From "Infant Hercules" to "Ghost Town":

Industrial collapse and social harm in Teesside

Abstract

This article explicates the harms associated with deindustrialization in Teesside in the North East of England in the context of neoliberalism. Drawing on in-depth qualitative interviews (n=25), the article explores how ongoing industrial collapse, typified by Sahaviriya Steel Industries' (SSI) closure in 2015 has generated various harms. First, the article examines industrialism's socioeconomic security and stability. It then explores the negative impact of SSI's closure in 2015, including a sense of loss and unemployment. Next, it demonstrates how the absence of economic stability produces harmful outcomes, namely insecurity, mental health problems and bleak visions of the future. The article concludes by casting industrial ruination as an impediment to human flourishing; the normal functioning of capitalism represents a "negative motivation to harm" that prevents the stability and security necessary for individual and collective flourishing.

Introduction

This article draws on original qualitative research that highlights the impact of deindustrialization and continued industrial collapse on Teesside, in the North East of England. A region built on engineering, iron, petrochemicals, shipbuilding and steel, Teesside has witnessed a continued systematic incursion on its *raison d'être* since the collapse of post-war capitalism (Harvey 2005). Mining ceased in Teesside in the mid-twentieth century, and the last shipyard closed in 1986. Since the 1990s, production of petrochemicals has declined

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significantly. This industrial retrenchment culminated in the closure of Sahaviriya Steel Industries (SSI),[1] the largest remaining steelworks in 2015 (Beynon et al 1994; Shildrick et al. 2012; Telford and Wistow 2019; Warren 2018). The local economy has since been reconfigured from mass production to services; insecure employment in call centers, leisure and retail prevails (Lloyd 2019).

This article examines the impact of industrial decline under neoliberalism, with particular emphasis on the 2015 closure of SSI, through a social harm or zemiological lens (Hillyard and Tombs 2017; Kotzé 2018; Pemberton 2016) to consider the impact of "structural violence" (Tombs and Hillyard 2004) on the lives of those affected by this process. Placing deindustrialization in the context of neoliberal political economy (Harvey 2005), this article will demonstrate how structural processes at the macro level have harmful consequences at the micro level (Pemberton 2016). We utilize an ultra-realist approach to social harm (Hall and Winlow 2015; Lloyd 2019) and therefore consider the probabilistic causal tendencies of absence in generating harmful outcomes for the local community and economy. In particular, we concentrate on what Hall and Winlow (2015) refer to as the "negative motivation to harm." This denotes how capitalism's internal need to expand and produce profit motivates business owners to act to maximize return on investments (Marx 1976), generating unintended but negative consequences. This unintentional harm to communities and individuals is engendered by the *normal functioning of capitalism.* The article also responds to Pemberton's (2016) challenge to produce empirically driven, structural analyses of social harm located within the context of late-capitalism.

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[1] Over the years, SSI endured various privatizations, downsizes of the workforce and faced closure in 2009, when it was temporarily mothballed (Hudson and Swanton 2012). While SSI agreed to a multi-million-pound takeover deal in 2011, it was viewed as a short-term solution because it contained outdated production facilities that required significant investment.

We begin with a discussion of neoliberalism, deindustrialization and social harm. Existing debates in these areas (see Davies 2017; Davies et al. 2019; Dorling 2004; Lloyd 2018; Lynch 2017; Strangleman and Rhodes 2014) act as a platform for the empirical findings. Next, we offer a brief account of our methodology, introducing the research project at the center of this article. Finally, we present our findings and suggest that industrial ruination within the context of neoliberal market capitalism has unintended but deeply harmful consequences for communities and individuals, including the absence of security, mental health problems and nihilistic cultural attitudes. In particular, the absence of stability and protection within the new context of working life in Teesside reflects a series of harms that prevent workers, their families and communities from flourishing (Pemberton 2016). Searching for a "good" life becomes problematic when the rug is pulled out from beneath one's feet (Lloyd 2018). This article demonstrates that entirely legal processes, such as deindustrialization, are of criminological concern due to the harmful consequences wrought upon those negatively affected by the normal functioning of capitalism (Hillyard and Tombs 2004). The consequences of deindustrialization create individual and community-based harms but also engender conditions in which illegality emerges in the spaces wrought by social upheaval (see DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2010; Hall et al 2008; Matthews et al. 2001). We turn now to current debates on neoliberalism, deindustrialization and social harm.

Neoliberalism and the deindustrialization of Teesside

A unique set of historical conditions resulted in the emergence of a "post-war consensus"; the Great Depression, World War II and the presence of alternative ideological frameworks culminated in a commitment by Western governments to full employment and a social safety

net (Harvey 2005; Piketty 2014). This briefly shackled capitalism's profit motive and redistributed surplus to workers who witnessed economic stability and unprecedented gains in living standards (Mitchell and Fazi 2017; Winlow and Hall 2013). As we will reveal below, this continues to shape memory and act as a backdrop for our current configuration. Structural crises in the 1970s enabled capitalism to dispense with full employment and unshackle a system determined to correct the declining rate of profitability (Harvey 2005).

Neoliberalism's ontological foundations are contested (see Harvey 2005; Mitchell and Fazi 2017; Slobodian 2018). While some see neoliberal ideology as one of free markets and state retrenchment, more recent work suggests a reconfiguration of the state's function in order to protect and facilitate market growth and the movement of capital (Mitchell and Fazi 2017; Slobodian 2018). The consequences for those on the economic precipice are delineated clearly in myriad empirical studies (Dorling 2015; Standing 2011; Wilkinson and Pickett 2009). Slobodian (2018: 13) suggests that neoliberalism eviscerated barriers to profit maximization through a process of "encasement"—the creation of legal scaffolding at national and supra-national level to protect the "rights" of the market, capital movement and accumulation. In other words, neoliberalism and the free market required a regulatory straitjacket to prevent interference from other ideologies, namely social democracy and what early neoliberals regarded as "misguided fantasies of global economic equality" (Slobodian 2018: 17). By enshrining neoliberal logic within global institutions, encasement depoliticized social issues. As a result, neoliberalism is no longer regarded as one ideological framework among many but simply "the economy."

Capitalism under neoliberal ideology has a specific spatial component to the movement and distribution of capital (Harvey 2010). The reversal of capital flow in the 1970s signaled resurgence for capital accumulation at the expense of the West's productive

dominance; a process of deindustrialization occurred from the 1970s onwards in Europe, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) (Beynon et al. 1994; High 2003; Linkon and Russo 2002; Shildrick et al. 2012) as production moved to the Global South and East, where costs were cheaper and labor regulations non-existent. As we will see, deindustrialization continues to impose numerous consequences in those parts of the West where industrial plants have closed and communities struggle with the effects of alienation and anomie (Linkon 2013; Strangleman 2017). As Mah (2013) notes, some areas received sufficient investment to develop reinvigorated post-industrial economies, while others continue to languish. We turn now to the literature on deindustrialization and its effects to foreground a discussion of social harm in the context of unemployment, lost identity, social and economic insecurity, deprivation and criminality.

Deindustrialization

Deindustrialization has been the subject of sociological investigation for four decades (see Strangleman and Rhodes 2014 for an overview). If we place deindustrialization in the political-economic context of global capitalism and neoliberal ideology, we can see the similarities in experience across the Rust Belt in the US (High 2003; Linkon and Russo 2002), South Wales, the Midlands and the North East of England (Beynon et al 1994; Byrne 1989; MacDonald and Marsh 2005; Warren 2018). Key recurring themes in the deindustrialization literature focus on job loss and unemployment (Doussard 2009), the impact on community (Linkon and Russo 2002), health and mental wellbeing (MacDonald and Shildrick 2013), identity (Rhodes 2013), socio-economic decline and poverty (Shildrick et al. 2012), and post-industrial criminality (Ellis 2016; Hall et al. 2008; Winlow 2001). In spaces where the economic logic changes significantly

and rapidly, associated socio-economic problems emerge and once thriving communities face multiple and entrenched challenges.

Teesside, in the North East of England, was built on iron, petrochemical production, and steel from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (Beynon et al. 1994; Lloyd 2013). Severe deindustrialization has entrenched social problems in an area with a traditionally narrow labor market unable to cope with the loss of 100,000 manufacturing and industrial jobs between 1971 and 2008 (Shildrick et al. 2012). The impact of deindustrialization on Teesside has been explored by many (see Beynon et al. 1994; Hudson 2005; Hudson and Swanton 2012). Although industrialism was the core organizing logic in the post-war era, it was "wiped out almost overnight" (Beynon et al. 1994 :75) in the 1980s as markets were exposed to international competition. Rapid capital flight followed and many of Teesside's localities now suffer from high rates of unemployment, underemployment and deprivation (MacDonald and Marsh 2005). Similarly, Warren (2018) argues that Teesside's contemporary employment opportunities in the service sector are not an adequate substitute for industrial labor because they provide a fraction of the pay and pension packages.

Offering a longitudinal study of youth transitions and social exclusion from the mid 1990s-2011, Shildrick and colleagues (2012) demonstrate how stability and security were absent, while transitions were messy and insecure. Many young people endured temporary employment in the service economy; the ability to keep a job was circumscribed. Other research displays how call centers comprise a core aspect of deindustrialized labor markets, where many workers fail to identify with their work yet remain committed to consumer capitalism's vibrant markets (Lloyd 2013). Despite the problematic aspects of industrial capitalism—namely, endemic class inequality and gender and racial disparities—the

commonality and shared experiences valued during industrial modernity are increasingly absent in contemporary insecure labor markets.

Linkon (2013) describes the "half-life of deindustrialization"—namely, the long-term consequences that shape recollections of the past, coordinate the present, and project into the future. Indeed, much of the deindustrialization literature contends with memory, belonging and the contextualization of the present around loss (see Linkon and Russo 2002). Strangleman and colleagues (2013) stress that deindustrialization has led to the loss of good pay, sense of community and place, and bonds among co-workers, as well as impacted their identity formation. Mah (2013) argues that a sense of loss, anger and resignation has accompanied the decline of shipbuilding in Newcastle, a regional neighbor to Teesside in the North East of England. Mah ascertains that the area had witnessed depopulation because of a lack of employment opportunities; industrial work had not been adequately replaced. Meanwhile, Mah's participants highlighted living memories of an industrial past. Nettleingham's (2019) research participants in deindustrialized Faversham in the South East of England recalled shipbuilding's noise, sights and smells. While optimistic about the future, they expressed sadness about the loss of history and tradition.

Other research in Nottingham in the Midlands, an area which relied on coal mining, discerns how former coal miners previously felt useful and served a social function (Emery 2018). The coal miners expressed sadness and resignation about industrial retrenchment, as well as feelings of despondency for the loss of camaraderie and togetherness. Doussard and colleagues' (2009: 205) study of Chicago suggests that deindustrialization reconfigured the "rules of the game." The compromise between capital and labor had been destroyed as trade union power collapsed, while more and more people were employed in low-paid temporary employment in cleaning, food, and retail occupations.

Strangleman (2017) contends that deindustrialization has engendered negative cultural attitudes and the decline of employment, where men dominated the workforce and where masculine values were cultivated and reproduced. Other research indicates working-class life in deindustrialized locales is characterized by social bonds and commonality (Mah 2013; Nettleingham 2019). Life is difficult, but it is made bearable through cultural collegiality. While empirically useful, absent is a recognition that when the social world changes, individuals change too (Wakeman 2016). Winlow and Hall (2006) claim industrial collapse has diminished traditional class-based identities around employment, community and durable friendships. Young peoples' identities are, therefore, forged principally through consumer culture, which advocates cultural distinction and loosens social bonds. Some suggest neoliberalism has concealed the post-war period because many young people have no knowledge of industrialism and its associated cultures (Fisher 2009; Lloyd 2013; Winlow and Hall 2006). Going further, some have argued that various deindustrialized locales exhibit signs of a "post-social" configuration—that is, communal bonds have withered and competitive, "me first" individualism is pervasive (Wakeman 2016; Winlow and Hall 2013). Indeed, areas ravaged by deindustrialization have also become sites of criminological concern because they often possess high-rates of criminality, including homicide, illicit drug markets and violence (Dorling 2004; Hall et al. 2008).

DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2010) document how deindustrialized areas in the US often contain sizable levels of poverty, unemployment and high rates of male-male and male-female violence (see also Ellis 2016). Similarly, Currie (2018) describes how marketized societies generate higher rates of criminality and imprisonment because of their social and economic conditions, including inequality, poverty and a dearth of meaningful industrial employment.

Matthews and colleagues (2001) analyzed the homicide rate in the US's midsized Rust Belt locations between 1980-1995. They stress that deindustrialization creates a context—namely, depopulation, deprivation, low geographic growth and unemployment—which generates high levels of homicide. Indeed, Kotzé (2019) explicates crime's socially-corrosive effects in a deindustrialized space. Utilizing ethnographic data, he displays how crime is normalized, accepted and woven into society. Problematic drug use was prevalent, while fear and intimidation were also common. Davies (2017: 468) describes these as England's "bleak towns and cities," while Hall and colleagues (2008: 3) suggest they endure "permanent recession." In such areas that are abandoned economically and decaying socially, illegal markets fill the void left by deindustrialization. Deindustrialization and crime have been inextricably linked for decades, but the following part will introduce the social harm approach to indicate a new way of seeing the impact of deindustrialization.

Social harm

If criminology has often attended to the complex and damaging social problems associated with deindustrialization and neoliberal ideology, so, too, has the emerging social harm framework (see Hillyard and Tombs 2004; see also Davies et al. 2019; Hall and Winlow 2015; Lloyd 2018; Pemberton 2016). While influential criminologists previously encouraged criminology to broaden its focus and study social harm (e.g., Quinney 1970; Sutherland 1949), research in the area has burgeoned in recent years. Social harm or zemiology, as it is often known, grew from the critique that "crime" represents a small fraction of the harms endemic to capitalism (Quinney 1970), particularly its neoliberal variant (Pemberton 2016), and that the concept of crime is a social construction without ontological foundation (Hillyard and

Tombs 2004). While Hillyard and Tombs (2004) suggest the concept of crime and, indeed, criminology, as a discipline wedded to the study of crime, are outdated and problematic, others have argued persuasively for both criminological and zemiological investigations of a range of contemporary social problems (see Hall and Winlow 2015). While Lasslett (2010) draws on Marx and Lukacs to suggest that crime does possess an ontological reality, Kotzé (2018) notes that while "crime" may lack an ontological grounding, the *effects* of crime are real and have a lasting impact; we need both crime and harm perspectives if we are to understand complex social problems.

Social harm has widened the criminological gaze beyond transgressions of the criminal law (Hillyard and Tombs 2004) and into the realm of social injustice. For some, however, harm as a concept requires its own ontological foundation. Tombs and Hillyard (2004) offer a typology of physical harms, financial or economic harms, emotional or psychological harms, and harms to cultural safety. This allows us to categorize harmful action but does not offer a stable footing for understanding the nature of harm.

Pemberton (2016) outlines a needs-based approach that identifies neoliberalism as the most harmful form of political economy in terms of its active prevention of satisfying the basic needs of survival and freedom. In categorizing harms as physical and mental harms, autonomy harms, that is, the curtailment of one's freedom and autonomy, as well as relational harms, Pemberton provides a framework in which these categories often overlap, at times problematically (see Lloyd 2018). Yar (2012) usefully suggests a theory of recognition whereby harm constitutes the failure to secure recognition from others. At the institutional level of "respect," the social level of "esteem" and the personal level of "love," our rights and place in the social order are recognized by others; misrecognition of our rights constitutes harm.

An ultra-realist harm framework (Hall and Winlow 2015; Lloyd 2018) considers two interlinked motivations: the negative motivation to harm, which constitutes the unintended but harmful consequences of impersonal decision-making and social structures, and the positive motivation to harm, which embodies the subjective willingness to inflict harm on others. Finally, Raymen (2019) notes that attempts to delineate those issues that represent "harm" must rest on an ethical or moral framework of "the Good"; in a liberal society characterized by individualism and a capitalist ethic, collective agreement on what constitutes a "good life" or "good society" often bypasses ethical or moral questions in favor of greater individual freedoms. Raymen asks us to consider "the Good" embedded in social practice; a collective striving towards "goodness" offers an indication of harms that prevent individual and collective flourishing. Combining these ideas together might provide a robust ontological foundation that has previously been lacking.

While harm continues to search for a firm footing, its lens has been trained on a range of contemporary social problems including borders and immigration (Canning 2018), environmental damage (Davies et al. 2019; Lynch et al. 2019), leisure spaces (Raymen and Smith 2019), and workplaces (Lloyd 2019). More specifically, some harm-based research focuses on the effects of deindustrialization. Davies and colleagues (2019) document how the closure of a manufacturing domain in Northumberland was replaced by a metals and chemicals plant. Although workers obtained useful employment, such industries are environmentally- and individually-damaging as they perpetuate respiratory problems (see also Lynch 2017). Deindustrialization creates a social justice issue regarding local employment that clashes with an eco-justice concern of environmental harm. It is clear that there are complex factors at play within the context of deindustrialization, neoliberal governance and social harm perspectives; the remainder of the article will explore these connections in

relation to deindustrialization on Teesside. First, however, we outline the empirical project at the heart of this article.

Methodology

The data presented here are from a qualitative research project on class, deindustrialization and politics on Teesside. Teesside, or the Tees Valley, comprises five local authority areas (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees) and has a total population of around 600,000. The local authority areas contain some of the most deprived wards in the UK (English Indices of Deprivation 2019). While pockets of affluence exist, the official unemployment rate is often twice the national average, educational achievement is below average, and health inequalities are high (English Indices of Deprivation 2019; ONS 2020a; Public Health England 2020). Crime rates are also higher than the national average (ONS 2020b). The area was relatively prosperous at the end of the 1960s and a correlation exists between current multiple social problems and the long-term practice of labor market upheaval brought on by deindustrialization (Shildrick et al. 2012).

From 2018 to 2019, we conducted semi-structured interviews, lasting between forty and ninety minutes, with local individuals and substantiated with ethnographic vignettes. Core themes and codes were identified and then repeatedly cross-checked (Braun and Clark 2006). The interviews yielded rich data about current structural conditions, industrial collapse and participants' pasts. Consequently, participants' sentiments at the micro level were linked to the macro (Young 2011), which added depth to the discussion, revealed complex experiential realities, and elicited rich data about the personal and local consequences of deindustrialization—particularly SSI's closure.

Following other qualitative researchers (Ellis 2016; Treadwell et al. 2018; Wakeman 2016), the lead researcher's place of residence aided participant recruitment as five gatekeepers were utilized. This enabled access to fourteen participants. The remaining eleven respondents were recruited through snowball sampling. Thirteen participants were female, the rest male. The majority of the sample was between the ages of forty and fifty, while four were between eighteen- and twenty years old. Five individuals had retired. This broad age spectrum allowed for reflections from those who experienced deindustrialization as it happened in Teesside and those who are a generation removed. They all lived on Teesside and most had grown up in the conurbation. All respondents were White British. While parts of Teesside are ethnically diverse, the local authority where this research location was situated is overwhelmingly White British. Nine respondents were employed previously in the petrochemicals or steelworks industries. The remaining participants possessed a significant other that had been employed in one of these industries, principally a partner or relative. Respondents were currently employed in a number of diverse roles, including a self-employed window cleaner and joiner, several primary school teaching assistants, supermarket assistant, part-time work in the night time economy, an independent clothes store owner and several postmen and women. While social class is complex, particularly as traditional class demarcations have blurred (Bourdieu 1984; Savage 2015), participants are identified here as the working class because of their occupations.

Prior to data collection, we received permission to conduct the study from Teesside University. The risk posed to the participants and ethical issues were considered minimal. Participants were provided with an information sheet prior to the interviews, which outlined the research project's purpose, aims and methods and details on the General Data Protection

Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. We also distributed a consent form. All of the participants have been given a pseudonym to conceal their identity.

Methodologically and theoretically, this article follows ultra-realism (Hall and Winlow 2015). Ultra-realists call for a network of ethnographic research that collectively identifies the reality of life in contemporary society (Briggs 2017; Kotzé 2019; Lloyd 2019; Raymen and Smith 2019; Wakeman 2016). As with all research, this project contains limitations; the sample size is relatively small and cannot offer universal generalizations or be representative of the whole population. Nonetheless, it elicited rich and descriptive data which can offer analytical generalizability (Kotzé 2019). Essentially, this is where empirical findings are corroborated by other research in similar regions. For instance, previous empirical work has ascertained a loss of economic stability, security and fatalistic cultural attitudes in the deindustrialized North East of England (Kotzé 2019; Lloyd 2018; Telford and Wistow 2019; Winlow and Hall 2006).

A second hallmark of ultra-realism is its call for investigation of the probabilistic causal tendencies of societal depth structures (Hall and Winlow 2015). In recognizing multiple "domains of reality," investigating events and experiences in the actual and empirical realms of everyday experiences and interactions on deindustrialized Teesside can potentially offer insights into the real consequences of invisible structures, such as neoliberal ideology and political economy. Semi-structured interviews articulate the lived reality of job loss and social change, but critical analysis infuses those perspectives with insights into political economy and ideology, as well as with a mechanism for testing a social harm framework against individual perceptions and accounts. Although Teesside's former reliance on heavy engineering, iron, petrochemicals, shipbuilding, and steel is unique, analytical generalizability is possible when placed in the broader context of deindustrialized spaces in North America

and Europe, where industrial collapse, the ascent of unstable and low-paid work and myriad social and cultural problems have emerged (Davies 2017; Davies et al. 2019; Doussard et al. 2009; Mah 2013; Strangleman et al. 2013).

Ultra-realism emphasizes the importance of contextual conditions, history, political economy and structural changes (Winlow and Hall 2019). By conducting in-depth qualitative research and theorizing data, we advance understanding and respond to calls from both ultra-realism and social harm researchers for criminology to broaden its scope and explicate neoliberalism's damaging but normalized harms (Davies et al. 2019; Kotzé 2018; Pemberton 2016; Tombs and Hillyard 2004).

The presence of stability

Linkon's (2013: 39) term, the "half-life of deindustrialization," stresses how history shapes peoples' views of the present. Teesside's foundation of iron, petrochemicals and steel had, in the nineteenth century, led to the application of the labels "Ironopolis" and an "infant Hercules" (Lloyd 2013). While much of this industry has now gone, memories of industrialism persist, and people ascertain value in recalling industrial work's security and stability. The recollections of those people in our sample were partially idealized; they offered a concrete but restricted biography as employment was confined principally to Teesside's industry. Jimmy, 75, followed in his grandfathers' footsteps and worked at the steelworks:

> At 16 when I went onto the big mills, you did shift work 2-10, 6-2, but you got your weekends off, it was quite hard work. It was something everybody did, when the mines were open you either went down the pits to work or went in the steelworks. Jobs were plentiful then, ICI had also just started.

While industrial work was difficult and monotonous (Emery 2018), coherency characterized post-war capitalism: industrial workers knew their role in the system. Although the last pit

closed in the late 1960s, Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI)[2] employed a sizable rump of those who had worked previously in the pits and lost their jobs, employing over 30,000 people; many more worked in the local supply chain (Warren 2018). ICI was regarded as a generous employer, offering remunerative jobs and pension packages. John, 52, suggested ICI and the steelworks existed in tandem:

> It was massive [the steelworks] when my father worked there. When you were at school, everybody worked at ICI or British Steel, it was one or the other. It was enormous back then; as a kid you used to go and have a look and pick your dad up from the works.

Fixed capital investments by ICI and the requirements of mass production meant industrial capitalism required a large labor force (Winlow and Hall 2013). This fixity cultivated material and psychological comfort: all respondents felt that either they, themselves, or their significant others acquired what they regarded as a "job for life" and economic security. Sizable gains in industrial workers' living standards were made, and they expressed confidence that their children would mirror their biographies. Visions of permanent security and positivity characterized the future (Kotzé 2019).

The above memories undoubtedly masked the foul smell, dirtiness and pollution of industrial plants, which generated environmental harm and respiratory problems for the local population (see, e.g., Davies et al. 2019; Lynch 2017; Warren 2018). Steve, a retired shipbuilder, said: "ICI developed plastic, but look what it has done to the world." Matty, 54, an ex-steelworker claimed:

> It was very dirty, cleaning out massive tunnels or going down them chiselling. Black as hell, lots of water in it to keep it cool. I worked long hours—I did days, went home and did a night shift. It wasn't stopped back then. Some lads would help you out on your night shift and you would just sleep somewhere for a little bit. If I did two days like that in a row, I would be fucked.

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[2] Founded in 1926, ICI was a petrochemicals company on Teesside. Its pioneering chemical processing developed Perspex (plexiglass) and it was the largest global producer of ammonia (Warren 2018).

Matty notes the "harshness and the physical toils of day-to-day working life under industrial capitalism" (Ellis 2016: 26): work was dangerous and physically demanding. Nonetheless, it provided a social purpose, generating pride, identity and belonging. As Jimmy remarks, "some of the steel made here is on the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Australia, our steel went all over the world." Accordingly, he felt fortunate to experience his earlier working life when remunerative employment symbolized Teesside. The retrospective thoughts by Jimmy and others above suggest they were satisfied with their position in society because socio-economic prosperity and cultural stability formed the basis for social life (Winlow and Hall 2013). Indeed, if social harm represents an impediment to individual and collective flourishing then the eradication of this stability would prove problematic.

While this political-economic configuration benefited industrial workers because they possessed remunerative work, it was not bestowed by virtuous practice. Rather, capitalism encountered a crisis of legitimation in the early twentieth century and, therefore, the state intervened in markets throughout the post-war epoch to ensure its reproduction (Habermas 1975). This generated rising wages, adequate trade-union representation and security, which were "harm reduction institutions and mechanisms" (Pemberton 2016: 53), negating capitalism's class inequalities and gender disparities. Evidently, this was an anomaly in capitalism's history—a transient tactic to avoid the early twentieth century's social misery, pacify dissatisfaction and mute support for alternative ideologies. Consequently, a progressive consensus from 1945 to 1979 was forged, including full employment, widespread nationalization and a welfare state. Communities erected around industrial labor inevitably struggled to adapt and cope once those foundations were shaken with the shift to neoliberal political economy and the onset of deindustrialization in the West.

The end of the steelworks

The 2015 closure of SSI in Teesside caused the loss of over 2,000 jobs and many more in the local supply chain (Warren 2018). Although by 2015, Teesside's industrial labor market employed relatively few people, this closure represented the latest chapter in a long-term trend of industrial retrenchment and ruination (Mah 2013), bringing an end to over 150 years of Teesside's industrial heritage (Telford and Wistow 2019). Several participants attended protests and voiced their discontent at the closure. Carl, 20, stated: "At the Boro (Middlesbrough FC) games, they had a banner saying: 'save our steel' for the people who lost their jobs, but nothing happened."

Fisher (2009: 14) notes that today's protests form "a kind of carnivalesque background noise" to capitalist realism. Protests offer an image of vitality, political participation and a means to vent dissatisfaction, but industrial retrenchment continues. The protests failed to challenge the depth structures of political economy and neoliberal ideology; the market decides society's winners and losers, and deep harm can be inflicted on and in communities in the pursuit of profitability and greater efficiency. A depersonalized, legal and normalized economic process generated unintentional economic, psychological, and social damage that could be characterized as a negative motivation to harm. Emma, 49, asserted:

> If it didn't shut, he [Emma's husband] would still be there. It affected him badly, but he knew it was coming. He went to work one morning, then basically was told to just go home. So, we knew it was coming but it was just brutal the way they did it. They would think they would have given them time, but he went in and they said "sorry, just go home."

All respondents cast the steelwork's death with a dispiriting resignation. Participants suggested that either they, themselves, or their significant other struggled to adapt to

Teesside's labor market reconfigurations—an oversupply of labor, intense competition, insecurity and uncertainty (Lloyd 2018). Many ex-steelworkers acquired temporary employment, while others became self-employed. This offered a fraction of the steel industry's pay and pension package. It also fails to generate the sense of pride associated with meaningful work (Mah 2013; Strangleman et al. 2013; Winlow and Hall 2006). While others underwent retraining and acquired additional skills, such as in information technology (IT), these new skills possessed little value in the local economy. The location's loss of durable and disposable income had a domino effect. Tom, 52, explained:

> Directly the closure didn't affect me, but indirectly through my work—window cleaning and other bits, it did badly. From my point of view work-wise, it hit me a lot financially. I was probably a spinoff of the five thousand people who were affected. I know about twenty families around here who used to be my customers, who aren't now. Equally, people who had lost their jobs and moved away… I am not saying we are as bad as the villages of the mining era, where we will never get over it, but it was bad.

Financial capital moves spatially to overcome crisis and maximize opportunities for return on investment (Harvey 2010; Marx 1976). In following this blind logic, place-based communities (Mah 2013) become the winners and losers of capital mobility; the arrival of financial capital heralds an auspicious future of stability and relative prosperity, whereas its departure signals downturn, instability and a range of unintended but no less harmful consequences (Pemberton 2016). While we resist a blunt causative link between the systemic violence of deindustrialization and the myriad social problems facing Teesside, there is evidence to suggest a probabilistic causal tendency (Hall and Winlow 2015).

Unemployment, precarity and economic instability represent harmful conditions within which individuals and communities struggle to find solid ground on which to build a life and frame a sense of self (Lloyd 2018). In a culture described as "post-social" (Winlow and Hall 2013: 136), such structural factors may impact negatively on peoples' lives. In this study,

deindustrialization damaged well-being and increased what Fisher (2018: 464) referred to as neoliberalism's "psychic casualties." Eighteen participants made the connection between SSI's closure and various mental health problems, including depression and suicide. Harry was an 18-year-old part-time bartender who had previously seen his mechanics' apprenticeship terminated due to lack of work. His grandfather, father and uncle had worked in the steelworks and its closure had left his grandfather "in a state of depression" "I don't think he'll ever come out of," Katie, 42, described her husband's response to being made redundant when the steelworks closed:

> At the time, I was working down here at the nursing home, I was only bringing home £1200/£1300 a month. There is five of us in the family, and with tax credits they went on what you earned before, well we obviously earned a good wage then, so I got nothing. I think we got £5 a week, so we had to survive off £1200 a month when my rent was £600. That was for nearly a year, he was going for job after job, went on a couple of courses with that money the government put in for training, he did his offshore survival, but at the end of the day there was nothing for him to go into. He was applying every week and just getting knocked back, that was demoralising for him because I was the main wage earner and he was used to working. He got depressed, miserable. It was pretty shit really.

The absence of stability and the eradication of a work-based identity had harmful psychological consequences for many former steelworkers and their families. Katie's husband found the instability of unemployment, training courses, and repeated disappointment in the labor market to be a burden that damaged his mental health. The consequences of structural change and the vicissitudes of neoliberal polity represented a negative motivation to harm that had inadvertent but damaging outcomes for those involved. Finally, Claire, a forty-year-old who had worked as a bartender, carer and supermarket assistant suggested: "It's very bad for the area, a lot of people lost their jobs. A lass I went to school with, her husband killed himself over it. It was really bad, really sad. It was just before Christmas as well."

Anomic suicide represents a response to rapid changes in socio-economic circumstance (Durkheim 2006). The "psychic casualties" (Fisher 2018) of neoliberalism's negative motivation to harm include individuals' loss of stability, protection, sense of self-worth and place within a community. In challenging economic conditions, the ability to find comparable employment is difficult (Shildrick et al. 2012) and can impact many peoples' mental well-being. The structural forces behind deindustrialization and the recent steelwork closure on Teesside may be regarded as the normal functioning of a market economy; but there are potentially harmful consequences for those unable to find a sense of stability, build a life and flourish.

The debris of industrial ruination

Mah (2013) suggests there is a collective memory associated with industrial decline as deindustrialized locations continue to endure its negative effects. Twenty-one respondents' sentiments about current employment opportunities were bound to industrialism. Chloe is 55 and her son worked at the steelworks for decades. She claimed, however, that there is no longer "anything around here where you can leave school and walk into that will give you decent pay." Trev, 52, contended that:

> Jobs here are not many. I've got two lads—one is at college and one who is 12. I worry about what they are going to do, how are they going to get a job? When I left school, you could pack one job in, and start another one the following week. But now there is nowhere near as much work as there was. It is very difficult.

Trev's comments were repeated by other respondents, including John, 52, who worried about job opportunities for his children. While more and more people are attending university under neoliberalism, there is a mismatch between educational training and job availability (Lloyd 2018). Consequently, more and more young people possess employment that does not

allow them to make use of their educational background. This oversupply of labor serves capital's needs, enabling it to pick and choose its workers while increasing competitive individualism and negating collective action against harmful objective conditions (Harvey 2010). This negative motivation to harm unintentionally withered industrialism's lucid biographical trajectory and caused subjective distress to numerous young people, as Harry, 18, explained:

> There seems to be apprenticeships advertised, but they never get back to you. I must have applied for thousands of jobs and apprenticeships and I hardly get a response back. People are pushing young people to get jobs earlier on in life, but there isn't anything for us to go onto.

Capitalism has unveiled its post-war ideological mask and dispensed with its transient compromise between capital and labor. Hall (2012) stresses that neoliberalism has severed the Hegelian master-slave relation. Historically, the system required the recognition of workers to maximize profits, whereas today large workforces are surplus to requirements. Deindustrialization and the subsequent emergence of an oversupply of labor could be regarded as harmful outcomes of neoliberalism's normal functioning, shifting the balance of power back to capital. The ability to imagine a positive future is eradicated when people cannot ascertain stable and secure employment. Alice, 60, an ex-ICI employee, asserted:

> There used to be opportunities for people. I don't think there's the same [opportunities] anymore. It is the focus on money all of the time, the lack of opportunities to better yourself at work. There is nothing for young people, they must look ahead and think "What is my future? What is my future going to be?"

While neoliberalism emphasizes opportunity, meritocracy and personal success, its promise alludes many. Such notions also mask harmful outcomes, including exploitation, insecurity, and uncertainty. Stiegler (2019: 19) suggests that today's young people are the "blank generation"; devoid of a clear biography, job prospects and a future, they are unable to form

a coherent self and obtain the goods required to flourish. While industrialism shaped twenty-one participants' views (Linkon 2013; Mah 2013), the younger respondents possessed little knowledge of industrial work's security and perceived "job for life." The younger respondents also failed to demonstrate the positive sense of freedom and flexibility supposedly engendered by the postmodern eradication of the cloying effects of tradition and class background (Lloyd 2013). Post-industrial labor market conditions, such as individualized competition, had been normalized, while stability was a ghost from a previous historical era.

Financial insecurity generates an inability to plan ahead and thus envision the future. In this way, many people lack the disposable income to spend in the community. Twenty-five participants believed the area was in perpetual decline, described occasionally as a "dead-place." Neoliberalism's negative motivation to harm—the unintended but damaging consequences of capitalist's impersonal decision making—has diminished the area's previous identity and social function:

Luke: What's it like around here then?

Matty: *Ghost-town*. Have you been through it lately? Stuff is all boarded up, the steelworks is there left to rot. All the people who have worked there, and to see it just declining like that is just wrong. You walk through and it's pound shops, charity shops, there's naught decent.

This description of abandoned high streets populated largely by charity shops, pound shops (akin to Dollar Store in the US) and takeaway restaurants represented a refrain within every interview. In effect, respondents displayed an acute personal experience of what Hall (2012: 250) terms "the broken worlds of post-industrialism."

At the heart of our social harm perspective lies the probabilistic causal tendency of absence—that the absence of something can have potentially causative effects on people's lives (Lloyd 2018; see also Hall and Winlow 2015). The absence of well-paid and stable forms

of durable employment not only impacted the lives of those affected by the latest round of deindustrialization, but also damaged the community. The economic stability upon which places like Teesside had previously relied are now at the mercy of global capital, shaky inward investment, and the vicissitudes of the market. Twenty-one respondents identified an acute sense of loss, as well as a palpable fear, for the next generation. Younger participants demonstrated a fatalistic sense of what Fisher (2009: 21) has called "reflexive impotence": they recognized the parlous state of the local labor market and the impact it will have on their future prospects. Denied the stable platform required to acquire the goods necessary to live a "good life" and flourish, both individually and collectively, respondents are subjected to a form of social harm (Raymen 2019). The consequences of these absences could represent a negative motivation to harm—the inadvertent but negative effects of capital's quest to maximize profit in the neoliberal era. Ultimately, this incurs a heavy price for many individuals that inhabit Teesside's diminished industrial communities.

Conclusion

Deindustrialization has long been a subject of social scientific inquiry with attention focused largely on negative outcomes and consequences. Few, however, have tackled deindustrialization from a social harm perspective (for an exception, see Davies et al. 2019). This article has attempted this perspectival shift. Deindustrialization in Teesside has been an ongoing structural process for four decades. The impact of its most recent occurrences continues to ripple across a location suffering multiple entrenched social problems. Through first-hand accounts from local residents affected by SSI's closure and the continued polarisation of the labor market's opportunities, we have identified a sense of loss rooted in

community belonging, cultural relevance and socio-economic stability. A palpable fear for the future also pervaded interviews as respondents recognized the new reality facing the area.

In addressing these issues from a social harm framework, this article identified a "negative motivation to harm," whereby the normal functioning of capitalism has a series of harmful but unintended consequences for the economic stability of individuals and communities, the local labor market, the emotional and mental well-being of those directly and indirectly affected, and an increasingly uncertain future. This research provides further evidence that social harm is rooted in the absence of the goods required to flourish individually and collectively (Raymen 2019). The absence of stability, security and belonging can prevent achievement of a "good life" in which one can grow and succeed. In this sense, those absences and barriers are more than injustices; they represent social harms inflicted not with purpose or malice but through the normal functioning of an impersonal capitalist system. Deindustrialization in the context of neoliberalism therefore continues to prevent such flourishing in communities like this.

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