you could get'. This environment directly contrasts Andrew's current employment as a taxi driver, where out in the fresh air he feels 'a lot healthier'. Now a teacher, Jim McKeown feels that he would 'not be as healthy' if he had remained within the 'hellish' environment of steelmaking: 'the dust was always in the air, it was the dust, heavy dust in the air all the time, and the smoke, you were always covered in smoke'.

It is clear that improved health and safety stand as one of the few positive experiences of deindustrialisation. But it is possible to both oppose deindustrialisation and criticise the most dangerous aspects of industrial capitalism. Workers' experiences of employment are seldom two dimensional. Chatterley and Rouverol's *I Was Content and Not Content: The Story of Linda Lord and the Closing of Penobscot Poultry* (1999), records the life history of one woman, Linda Lord, after the closure of her workplace, Penobscot Poultry. The books title, 'I was content and not content', is given in answer by Lord when questioned about her job loss (1999, p. 21). In the book's foreword, describing the complex and seemingly contradictory emotions which workers feel towards their employment, Frisch, author of *Portraits in Steel*, compares Lord's statement to the interviews he carried out himself with steelworkers, who at once 'both liked and hated their jobs' (1999, pp. x-xi). Frisch cautions against attempts to place the experiences of working-class people into 'obvious categories', instead suggesting that their

views on work are defined by 'multivalence' – they hold many values simultaneously and without confusion (1999, p. xii).

Conclusion

This article has examined the employment transitions of Scottish steelworkers who were displaced as a result of deindustrialisation during the 1990s. It has placed an emphasis on identity and experiences of work, specifically the survivability of occupational identities in post-redundancy employment. The most pervasive representation of deindustrialisation within the literature is the deterioration thesis, which outlines the often-instantaneous collapse of working conditions and community cohesion. Former steelworkers' post-redundancy experiences generally align with the deterioration thesis' portrayal of deindustrialisation, with a few qualifications.

Deindustrialisation fundamentally shattered occupational communities, rupturing workers' social lives and bringing an abrupt end to socially embedded workplaces, representing the most profound impact of deindustrialisation upon former steelworkers' identities. The work culture of steelmaking had been characterised by an intense sense of occupational community. Bonds between steelworkers were likened to that of an extended family. The plethora of voluntary associations, sporting teams, charity initiatives, educational programmes, hobby networks, and political groups attached to steelmaking were absent from their new workplaces. The social aspect of steelmaking had immersed steelworkers and their families in a vibrant and often all-encompassing culture, which extended well beyond the workplace into the heart of community life. The material basis of this culture was demolished alongside the steelworks. Yet it would be wrong to assume that work itself lost its meaningfulness. Employment remained a fundamental aspect of identity, it continued to inform how workers defined themselves and underpinned their self-respect. Former steelworkers' work-based identity did not shatter under the pressure of deindustrialisation. Similarly, while job titles changed, former steelworkers' working-class identity remained fixed and unbroken. The most dramatic consequence of employment transition was undoubtedly the exit from a heavily unionised workplace, which had been typified by a powerful union and a respectful management. As their new workplaces were often wholly non-unionised, any necessity for respectful relations was removed entirely: interviewees generally found their new management autocratic and openly hostile to trade unions.

However, like the survivability of their class and work-based identities, former steelworkers retained their commitment to collectivism and trade unionism, underlining that displaced workers cannot be cast as passive victims. Deindustrialisation has been portrayed as a potentially emasculatory experience; one which may tie into the supposed 'crisis' of masculinity. Yet former steelworkers who entered female-dominated or mixed workplaces reported no sense of emasculation whatsoever. The presence of women colleagues did not belittle their masculinity, neither did their performance of traditionally 'female' work. Employment with decent conditions and pay – regardless of gendered employment stereotypes – was the crucial factor which designated decent work. The emasculation felt by other heavy industry workers who enter female-dominated employment relates less to working in a job considered effeminate, but rather to that fact that women have been historically marginalised into precarious, non-unionised, and low paid work.

Steelworkers' post-redundancy employment experiences demonstrate that deindustrialisation cannot be understood as a single event; its impact upon workers and their communities is an

ongoing process, one which continues to define the lives and identities of displaced workers and the subsequent generations who have grown up under the reality of industrial ruination. Working-class jobs have become endemically low-paid, exploitative, and insecure. Decades of neoliberalism have crippled the labour movement, delegitimised working-class history and identity, almost erasing working-class collective memory and action. For many young workers low paid precarious work is norm. Yet 'post-industrialism', the 'end of the job for life' and the 'gig economy' are not a shocking new postmodern phenomenon. They are normal elements of a social system which continuously undermines the stability of working-class communities and employment. The impact of deindustrialisation on occupational communities and working-class culture can be aptly summarised by Marx and Engels: 'Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty... All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned' (1848, pp. 38-39). The post-war consensus of stable, decently paid working-class employment represents an effective blip in the history of work. Walkerdine and Jimenez have rightly cautioned against the tendency to cast working-class communities before the advent of deindustrialisation with a 'salt-of-the-earth stability' (2012, p. 7). In truth, industrial communities have always been characterised by periods of struggle and change. The distinguishing feature of deindustrialisation, especially in Scotland where it was both rapid and pervasive, was the accelerated destruction of the material basis of organised working-class culture through the demolition of heavy industry. Former steelworkers 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. However, the question posed by Tovar et al. – 'how long can memories of an industrial past survive when there are no material traces of the formerly dominant industrial activity?' (2011, pp. 339-340) – shows that while the occupational working-class culture of steelworkers survived deindustrialisation, it did so only within the identities of steelworkers themselves. As is the case with modern working-class employment, the long-term survivability of the specific occupational cultures of heavy industry appears precarious.

Author Bio

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Interview with Brian Cunningham by James Ferns, 19/01/2017
Interview with Bill Burt by James Ferns, 22/01/2017
Interview with Frank Shannon by James Ferns, 23/01/2017
Interview with James Carlin by James Ferns, 24/01/2017
Interview with Andrew Kane by James Ferns, 25/01/2017

Interview with Tommy Johnston by James Ferns, 26/01/2017
Interview with Peter Hamill by James Ferns, 28/01/2017
Interview with Rev. John Potter by James Ferns, 28/01/2017
Interview with Frank Roy by James Ferns, 01/02/2017
Interview with Jim McKeown by James Ferns, 13/02/2017
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