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Organisational Legacy and Employee Relations in UK Shipbuilding

by

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Abstract

Shipbuilding on the River Clyde in Glasgow has long been a source of fascination for historians and social scientists alike, due to its connections to the industrial heritage of the city and the associations with the wider industrial legacy across the UK. In the 1970s, shipbuilding became synonymous with industrial action, with the events of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in gaining notoriety around the world as a display of successful workforce militancy, solidarity and defiance. This study offered the opportunity to gain an insight into this unique context from an organisational studies perspective, some fifty years on from the events of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' action. This study was undertaken to explore the impact of organisational memory on contemporary employee relations, to help understand the extent to which events of the past impact on the organisational present. This study also sought to investigate empirically the multiple factors at play within the contemporary employee relations environment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the conversation across a number of areas; firstly, it provides a contribution to the conceptualisation of organisational legacy. It also provides a contribution to the study of organisational memory, especially memory as a social construct. The recent literature on "organisational ghosts" suggests a need for more studies which investigate the concept to help understand the tangible role that the past can play in the organisational present; this study adds an additional perspective to this research. Through the theoretical lens of labour process theory, organisational legacy, memory and "organisational ghosts", this research also examines the impacts of individualism and workforce differentiation and unpacks the complexities of employment in shipbuilding today.

This research was conducted as a single case study, with a focus on qualitative data. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, and a researcher reflective diary. The data was thematically analysed, and theoretical contributions subsequently derived from the emergent themes.

The findings contribute to the organisational legacy literature, detailing several significant components which impact on organisational legacy and memory: history, identity, storytelling and organizational spaces. The findings also contribute to the growing body of literature on organisational ghosts; exploring aspects of temporality and spatiality to help explain the ways in which the past, present and future interact in organisations. This study adds an additional perspective to the discussion on contemporary employment relations, outlining the changing role of trade unions, and the challenges presented by workforce division and differentiation. Finally, this thesis presents some implications for labour process theory, articulating the need for a more open debate about the future of work and sustainability of current work structures.

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Glossary

CIPD: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development

HR: Human Resources

HRM: Human Resource Management

IR: Industrial Relations

LPT: Labour Process Theory

SHRM: Strategic Human Resource Management

TU: Trade Union

TUC: Trade Union Congress

UCS: Upper Clyde Shipbuilders

UK: United Kingdom

Author's declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to this thesis. It starts by presenting an overview of the study context, followed the motivation for the research, and then the research question and objectives to be addressed through the study.

1.1 Study Context

Figure 1.1: Shipbuilding on the Clyde: Burners

Stanley Spencer (1940)

The above image has been taken from a series of paintings commissioned in 1940 which depict Lithgow's shipyard in Port Glasgow on the River Clyde. The subjects of the series reflect the different stages of activity associated with shipbuilding, and the different skilled trade disciplines involved in the process. They are titled: Burners, Riveters, Welders, Riggers, The Template, Bending the Keel Plate and Plumbers, plus an additional single painting; The Furnaces (Saywell, 2023). This series of paintings illustrates the complexity and at times brutal nature of the shipbuilding process. In addition to artwork like this, there are numerous songs, poems, films, television, and books, which all put the shipbuilding industry and industrial heritage of the River Clyde at the heart of their subject matter. The following lyrics are an excerpt taken from a folk song known alternatively as The Shipyard Apprentice or The Fairfield Crane, by Archie Fisher, Norman Buchan and Bobby Campbell:

I was born in the shadow of the Fairfield crane
Where the blast of a freighter's horn
Was the very first sound that reached my ears

On the morning I was born

I lay and I listened to the shipyard sound

Coming out of the great unknown

And was sung to sleep by the mother tongue

That was to be my own. . .

(Fisher, Buchan and Campbell, date unknown)

The lyrics of this song help convey the close relationship which many individuals in the West of Scotland have with the shipbuilding industry, and how connected it is with their identity and idea of home. I have my own memories of attending a dynamic ship launch in Govan as a child, and my father worked at Yarrow's shipyard for a period of time as a young man. Similarly, many people I know have their own stories of how their lives are connected to the yards through family or friends, and their own experiences and memories of the industry over the years. Recollections of Glasgow and its history are never complete without reference to the shipbuilding industry at its peak and how it shaped the city's economy and architecture. One of Scotland's most famous comedians Billy Connelly has often referred to his time working in the yards, sharing stories of the people he met and worked with and how that influenced his life and career.

To say then that the shipbuilding industry on the Clyde has long been a source of fascination to people around the world is probably somewhat of an understatement. It is by its inextricable link to the industrial heritage of the UK, illustrative of the reputed 'golden era' of manufacturing in this country during and after the industrial revolution. Images of thousands of workers streaming in and out of the yards in the heyday of the industry are frequently used in the media to illustrate its significance for the economy of the West of Scotland. These images are often juxtaposed with stories about the decline of the industry, the current state of the yards, government intervention, the need for investment, and the future of shipbuilding in the UK. The result is a haunting picture, a lament if you will, for a bygone era of prosperity on the Clyde. Today only two yards in Glasgow (and one in Greenock, which went through a period of nationalisation) remain on the Clyde. When I joined the company who operate the Glasgow yards in 2013, I quickly realised that I was in a unique position to undertake a study which would capture a picture of the shipbuilding industry as it is today and afford the opportunity to unpack the organisational implications

of such a complex and emotive legacy. The next section of this chapter therefore presents the motivation for my study, and the process by which I determined my research questions.

1.2 Motivation for Study

My case study organisation is one of the key defence contractors in the UK, and at the time of my study it was being driven by a need for business improvement as a result of greater pressure from their primary UK customer and the UK government, to offer more cost-effective manufacturing capability (see the National Shipbuilding Strategy, 2017). The shipbuilding part of the business was under considerable pressure to be more cost-effective, whilst also maintaining jobs and UK sovereign shipbuilding capability. Additionally, the business was keen to pursue export opportunities; something that had not been feasible for a long time due to prohibitively high manufacturing costs. Overall, the need for change was underpinned by a sense that if the business did not find a way to operate differently and balance the demands of multiple stakeholders, it would ultimately become untenable. Despite the growing company desire for change, and various organisational efforts to improve employee engagement and productivity, there seemed to be something going on under the surface that was preventing the organisation from moving forwards.

The first source of insight which informed this view was my own experience of the organisational context, based on my knowledge of challenges I experienced in my day-to-day work as a Human Resources (HR) professional. Based on my experiences, the following phenomena were evident; a reluctance to change processes and working practices, significant barriers to properly engaging with employees, a culture of negativity, a sense of 'us and them' between employees and management, and traditional hierarchical organisational structures. Further to this, I witnessed a number of organisational redesign activities and related redundancy programmes. Employee issues seemed to manifest themselves to me as an HR practitioner in the following ways: employee reluctance to participate in new incentives, new processes taking a long time to implement, general frustration between management and employees, and a lack of properly transformative action when designing and implementing business initiatives.

The second source were insights into the perspectives of management and employees in the organisation gleaned from conversations held during normal business activity. Although

these perspectives do not constitute the empirical data analysed here, they were nonetheless valuable when considering my research problem. I found that some employees were frustrated by what they considered bureaucracy in the organisation, how long it would take to get anything done, and the hierarchical structures imposed on them. They also struggled with what they felt was the company's apparent inability to use technology effectively; I was told; "It doesn't feel like a modern place to work." Some views from long serving employees suggested that the fluctuations in labour demand within the industry have created an ongoing threat of redundancy which was lingering in the business. Additionally, it was inferred to me that the company had not managed redundancy programmes well in the past; with the view that at one time; "you would get a tap on the shoulder on a Friday and told not to come back on Monday". The management perspective was that the business was not productive and was not properly leveraging discretionary effort from employees to properly meet customer demands. They felt that the culture was still one of rewarding people for attendance, not their output or willingness to help drive a successful business. They wanted an engaged workforce, with employees willing and able to challenge the status quo. I heard that the main problem was that the business was "hampered by the traditions of the industry" and not in a position to keep pace with other organisations in other industries due to its history and heavily unionised workforce. I wanted to explore this to better understand relationships in the organisation, and why so many people felt so strongly about the past. The final factor which influenced my research was the industrial relations legacy of the organisation, and the history of industrial conflict on the Clyde; I was keen to understand whether this still played a role in the contemporary employee relations climate.

1.3 Theoretical Rationale

Faulkner (1953: 78) stated that "*the past is never dead. It's not even past.*" This quote highlights the complexity of our relationship with history, and hints at the enduring nature of the past within the present. Wittenburg (2013) noted that we want to understand in what ways and under what circumstances the past influences the present, such that the term 'legacy' can be understood. He noted that a multitude of economic, social, cultural, psychological, institutional, political, and other types of legacies have been conceptualised. Although the term legacy implies a relationship with the past, it arguably cannot exist without a disconnect of causal factors; a legacy is an aftereffect of an antecedent that is no longer in existence (Kotkin and Beissinger, 2014). In other words, a legacy is what remains or carries on after a significant event or series of events. Much of the existing literature on

the concept focuses on the legacy of political systems (Farall and Hay, 2014; Maeckelbergh, 2011; Mamdani, 2001; Millar and Wolchik, 1996), but more recent studies have considered the legacies of significant social events such as the Olympic games and the 'Me-Too' movement (Girginov and Preuss, 2022; Goncharenko, 2023). There is considerable literature on the legacies of prolific philosophers, such as Marx (Boron, 2000; Caffentzis, 2011; Guess, 2015; Johnson, 2012) and Foucault (Allan, 2022; Mottier, 2001; Prado, 2009). Morris (2007) explored the legacy of Jacques Derrida, whose work is relevant to the discussion on inheritances later in this thesis. The concept of organisational legacy is explored in the studies into legacy systems and processes in organisations (Brooke and Ramage, 2001; Goff et al., 2021; Kavakli and Loucopoulos, 1999), and in the research on organisational design and change (Buchanan et al., 1999; Randall et al., 2002).

The common thread across the existing studies is that legacy refers to events now generally concluded, allowing for the application of historical perspective (Farrall and Hay, 2014). Wittenberg (2013) argued that determining the extent to which legacies matter requires further empirical analysis, in which legacies and contemporary phenomena are set against one another as explanatory variables. This implies a need for further academic research which seeks to unpack the impact of legacy events and understand the relationship between past events and present day.

There is a wealth of sources on organisational history, organisational memory, organisational identity, storytelling (Barker and Gower, 2010; Blackman and Connelly, 2001; Boje, 2003; Booth and Rowlinson, 2006; Casey and Olivera, 2011; Deal et al., 2021; Johannson and Jones, 2020; Rowlinson et al., 2014, Walsh and Ungson, 1991), and increasingly scholars' attention turns towards the topic of organisational ghosts (Blackman, 2019; Hunter and Baxter, 2021; Jung and Orr, 2021; Orr, 2014; Pors, 2016). There are fewer studies, however, which seek to understand how these various components might contribute to the notion of organisational legacy. Researching these complex phenomena in an organisation with rich history was a valuable opportunity.

As much as there is considerable literature on the employment relations and employee relations in the historical context (Ackers and Wilkinson, 2003; Grantham and MacKinnon, 2002; Kaufman et al., 2003; Zeitlin, 1987), there are fewer studies which directly consider

how industrial relations of the past resonate in the current industrial relations, and the extent to which history impacts on the contemporary employee relations climate in organisations.

1.4 Research Question and Objectives

My initial intent was to utilise my study to contribute to the academic conversation on organisational trust and distrust, and I developed an initial set of research questions with this in mind. However, as my study developed, I felt that whilst the concept of trust was relevant, the organisation was more complex than I had initially assumed, and focusing only on trust and distrust was somewhat limited and would not do justice to the research context. I therefore began to undertake my empirical research with a broad set of themes I was keen to explore, which sought to draw out broad perspectives on organisational legacy, history and employee relations, as well as trust. As I later worked through my data analysis, the thematic areas for focus in my empirical chapters were emergent, and my research questions were refined further. As such, the process for outlining my research question and objectives was evolutionary, and I revisited the literature to help situate my study and identify my areas of contribution.

As a result of this evolution, and the iterative process of moving between data and literature, I determined my overarching primary research question to be as follows:

What is the significance of history in shaping contemporary employee relations within shipbuilding on the river Clyde?

To help address this research question, I set the following additional research objectives:

- To investigate the impact of organisational memory on current employee relations climate;
- To examine the impact of historical legacy on employee relations and trust in the organisation;

The ways in which my study aims to contribute to the academic conversation will be further explored in Chapter 3: Literature Review. Chapter 2 first provides an overview of key historical events which have shaped the shipbuilding industry on the Clyde, help situate the

concepts of history and legacy as they relate to my research, and to describe the broader context in which my case study organisation evolved.

Chapter 2: Setting the Scene: The Legacy of Shipbuilding and Industrial Relations on the Clyde

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the key historical events which have shaped the shipbuilding industry on the Clyde and those employed within it, with the aim of contextualising the term 'legacy' and how it relates to my case study organisation.

Shipbuilding on the River Clyde in the West of Scotland dates as far back as the 18th Century (Walker, 2001), with some claims that ships were being built in the area as early as 15th century (Clyde Waterfront, 2014). The industry played a pivotal role in the development of Glasgow as an economic power during and after the industrial revolution, with Shipbuilding eventually becoming the jewel in crown of Scottish industry (Walker, 2001), and Glasgow being widely recognised as 'The Second City of the Empire' (Deas, 1876; Fraser, 2014; Keating, 1988; MacInnes, 1995). Tucker (2008) described Glasgow as traditionally a city of rich industrial heritage, dominated by shipbuilding and manufacturing production. Ships built on the Clyde were revered the world over for their quality of engineering and build. The legacy of the city's status as an industrial powerhouse is still evident today; MacInnes contended that it is visible not just in the economic statistics of the time, but in the confidence and flamboyance of its architecture. Tucker (2008) attributed the growth in arts and culture in Glasgow to the presence and subsequent decline of heavy industry, postulating that the need for an identify shift was borne out of the desire for regeneration and to move away from the negative associations of economic decline in the post-industrial era.

2.1 The Birth of the Shipbuilding Industry on the Clyde

The story of industrialisation in Glasgow dates back to the expansion of the tobacco industry in colonial America; American colonists were forbidden from trading directly with Europe, and Glasgow became a significant trading post due to establishment of Port Glasgow at the mouth of the Clyde (Keating, 1988). By the 1750s over half the British tobacco industry was controlled by the Glasgow merchants (Cage, 1987a). When the war of independence stopped the tobacco trade, the cotton industry expanded (Keating, 1988). The tobacco lords ploughed investment into the cotton and textile industry, recognising the importance of

mechanisation in manufacturing and the creation of commercial infrastructure within the city (Cage, 1987a).

The River Clyde itself required substantial improvement work to accommodate the growing industry (Deas, 1876). In his detailed historical paper on the development of the Clyde, Deas described the extensive work undertaken to deepen and widen the river, and to fortify its banks. He claims that the commercial success of the river Clyde can be directly attributed to the engineering skill applied to its improvements. He also accredited the work with the creation of the "largest seat of shipbuilding in the world" (Deas, 1876:2), and an expansion in the population of Glasgow of more than 500,000 in the 100-year period between 1771 and 1871. This work was critical to the establishment of the shipbuilding industry on the Clyde, as without it the river simply would not have been deep or wide enough to accommodate vessels (ibid.).

The development of the cotton and textile industry gave rise to the engineering sector in the West of Scotland; this engineering capability was later deployed within heavier industry such as the railways and shipbuilding (Cage, 1987a; MacInnes, 1995). Walker (2010) attributed the contribution of many engineering discoveries in Edinburgh and Glasgow to much of the progress made during Industrial revolution across Britain. Most notably the development by James Watt of the steam powered engine; this feat of engineering was to be a catalyst for great change in industrial production (Manolopoulou, 2008; Walker 2010). The coming of steam power had a significant effect on both the manufacturing processes used in heavy industry, making production easier and more efficient (Cage, 1987a), but also on the physical design of ships; structures changed to accommodate heavier boilers and the other cumbersome equipment associated with the steam powered engine (Walker, 2001).

One shipbuilding pioneer who sought to take advantage of steam power was Henry Bell, who in 1811 commissioned a number of engineering companies in Glasgow to build and supply various parts which he then assembled into the world's first successfully launched steam passenger ferry 'The Comet (Smith, 1938). Smith noted that this marked the inauguration of the use of steamboats on rivers in Britain, and the attention Bell received resulted in other eminent marine engineers following his lead; many becoming very wealthy in the process (Lefroy, 1883). The Napier brothers were accredited as establishing the Clyde

as a commercial centre for shipbuilding by later copying and improving upon Bell's example (Moss, 1997). Bell did not receive adequate financial reward or recognition for his contribution during his lifetime; but he is memorialised today with obelisks at Helensburgh and Bowling on the Clyde (Smith, 1938). Many of Bell's contemporaries such as David Elder are more commonly credited with being at the forefront of the maritime engineering movement, Elder being named as the "Father of Marine Engineering on the Clyde" (Quigley, 2013). Significantly, in 1840 the University of Glasgow took the bold move of establishing the first engineering chair in the world, in the form of a Regius Chair of Engineering and Mechanics; thereby firmly establishing Glasgow's status as a centre for engineering excellence (Walker 2010).

During the Industrial Revolution, shipping in the UK increased in importance as a more effective distribution method for products, and as a form of transport (Manolopoulou, 2008). The expansion of foreign and coastal trade routes placed greater demands on the shipping industry, and as a consequence the requirement for shipbuilding and repair services also grew (*ibid.*). In 1819, Vulcan, the world's first iron ship was launched in the West of Scotland (Walker, 2010). The use of iron in shipbuilding and further engineering improvements made sea travel faster and more reliable, steamships began to undertake ocean voyages, facilitating the further expansion of trade routes across the Empire, and in turn creating even greater demand for ships (Manolopoulou, 2008). Steel replaced iron by the late 1870s, resulting in even lighter vessels, and in 1881, a more efficient steam powered engine (triple expansion engine) was introduced (Education Scotland, 2015). By 1889, almost all ships on the Clyde were built of steel and were being exported across the globe (Education Scotland, 2015).

The most notable period of growth and prosperity for the Clyde was around the free trade era circa 1850- 1914 (Johnman and Murphy, 2002). The town of Clydebank on the outskirts of the city did not exist in 1861, but by 1901 it was home to over 30,000 people, the majority of whom were employed in the shipping industry or in jobs related to it (Education Scotland, 2015). Cage (1987a: 7) surmised this growth by stating "By 1900, Glasgow was a world metropolis." At the turn of the century there were as many as 38 major yards along the river building a huge range of different vessels (Johnston, 2000). Bellamy (2006) noted that during this period, Clydeside was booming with industrial confidence. He described the action taken to celebrate the success and to market the industry further; two exhibitions were

held in Glasgow in 1888 and in 1901 at which hundreds of models of ships and engines were put on display. The legacy of these exhibitions was the building and establishment of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, which is still a part of the cultural legacy of the city today (Bellamy, 2006). Additionally, much of the artwork on display in the museum was donated by wealthy shipbuilding and shipping industrialists (*ibid.*).

Thus, a perfect storm of technological innovation, engineering capability and market demand laid the foundations from which industry in Glasgow would rapidly grow and prosper (MacInnes, 1995). The shipyards went from strength to strength, their reputation preceding them the world over:

> "During its heyday Glasgow was a familiar name in every corner of the world. Clyde-built engines drove the world's machinery; Clyde-built steamers commanded the seas; the machinery-engineering industries of Glasgow were the centre piece of the industrial showcase." (Cage; 1987:1)

It is therefore clear that the shipbuilding industry, and the river Clyde itself, were both an integral part of the industrial and social development of the city. Furthermore, this industry was to play a pivotal role in shaping social dynamics of the West of Scotland, as this chapter will now go on to explore.

2.2 Class stratification

Whilst examining the growth and prosperity of the shipbuilding industry, it is important to consider the polarity in standards of living during this period. Industrialisation in Britain resulted in an increase in the population and the phenomenon of urbanisation, as growing numbers of people moved to urban centres in search of employment (Manolopoulou, 2008). In Scotland, urbanisation was even more pronounced as a consequence of the Highland clearances, when rents were raised in rural areas making agriculture untenable, and tenants forced to move to urban areas to seek employment (Johnston, 1929; Johnston, 2000). MacInnes (1995) noted the prospect of relative urban wealth drew thousands of young migrants to the town from outlying areas, the Highlands of Scotland and from Ireland. He described how Glasgow's population grew twenty-fold in barely a century, with population

densities of up to 1800 persons per hectare. At the same time, a class of affluent industrialists, ship owners and merchants dominated, accumulating great wealth (Manolopoulou, 2008). Much of the wealth and success of shipbuilding is evident in the architecture of Glasgow today; in the form of sculptures honouring notable shipbuilders such as John Elder and Sir William Pearce, and shipbuilding motifs feature as architectural embellishments on buildings (Bellamy, 2006).

In terms of the construction of the city, Tucker (2007) argued that Glasgow had a unique urban fabric based on a dense housing system situated close to manufacturing and production areas. Society at the time was very conscious of class hierarchy and this was reflected in the construction of neighbourhoods; elaborate villas were built at the top of hills for the wealthy (BBC History, 2014). Below that, terraces for the professional classes, tenements for skilled workers, and no-frills housing blocks for the labourers and the lower class located close to riverside industrial areas (*ibid.*). The physical separation of the classes was indicative of a wider social divide; Hinton (1983) noted that the structures of inequality, exploitation, poverty and oppression characterised the social order during this period. Whilst the upper and middle classes enjoyed the fruits of prosperity, the working classes found themselves in poor living conditions, with children and women sent to work in factories, where they were often exploited and ill-treated (Manolopoulou, 2008).

Thomas Johnston, a Liberal politician of the time, argued that capitalism was exploitative and that many of the working class in Scotland were downtrodden through desperation and the struggle to survive (Johnston, 1929). He claimed social mobility was not possible and that industrialists and the government conspired to keep wages low and food prices high (*ibid.*). MacInnes (1995) noted that wages in Scotland were below English levels, child mortality rates were high, disease was rife, and poor nutrition left Glasgow's workers physically smaller than their English counterparts. Similarly, Johnston (1929) described the outbreaks of disease, lack of sanitary conditions, poor housing, and starvation, all of which contributed to what he saw as the 'misery' of the working class. Likewise, writing about the 'Scotch poor' in a report in 1856, Sir George Nicholls observed that working people were 'very poor, very wretched', and that there was 'an atmosphere of general misery all around'. MacInnes (1995) described that the working classes in Glasgow lived in some of the worst slums in Europe; this view was also espoused by some of the press of the period: "The

Glasgow closes, wynds, and vennels are about the most unhealthy places in Europe"
(Scotsman, 1863 in Johnston, 1929: 295)

Writing about the neo-liberalist economic view of the time, Dentith (2009) noted that it was believed to be counterproductive to help the poor by giving them what they wanted, and that it was better to require them to confront the harsh realities of the world so that they would be better placed to help themselves. The limited provisions for 'poor relief' were covered in Scotland by The Poor Law Amendment Act (Scotland) 1845; this amendment to the act caused great concern for Glasgow officials, with many fearing that the law threatened the moral standards of the lower classes, and that they may be less inclined towards self-reliance than to feelings of dependence which would harm their own well-being, as well as that of the wider community (Cage, 1987c).

An educated middle-class audience who sought to better understand the condition of the working classes found a number of authors who offered insight (Lamb, 1997). These authors created 'sociological investigations' of working-class homes and domestic habits, which Lamb (1997) argued were a strange form of social eroticism that effectively distanced and objectified the working class. These depictions allowed readers to explore, in their own time, and without fear, pictures of working-class domesticity which they found shocking (Godwin, 1854). An example illustration of a working-class residence: "Filthy, unfurnished, deprived of all the accessories to decency or comfort, they are indeed but too truly an index of the vicious and deprived lives of their inmates" (Gaskell, 1833: 133).

Such depictions suggested a predisposition towards antisocial behaviour and a lack of moral worth (Lamb, 1997), and showed little or no sympathy for the individuals in question. Lamb argued this is indicative of a 'sanctimonious voyeurism', in which the middle classes enjoyed digesting the depictions of squalor, but at the same time believed that such conditions were consequences of people's own failings and even their genetic make-up, rather than the by-products of the difficult situations they found themselves in. Similarly, Butt (1987) described the view of many public officials that epidemic disease and housing issues were as a result of the human failings of their inhabitants, in the form of immorality, vice, drunkenness and criminality, which created repositories of depravity and delinquency within slum dwellings. Lamb (1997) took his analysis a stage further, commenting that the

aforementioned ghoulish depictions of working-class homes in print was a means to control the ways in which the different classes were defined in the mainstream consciousness.

Despite his work which detailed the social issues faced by the working classes in Glasgow, Cage (1987b) engaged in what he termed the 'standard of living debate' in relation to urban industrialisation and the working class; he considered the contrasting perspectives which emerge from the literature, arguing that many of them are narrow and one-sided. Whilst many Socialist or Marxian authors adopted the view that industrialisation was a purely destructive social element, Cage criticised the homogeneity of this approach and the suggestion that all of the working class found themselves in the same situation, i.e., they were all remunerated poorly and all lived in similar housing conditions. He argued that this was not the reality and that in fact the standard of living for some of the 'skilled' workers actually improved as a result of industrialisation. The terminology around 'skilled' and 'unskilled' workers will be addressed in further detail in the next section of this chapter. Similarly, Hinton (1983) argued that life improved on the whole quite substantially for the working class from the 1870s onwards. He described how the average working week was reduced, leaving more time for domestic life and, for those who could afford it, recreational activities such as football matches, attending the music hall, and even excursions to the seaside; something which had been enabled by the expansion of the railway. He did however note that profound divisions persisted within the working class and that there was no cultural or social uniformity within this group. He also proposed that a rise in 'white-collar' employment, in the form of managerial and technical staff, further complicated the state of the 'labour aristocracy'; somewhat lessening the starkness of privilege by filling the gap between workers and their employers.

Hinton (1983) further asserted that whilst there had been a general rise in living standards for the working class, a sub-class of 'poor' individuals presented some of the most critical issues within society. In 1900 the 'poor' constituted up to 40% of the working class, and that poverty was endemic for unemployed, casual or seasonal workers, and low wage regular earners; and that in the absence of any social security system, ill health or accident could be crippling for a working-class family (*ibid.*). Butt (1987: 48) similarly argued that the reality of employment for many was casual or temporary work which was highly subject to economic fluctuations and "occasionally insecure for even the best paid working man". Considering the broad depictions of the social landscape during the industrial period, the

effect of industrialisation on the working classes is clearly complex. Industrialisation appears to have brought positives for many individuals, particularly 'skilled' workers, whose standard of living did begin to improve by the beginning of the 20th century. Inequity and poverty however remained prevalent and aggravated the situation for the 'urban poor' (Hinton, 1983). Furthermore, the working classes were wholly reliant on employment to support their families (*ibid.*), yet insecurity characterised the employment relationship for the majority (Butt, 1987).

2.3 The Birth of Trade Unionism

Having considered the social stratification which existed throughout the industrial period, it is perhaps no surprise that the working classes began to seek ways of having their interests represented; thus, as industry expanded, so too trade unionism began to grow in social and political significance. In their notable publication, which was widely acclaimed by contemporaries following its publication in 1894 (Hamilton, 1894; New Statesman, 1920), Webb and Webb detailed the history of trade unionism. They began by defining a trade union as a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment. They argued that although there are a number of forerunners of trade unionism, discussion on the subject really begins at the start of the eighteenth century, from when the aforementioned definition can be applied. It was also noted by Webb and Webb (1894) and Hinton (1983) that the act of 'striking' actually pre-dates trade unionism itself; and therefore whilst 'strikes' are often synonymous with trade unionism as we understand it today, it is important to acknowledge the distinction between the two. However, the remainder of this discussion on the history of unions will focus on trade unionism from the 19th century onwards.

Whilst some historians have mistakenly tried to trace the origins of the modern trade union through the history of the 'Craft Guilds'; Webb and Webb (1894) concluded after extensive historical investigations that trade unions have their roots in the hired 'journeymen craftsmen' organisations which were set up by self-employed artisan craftsmen. These journeymen craftsmen groups combined their efforts to put pressure on employers to protect earnings and improve working hours, and occasionally took to the streets to campaign or protest legislative change (Fraser, 1999; Webb and Webb, 1902). They also provided mutual aid for the widows or orphans of their members and helped one another to find jobs when

they were out of work (*ibid.*). The similarities between their activities and those of the modern-day trade union are clear. These associations of journeymen sought to control who could enter their crafts and be employed, so as not to overstock the labour supply (Fraser, 1999); another theme which re-emerges in the description of more formalised and organised trade unions.

Prior to 1824, the Combinations Act (1799) prevented working men from uniting in order to raise wages or improve working conditions (Orth, 1991). Orth (1991) noted that despite the repeal of this act in 1824 (The Combinations of Workmen Act, 1824), Victorian employment law continued to place considerable barriers in the way of collectivism and industrial action of workers. It was only with the passing of the Trade Disputes act in 1906, that unions were legitimised sufficiently in law to operate fully (Orth, 1991). Hinton (1983) contended that the granting of the vote to section of the working class through the Reform Act of 1867 was symbolic of the emergence of political and social freedom for the working class (albeit only a small elite group of workers), characterised by the politics of Liberalism and the expansion of working-class organisation. Following the Reform Act of 1867, in 1868 the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was formed as a unifying organisation for all Britain's trade unions (Streedharan, 2002). Journeymen's societies, as described previously, existed in spite of the legislative provisions in the Combinations Act (1799), with some employers complaining that the Act had no effect on restraining combination (Fraser, 1999). However, the threat of illegality would have acted as a deterrent to collectivisation for many workers, as it placed the legal advantage firmly with the employer (*ibid.*). Despite this, by the time the Combination Laws were repealed in 1867, trade unions were already established across a range of occupations in the UK (*ibid.*).

In Scotland, the cotton industry had given rise to the hand loom weavers and cotton spinners associations, who had been negotiating over wages for some time (Fraser, 1999). The Shipbuilding and Engineering unions have their roots in the Associated Society of Engineers, the Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders, and the Associated Society of Blacksmiths, Carpenters and Joiners, Shipwrights and other organisations whose primary activity centred around shipbuilding (Johnston, 1929). As touched on previously, within the working population, workers were classified as 'skilled' and 'unskilled'; with 'skilled' workers only generally belonging to trade unions due to their 'craftsmen' status (Johnston, 1929; Hinton, 1983). There was no uniformity in the differing 'skilled' groups with regards pay or skill

recognition, with the primary unifying factor being that they were recognised as having a 'craft'; one whose skills could only be passed on via a period of experience through an apprenticeship, known as 'serving his time' (Clegg et al., 1964; Johnston, 1929; Hinton, 1983).

Consequently, early trade unionism was as concerned with preservation of job autonomy and protection of the 'skilled' status of their members, as with maintenance of pay rates and working conditions (Clegg et al., 1964; Hinton, 1983). Hinton (1983) described some of the other benefits trade unions provided their members including, unemployment, accident and sickness relief payments, as well as coverage of funeral expenses; he argued that these benefits gave the members a degree of economic security at a time when there was very little of such, and enhanced workers' loyalty to their unions. Clegg et al. (1963) noted that many of the 'rules' of union membership were unwritten. Furthermore, some of the practices were best left unwritten, such as the practice of the 'closed shop'; whereby a worker could not secure employment unless he was a union member or agreed to sign up; and the rules which limited individuals in the amount of work they could do in a day (*ibid.*). The unions themselves then had a clear set of boundaries to control the behaviour of their members, so as to best leverage their position against that of the employers (*ibid.*).

In some industries where the skill of the workers was less easily protected, 'skilled status' was actually a product of trade union membership, rather than the precondition for it (Hinton, 1983). As such trade unionism played a role in the widening structural divide within the working class; between the 'skilled' workers and the mass of labouring poor; allowing 'skilled' workers to socially demarcate themselves as different from the rest of the working class due to their higher earnings, and actively de-associated themselves from the inner city slums and poor through participation in the temperance movement and working with adult education institutions and other voluntary associations (*ibid.*).

The next step in the evolution of the trade unions came between 1889 and 1910, with a significant shift in the way collective bargaining operated; it moved from the local or district level to a national level, with both engineering and shipbuilding industries included in the agreements which were signed (Lovell, 1991). Many of the modern engineering, building and other craft industry unions are direct descendants of the national organisations which

emerged during this period (Hinton, 1983). The development of these national level agreements encouraged efforts to standardise earnings and conditions, and collaboration between unions and provided a forum for debate and publicity (Fraser, 1999). The primary union motive for nationalisation was to spread the risk of strike action by establishing a central fund (Clegg et al., 1963). The process of nationalisation did not attempt to control local trade union custom or practice; and that local branches were permitted to maintain autonomy over their day-to-day activities (*ibid.*).

The latter part of the 1800s also saw a significant shift in the tone of trade unionism; unions began to try to shape their public image; public statements were released which included phrases such as 'self-restraint', 'self-control', ' respectability' and 'independence' which emphasised improvement (Fraser, 1999; Hinton, 1983). Fraser contended that union leadership used this to appeal to Victorian self-image and a refusal to bow to the middle-class anti-union and anti-working-class propaganda. Hinton (1983) argued that this was an attempt by the labour movement, not to escape from its working-class situation, but to establish a recognised status for itself within the social order.

As industry expanded, so too did unionism; new unions of unskilled workers began to emerge during the latter part of 19th century; these unions had low entrance fees compared with the craft unions, recognising the reality of what casual and unskilled workers could afford (Fraser, 1999). General unionism did not pursue a particular policy and was more a response to industrial dispute; these unions had to show quick results to attract new members and retain existing ones (*ibid*.). However, these unions had no procedures for negotiation and were often faced by employers were unhappy with the challenge to their authority and could draw on a readily available pool of other casual or unemployed workers to replace strikers (*ibid.*).

The tone of the labour movement on the Clyde was adversarial; the shipbuilding industry was subject to unusually extreme fluctuations, leading to frequent changes in wages and periods of high unemployment (Clegg et al., 1963). This led to a higher rate of industrial disputes for the shipbuilding unions than in any other craft industry; an 1877 strike of 25,000 workers on the Clyde lasting 23 weeks dwarfed any prior industrial action in Britain (*ibid*.). The shipbuilding industry was also rife with inter-union conflict; the increase in

specialisation in the industry created work for a variety of crafts; resulting in conflicting claims of ownership over the tasks (*ibid.*). As a result, skilled men from each craft came together to try and protect their position against anyone who they perceived to be a threat; either 'unskilled' workers or those from other crafts (*ibid.*). This created great tension between the skilled and unskilled unions and further emphasised the already profound divisions within the working-class population (MacLean, 1983).

In response, employers on the Clyde formed associations; the Clyde Shipbuilders Association (CSA) founded in 1866 was one of the most powerful employers' associations on Clydeside (Johnston, 2000). The primary purpose of these employer associations was to control the labour force; either by a show of strength or by initiating collective bargaining channels; the 'labour threat' posed by an increasingly organised workforce was perceived to be significant enough to warrant a collective response (*ibid.*). Towards the end of the 19th century, Clydeside employers and workers realised the benefits of negotiation over outright conflict, unions were increasingly, if grudgingly, recognised by major Clyde employers, and collective bargaining was engaged in more frequently (*ibid.*). However, the recession of 1895 resulted in a hardening of employer resistance to organised labour, primarily driven by increased competition from overseas (Fraser, 1999). As a result, employers reverted to more traditional authoritarian methods of workforce control, such as use of lock outs, payments to strike beating organisations, and circulation of blacklisted workers names (Johnston, 2000).

A number of disputes during the 1890s and early 1900s took many of the Clyde unions to the point of bankruptcy, most notably the lock out of 1898 which occurred as a result of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) demands for an 8-hour day (Johnston, 2000). The financial strength of the employers' associations allowed them to sustain the fight and settle on highly favourable terms; they could employ as many apprentices as they liked, move people between machines and impose piecework and overtime as required (Fraser, 1999). Employers did not fully exercise the powers they gained at this time, nor did they attempt to break the unions completely, recognising their need for skilled workers; however, the legacy of the dispute was bitter ill feeling between the parties which was to last for many years to come (*ibid.*). As a result, there were calls for greater co-ordination between the unions; and a move to create greater unity between the craft organisations and those who represented semi-skilled or unskilled workers (*ibid.*).

Whilst the most notable Clydeside unions were the skilled Shipbuilding and Engineering unions, and they have often attracted the most attention from historians, Wilson (2008) argued that equally important for understanding the labour movement on the Clyde were the Seafarers and Dockers unions who engaged in a wave of strike action between 1910- 1914; joining the wave of dockers strikes across Britain and Europe. In contrast to many of the earlier disputes, these strikes were successful, agreements over increased pay and union recognition were signed and promises were made of no victimisation of strikers (*ibid*.). The impact of these events on trade union strength was enormous as the scale of industrial conflict witnessed was representative of the stage of trade union development which made it possible to translate ambition into action (*ibid.*). This particular dispute reflected a wider period of labour unrest prior to and during the First World War, and one which came as a shock to the Clydeside employers who were traditionally successful at controlling the labour movement (Johnston, 2000). A broad atmosphere of industrial strife was simmering below the surface on Clydeside and other heavily industrialised regions throughout the war years (Jenkinson, 2008). Fraser (1999) attributed the increase in unrest to a variety of different factors, such as a fall in living standards, changes in the workplace, technological advancements and a feeling that workers had lost control of the labour process through centralised trade union control and an increase in collective bargaining; the result was a demand for a more radical approach.

2.4 Red Clydeside

'Red Clydeside' refers to an era of political radicalism that characterised Glasgow and the surrounding urban areas on the banks of the River Clyde (Glasgow Digital Library, 2015). The period lasted from the 1910s until roughly the early 1930s; and consisted of industrial conflict, community-based protests and political developments which established Glasgow's reputation as the centre of working-class struggle in Britain (Glasgow Digital Library, 2015).

The social unrest arose from a number of ideological, political and social factors (touched on previously), including increasing opposition to what was viewed as an imperialist war, poor housing, wage reductions and rising rent prices (Campbell, 2014). Although socialist ideals were present in Scotland prior to the First World War, there was scant representation in parliament and the majority of the skilled working-class voters remained loyal to the Liberal Party (BBC History, 2014). However, following the outbreak of war, many Scots

began to feel under-represented by the Liberals. Furthermore, Prime Minister Lloyd George treated the Unions and Socialist organisations on Clyde as subversive elements which were a danger to the war effort (*ibid.*). Members of the Associated Society of Engineers (ASE) were branded by George as unpatriotic due to some of their demands for wage increases early on in the war, and even went so far as to accuse workers of drunkenness resulting in poor productivity (MacLean, 1983). As a result, many Scots dissociated from the Liberal party as representatives of the working class (BBC History, 1914). Scottish membership of the Independent Labour Party tripled during the Great War, highlighting the mobilisation in political allegiance at the time (*ibid.*). Scottish politics became polarised, with the middle classes swinging to the right-wing Unionist Party in response to this 'red menace' (*ibid.*).

British labour leaders maintained an anti-war stance up until the point, on August 4th 1914, that the government finally declared war on Germany. By the end of August, the Labour Party and the TUC declared an 'industrial truce' for the duration of the war and lent their support to an all-party recruitment campaign (Davis [no date]). The government drew the unions, including the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), whose members were principally affected, into agreeing to suspend 'restrictive practices' in skilled trades by agreeing to the use of unskilled or semi-skilled labour in the war industries; and to the introduction of greater mechanised production methods; this practice was known as 'dilution' of labour and caused great resentment amongst the 'skilled' craft workers (MacLean, 1983), since the 'skilled' status of their members was something the craft unions had long been focussed on protecting (Melling, 1990).

The backbone of industrial militancy was formed amongst the engineering craftsmen threatened by new technologies and provoked into open resistance during the Government's dilution programme (Hinton, 1973). The most familiar response was the defence of their craft privileges, but a significant section of the workforce recognised the need for fresh strategies (*ibid*.). These radicals were led by a group of shop stewards opposed to the policies of moderate union officials and ready to confront employers and government bureaucrats (*ibid.*). Influenced by the Socialist Labour Party, this group created the Clyde Workers' Committee (CWC) to coordinate resistance and formulate a radical policy of dilution which would secure workers' control (*ibid*.). Shop floor militancy was most developed in the engineering trades where the impact of technology changes were felt most profoundly, and in particular in those companies which had championed management reform (*ibid.*).

Therefore, the structure of Glasgow's engineering industry, with its general manufacturing output, helps to explain the geography of workplace unrest on the Clyde (*ibid.*).

A further cause of unrest during the war were rent rises; caused by a huge influx of workers to Glasgow to work in munitions factories, and a subsequent housing shortage (MacLean, 1983). The already poor housing conditions in the city became even worse, putting greater pressure on the cramped tenement blocks and their inhabitants; the areas surrounding the Govan shipyard were particularly badly affected (*ibid*.). This, coupled with general discontent over the cost of living and rising rents resulted in the Labour party movement organising tenants against increasing rents; resulting in agitation amongst munitions and shipyard workers, who threatened sustained strike action (*ibid*.).

Following the war, unemployment due to demobilisation and the discharge of civilian workers caused massive issues within industrial cities and Glasgow was particularly badly affected (Griffin, 2015). The overall social unrest, which had been bubbling under the surface for some time, spilled over during the 'Bloody Friday' strike in 1919, when one hundred thousand people gathered in George Square to protest the introduction of a forty-seven-hour working week for men in the shipbuilding and engineering trades (Urban Glasgow, 2008). The action for a shorter working week of 40 hours, with no reduction in pay, was an attempt by workers to reclaim their own time and help absorb the unemployed and returning soldiers (Griffin, 2015). The strike was primarily led by shipyard workers; with 70,000 of the Clydeside workforce employed in the yards (Foster, 1990: 34; in Griffin, 2015: 124). The strike demands conflicted with the national negotiations led by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE) which were moving towards a settlement of a forty-seven-hour week (McLean, 1983); and as such the strike was officially unsupported by union leadership (Davis [no date]).

The protest quickly escalated to a riot, with the red flag being raised in George Square and the police responding with baton charges (Urban Glasgow, 2008). The UK government viewed the riot as a Bolshevist uprising, and twelve thousand troops, machine guns and tanks were dispatched onto the streets of Glasgow (*ibid.*). What was seen by the workers as a protest against unfair working conditions, was viewed by the government as imminent revolution and as a result, the strike demands were dismissed (BBC History, 2014). The

whole episode strengthened socialist convictions in Glasgow and on Clydeside, affirming the Labour Party and trade unions as a major political force throughout the rest of the century (BBC History, 2014). The action was one incident amongst many during 1919 as the working class in general and ex-service personnel in particular, took to the streets in violent demonstrations of dissatisfaction with the post-war economic situation (Jenkinson, 2008).

In his thorough historical examination of 'Red Clydeside', McLean (1983) concluded that the events were not such a challenge to the established order as was subsequently made out. He argued that the governmental overreaction actually served to highlight and place greater significance on the events of 1919, and that the greater change came later in terms of the increased political strength of the Labour party. Wrigley (2005) pointed out that whilst perhaps revolution was not imminent during the events of Red Clydeside; there was nonetheless a general 'mood' of revolt which underpinned much of what was happening at the time, potentially bolstered by similar revolutionary behaviour in Eastern Europe, and that this 'mood' cannot be dismissed. He argued that the difficulty when considering the events of Red Clydeside is discerning what is 'legend' and what is fact; however, he concluded that Red Clydeside remains a significant part of Scottish social history and the legacy of the Labour party and labour movement.

From a similarly critical perspective, Jenkinson (2008) contended that whilst the 1919 events of Red Clydeside are often portrayed as the Socialist ideal of uprising and a show of working-class revolutionary power, certain aspects which are somewhat incongruent with this view are often glossed over or ignored in the recounting of the events. She described the 'Broomielaw race riot' in which many white sailors and labourers on the Clydeside engaged in racially motivated violence towards black and ethnic minority counterparts, during a riot at the docks in January 1919, believing them to be to blame for 'stealing' their jobs, being 'unskilled' and accepting lower wages (*ibid.*). After the war, the continued presence of such minorities had become a real source of working-class resentment in Glasgow (*ibid.*). Two of the 'leaders' of the movement, who were subsequently immortalised in the 'Red Clydeside' legend; Willie Gallacher, and trade union activist (later turned politician) Emmanuel Shinwell, were actually at the forefront of the movement seeking to marginalise black workers (*ibid.*). In a similar vein, Melling (1990) argues that the unions were also concerned with female dilution of labour following the introduction of women to the workforce during the war. The lack of popular coverage of the more unsavoury events of Red Clydeside is

potentially down to organised trade union opposition to the employment of marginalised workers not sitting well against the politically radical image of industrial relations on the Clyde (Jenkinson, 2008).

The issues raised during the events of Red Clydeside did not unite the working class; they served only to further intensify the inherent social divisions (MacLean, 1983). Nonetheless, within the context of social change and the wider values of the time, these events are argued to be both radical and highly significant. The Red Clydeside events set in motion a political momentum for the Labour party in Scotland; in the 1922 General election, Labour won 10 out of 15 seats in Glasgow (MacLean, 1983). Furthermore, the events were representative of the wider power of the labour movement; by the 1920s, the New Statesman (1920) remarked that Prime Minister Lloyd George was, in trying to resist the power of the labour movement, like a stone trying to stand in the way of a steam roller.

2.5 The Beginning of the Decline

As many industrial cities in the 1930s witnessed, global depression caused the economy of Glasgow to rapidly decline due to its over-reliance on heavy industry, and consequently unemployment peaked in 1930 at 30% (Booth and Boyle, 1993). Other competitor industrialising economies were able to themselves produce capital equipment which Glasgow had earlier supplied to world (Keating, 1988). Glasgow's industrial expansion had been overly dependent on a narrow imperial role; but once competing industries abroad developed, the future of the city depended on diversification (MacInnes, 1995). The slump in world trade reduced the demand for ships; in 1933 the Clyde launched 56,000 tons of ships, only seven percent of the 1913 output; seven out of ten Scottish shipbuilding workers were without work, and overall, one in three men in Glasgow were recorded as being unemployed (Keating 1988).

The decline of the shipbuilding industry continued, and by the 1960s; Harland & Wolff's Linthouse yard had closed, and Fairfield yard in Govan faced bankruptcy (Education Scotland, 2015). The government response to the failing shipbuilding industry was to create Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) in 1968; it amalgamated five yards on the Clyde with around 8500 workers; the Fairfield and Stephen yards on the south bank, Connel and Yarrow

yards on the north bank, and John Brown at Clydebank (Education Scotland, 2015). Between 1971 and 1983 manufacturing employment in Glasgow fell by forty five percent, and more alarmingly, the city failed to attract additional service sector employment (Booth and Boyle, 1993). In a film in the British Pathe archive (1974), life in the post-industrial 'Glasgow slums' is captured with images of run-down tenement blocks, children playing amongst rubbish and debris, and striking depictions of unemployment and deprivation.

2.6 Upper Clyde Shipbuilders

In 1971 UCS went into receivership and was refused a government loan (Education Scotland, 2015). The events which transpired as a result of this made headlines across the world (Kelly, 2015). The trade unions organised a workplace occupation in the form of a work-in to complete the orders in place (Education Scotland, 2015). The workers, who had £87 million pounds of outstanding orders to complete, refused to leave the shipyards, determined to finish the outstanding orders (Kelly, 2015). Coming at a time of rapidly rising unemployment, the action caught the public attention and attracted widespread support in the press (Fraser, 1999). In 1972, the Heath Government caved in and retained two yards; Yarrow at Scotstoun and Fairfield at Govan (Education Scotland, 2015).

Foster and Woolfson (1986) argued that the UCS occupation was successful because it was an attempt to show that the workers could run the yards better than the current management, which aided the case for nationalisation. Other sources proposed that the unions and workers had their own part to play in the failing of the yards; striking and work stoppages had become almost a habit, greatly eroding the productivity and as such competitiveness of the yards; and by the time the Government decided to step in and form UCS, it was probably too late (The Silent Men of Upper Clyde, 1971). Regardless of the criticism, the UCS work in was symbolically significant in terms of the UK working class struggle; the action typified the wider power of militant workers during the early 1970s; and in the case of UCS, the workers were not only able to successfully defend their own interests, but also to do so in a way that politically challenged the normal order of society (Gall, 2010). The idea of a work-in was very different from the traditional response of strikes or occupations; it was based on the concept of the right to work, rather than simply the right not to be made redundant (Wilson, 2010). It was an event that galvanised working-class consciousness, challenged political moralities and haunted the prime ministerial tenure of Edward Heath (ibid.)

The figure immortalised by the UCS action was surely Jimmy Reid, although there were two prolific figures who led the campaign; Jimmy Reid and Jimmy Airlie; both stalwarts of the Communist party; Airlie was the strategist and Reid the rhetorician (Wilson, 2010). It is difficult to overstate the status that Reid achieved at this time (*ibid.*). One of the last great platform orators, he had the ability to convey trade union demands in human terms; he invited the listener to ponder what it would profit a man that he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul (*ibid.*). He was rewarded with a multitude of admirers who were willing to overlook the fact that he was also a member of the British Communist party (*ibid.*). In fact, his communism reinforced his popular image as a man of unswerving principle, rather than just another politician or trade union leader (*ibid.*). In the wake of the UCS triumph, Reid was elected rector of Glasgow University and his rectorial address was printed in its entirety by the New York Times, which compared it to the speeches of Abraham Lincoln (*ibid.*). An extract from which reads: "From the very depth of my being, I challenge the right of any man or any group of men, in business or in government, to tell a fellow human being that he or she is expendable." (Reid, 1972)

The UCS action was indicative of a time of wide industrial relations strife. Rampant inflation, frequent pay disputes and the failure of the social contract ultimately led to the 1978- 1979 Winter of Discontent (Nowak, 2015). But the election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979 signalled the beginning of a very different era in industrial relations (Nowak, 2015).

2.7 Trade Union Decline and Evolution

The Thatcher government brought with it an end to the government attempt to base its economic management on the pursuit of full employment. In a reversal of previous policy, industry was 'squeezed' in an attempt to reduce inflation. The result was a dramatic increase in redundancies and closures (MacInnes, 1995). Markets were deregulated, public enterprises were sold off and social partnership institutions were dismantled (Nowak, 2015). Traditional industries, such as shipbuilding, were impacted most severely and unemployment climbed beyond the three million (*ibid.*). Trade unionism was hit hard; many

of the worst affected industrial sectors were shipbuilding and steel making, traditional union strongholds (*ibid.*).

Several tranches of legislation hostile to trade unions were also passed during this period; much of which endures to this day. Secondary action, previously a central tactic during industrial disputes, was outlawed and the closed shop banned (Nowak, 2015). State power was used to subdue major industrial disputes such as the miners' strike (*ibid*.). The Labour government of the 1990s and the coalition administration 2010 – 2015 continued to strengthen the power of employers through deregulating the labour market and reasserting the managerial prerogative (Marginson, 2015; Purcell, 1991; Welch and Leighton, 1996). Trade unionism was also being challenged culturally as well as politically and economically; the idea of collectivism itself (solidarity among working people) was slowly eroded by aggressive individualism (Nowak, 2015).

Where in the 1960s and 1970s trade union leaders had been influential figures in national and public life, from the 1980s onwards it was increasingly figures from business and entrepreneurs. Trade union density was at its peak of fifty six percent in 1979, it declined steeply to only twenty five percent in 2014 (Marginson, 2015). The changing composition of the workforce, for example the shift in employment from manufacturing to services and the growing labour market participation of women and part-time workers were important contributory factors in union membership decline (Towers, 1989). Whilst some argue that the decline of trade union membership was driven by the changing individual preferences of employees, there is also evidence to suggest management intervention in restricting union availability for workers (Charlwood, 2003). Employers accumulated growing discretion in deciding whether to recognise unions and engage in collective bargaining, and the scope of what was covered by collective agreements (Marginson, 2015). As a result, from soft cultural power through to the hard power of the state, this was a profoundly difficult period for the trade union movement in Britain (Nowak, 2015).

Despite these changes, the essential raison d'etre of trade unionism has endured; to win fairness, justice and equality for working people (Nowak, 2015). Many of the central debates trade unionists were having fifty to sixty years ago about the relationship between capital and labour; state and market; employers and workers remain at the forefront of

contemporary TU campaign and policy work (Marginson, 2015). Jones (2015) argued that the culture of the state as elitist as ever, with a political class which has grown and overseen significant increases in inequity and characterised by a neo-liberal context of authoritarian populism. Political structures are dominated by elitist networks and privately educated hierarchies with an abusive attitude towards public office (*ibid.*). For Lucio (2015) the question of the state and its crisis in industrial relations is part of a broader constitutional issue. The question of worker rights needs to be further linked to the question of human and civil rights, as well as broader political reform, if we are to sustain a humane perspective in terms of how, why and for what we work (*ibid.*).

Calls for unions to modernise if they are to reverse long-term decline and meet the new challenges workers face come from within the union movement (Arnold, 2018); the stark warning of 'change or die' is prominent (Topping, 2018). The Covid- 19 pandemic created new challenges, but also possibilities for renewal (Hunt and Connolly, 2023). Hunter and Connolly (2023) noted that unions have been able to achieve greater levels of engagement and participation through use of online communication mechanisms which were introduced during the pandemic. This provided unions a richer picture of the situations members were experiencing, leading many officials to state that they could now better plan campaigns and represent members in negotiations with employers (*ibid.*). Such adaptations made during the pandemic proved that trade unions are still able to learn and innovate rapidly to change how they work and shape public policy, thereby challenging their critics and the stark narrative of long-term decline (*ibid.*).

2.8 Relevance for this Study

In terms of the relevance of this historical exploration for my study; the two remaining shipyards on the upper Clyde; Yarrow in Scotstoun and Fairfield in Govan; were incorporated into British Shipbuilders in 1977 (Brocklehurst, 2013). Once in power, the Thatcher government began a privatisation programme and the profitable Yarrow yard was one of British Shipbuilders' early divestitures. It was sold in 1985 to GEC-Marconi, becoming Marconi Marine. British Shipbuilders was broken up and denationalised in 1988, and the former Fairfield yard in Govan was sold to the Norwegian Kvaerner group (*ibid.*). In 1999 Marconi and the Yarrow yard was sold to British Aerospace, creating a new parent company, which proceeded to also take over the Fairfield yard at Govan. As a result, the

two remaining shipyards on the upper Clyde were owned by the same company and their shipbuilding capability consolidated within one organisation. I joined this organisation as an HR practitioner in 2013 and could feel the significance of history from the moment I started. The evocative nature of shipbuilding, recalling the Clyde in its industrial heyday and all the associated elements of identity were rolled up in this place, and I knew I was in an enviable position in terms of my access to this organisation. As a result, I knew I wanted to undertake a research study within this singular context.

In a 1971 Industrial Management article on the UCS work in, a harsh description of organisational life within the Govan shipyard was presented;

> "The management at the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' Clydebank Division wear white safety helmets and grey suits and eat their meals in a bright white canteen with waitress service. The labour force in the yard do not always wear their safety helmets, their overalls are uniformly filthy and they queue for meals in their grey, greasy canteen or struggle to get served in D. J. Connoly's bar across the road. When the hooter. . .blasts long and loud across the yard at 4.18 each afternoon, the management drive back to their homes along Clydeside's pleasanter stretches: the men surge out of the gate to their flats off the stairways of the dirty, damp tenements or climb the hill to their new council house near the overcrowded cemetery." (The Silent Men at Upper Clyde, 1971: 82)

Set against a backdrop of significant social and political change over the past 50 years; the question for me was whether this depiction of the shipyards was truly a historical one. At the outset of my study, my feeling was that the conditions described were too familiar, despite the passage of half a century. There are some defining features described above which I will explore in subsequent chapters, as I attempt to paint my own picture of the contemporary organisation. The history presented in this chapter, especially the features of division, industrial conflict and the role of the trade unions feel as pertinent as ever, both for the context of my research study and as topics for academic enquiry. The next chapter will present the literature deemed most pertinent to my study in order to situate this enquiry.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will now cover the key concepts in the literature which are most significant for my study. The literature is grouped into high level themes: organisational legacy, organisational trust, employee relations, and labour process theory. The organisational legacy section covers the concepts of history, organisational memory, identity, storytelling and ghosts. The section which follows explores organisational trust and division, and the final section considers perspectives in employee relations, labour process theory and human resource management literature. Throughout the review, I have identified connections between the literature and my study.

3.1 Organisational Legacy

As touched on in my introductory chapter, a legacy is what remains or carries on after a significant event or series of events (Farrall and Hay, 2014). For the purposes of this review, I have used 'organisational legacy' as a framework by which to connect various concepts in the literature relating to inheritances of the past. The following concepts are covered: organisational history, memory, identity, and storytelling. Outlining how each of these concepts has been studied to date within the organisational literature was considered essential for shaping the approach to my research. Additionally, these inheritances are arguably the evidence of an 'organisational legacy' in action. This section of the review also includes an exploration of the literature related to organisational ghosts; as this literature greatly enhanced the sense-making process in terms of understanding the way the past and present converge in organisations.

3.1.1 Organisational History

It is generally accepted by management scholars that knowledge is one of the most important sources of competitive advantage within the current business climate, and the ability to build and create knowledge is critical for business survival (Blackman and Connelly, 2001). Consequently, knowledge of the organisation itself, its culture, its systems and how they evolved; essentially its history; can be an invaluable source of understanding (Blackman and

Connelly, 2001).   The ongoing existence of 'Business History' and other international journals concerned with how businesses, organisations, and their environment develop over time, and the influences on contemporary organisations; shows the significance of organisational history within the scholarly discourse.   It was a desire to understand more about the history of my case study organisation, and how that history affects individual experiences of work and the employee relations environment today, that provided my primary motivation for undertaking this study. As explored in the previous chapter, the organisation has a distinctive history, often characterised by industrial conflict and workforce resistance, and prior to undertaking my research, I believed the modern business faced significant challenges in understanding the depth and complexity of its inheritances and appreciating their impact on the modern employment context. The purpose of the first section of this literature review is to outline the existing perspectives on organisational history, and how this might impact the contemporary organisation.

In terms of organisational history, there has been much debate in the literature about the role that history should play in contemporary organisation studies. In her notable work, Lawrence (1984) considered the significance of the 'historical perspective' for research horizons and argued that history was a devalued component in social sciences research. She contended that the difference between history and historical perspective is that object of historical perspective is to enhance understanding of the present, not the past. Using written documents and artifacts to study attitudes is historical research, whereas using historical information to understand differences in attitudes today is historical perspective. As such, history provides the raw materials for the development of historical perspective (Lawrence, 1984).   There have been repeated calls in the literature for a more historical approach to the study of management and organisations from leading academics such as Zald (1993, 2002), Kieser (1994, 1997, 2015) and Burrell (1997). Kieser (1994) contended that organisational sociologists had, at the time of his writing, lost interest in the history of organisations. Similarly, Zald (2002; 381) argued that business school social science tends towards 'universalist and presentist' approaches, and that in a quest to pursue modern relevance, 'social science cut itself off from history'.

Kieser (1994) detailed what he believed to be the four primary benefits of considering organisational history in sociological research. Firstly, he found that organisational structures and behaviour are reflective of culture-specific historical developments. As a

result, differences between organisations in different cultures can only be fully understood if consideration of the historical dimension is included. Secondly, he argued that for organisational problem-solving activity, historical information on past developments within the organisation can act as a mediating factor against potential reductive use of current 'trends' in management theory and practice. The third theory he posited was that historical analyses help researchers to understand existing organisational structures as the result of past decisions and choices, some of which were deliberate and others more implicit. He argued that learning from past choices can help organisations to make better and sometimes more intentional decisions when choice opportunities are presented again. Finally, he determined that organisational change theories can be subjected to more rigorous testing when history is accounted for than they must pass when being confronted with short term insights. He concluded his work by examining the criticisms of utilising historical analyses within organisation studies. He acknowledged that as the volumes of historical material available can be considerable, a selection process for determining relevancy cannot be avoided. There is always a risk that this selection, as well as the interpretation of events, will reflect the ideologies (and biases) of the researcher. Consequently, as with all other theoretical approaches, the results of any historical analyses should be subjected to critical enquiry. I acknowledge that my earlier historical context chapter could be critiqued in this way, as I selected to detail specific historical events which were most relevant for contextualising the growth and decline of shipbuilding, and the employee relations climate on the Clyde.

Sewell (2005) noted that there is a general scepticism in the social sciences towards archival narrative history. It has been suggested that consulting organisational archives is not a legitimate method of empirical research because data and information are collected, rather than being generated as a result of organisational research (Strati, 2000). Alternatively, history is regarded merely as a form of storytelling, with the implication that critical perspectives are set aside when reading history, and historical narratives can be incorporated to illustrate theoretical arguments (Down, 2001). Similarly, Blackman and Connelly (2001) explored the issues with utilising organisational history to inform decision making in the present. They argued that as much of an organisational history is actually socially constructed, it lacks objectivity, and may be selective in terms of what is perceived and remembered. They also noted that history may be used indulgently to glorify the events of the past, rather than attempting to learn from them. Furthermore, history can also be used as a way of patting the present on the back for being superior to the past; again, failing to acknowledge the significance of true organisational learning through examination of

previous experiences. As such, they asserted that the study of organisational history should consider both the actual events of the past, and the representation and human interpretation of those events (*ibid.*). Kieser (1994) acknowledged a further limitation of historical analyses is that history does not repeat itself; consequently, historical analyses can only serve to reflect on existing organisational designs and practices, and to critique existing organisational theory. He further critiqued organisational theory suggesting that it is ahistorical; driven by theoretical fads searching for or building on objectivist notions of organisational development; and overly focused on highly controlled research contexts to ensure scientifically 'verifiable' data. In direct opposition to the arguments posited by Kieser, Goldman (1994) questioned not only the importance of history for understanding organisational events and outcomes but also the methodological rigor of the discipline of history overall. Both Kieser and Goldman agreed however that there are some research communities within organisation studies who will always continue to engage with history; one such community they explicitly recognise is that of labour process theorists. I will examine the labour process theory (LPT) literature later in this literature review.

Returning to the arguments in favour of historical perspectives in organisation studies then, Blackman and Connelly (2001) argued that it is only possible to understand the present state by gaining insight into how the present came to be. Sydow et al. (2009) agreed that "history matters," both for understanding ourselves and organisations. Similarly, Langenmayr (2016) stated that the present context of an organisation is based on both the future state it aspires to, as well as being defined by its past. He argued that neither dimension of the organisation could exist independently of the other (Langenmayr, 2016). In terms of organisational culture, Collingwood (1993) contended the link with organisational history is important, as one of the elements which contributes to culture is historical fact and narrative. He claimed historical appreciation leads to better understanding of both the past and the present, which in turn provides a basis for action in the present. He further argued if the past of an organisation is accurately reported and, more critically, understood; the insights gleaned will enhance capacity for organisational decision-making.

In some of the more recent 'historical turn' literature, perspectives on the relevance of history for organisational studies have developed further as different researchers expanded the debate. Rowlinson (2004) moved the argument towards a critical reappraisal of both history and mainstream management studies in his outline of three historical perspectives in

organisational studies. In their paper, Booth and Rowlinson (2006) discussed their ten-point agenda for the new (at that time) journal Management and Organizational History; their paper contained proposals for future directions in management and organisational history research, and also encouraged greater discernment of methodological similarities and differences between historical and organisational approaches. Additionally, they argued that demands for more historical awareness in research are often aligned with critical perspectives in the literature, and the idea that historical perspectives can provide a critically reflective version of the 'good society'.

As a result of these proposals by Booth and Rowlinson (2006), Durepos and Mills produced several pieces of work (Durepos and Mills 2012a, 2012b; Mills and Durepos, 2010) on ANTiHistory; an approach that seeks to understand knowledge of the past, existing knowledge, and the interactions of the two; through studies of the relational networks that may be thought to have constituted them. The process is iterative, where knowledge of the past as history and organisational knowledge are, at points, mutually reinforcing and, at other points, mutually conflicting. Another development in the research was the increasing interest in rhetorical history; the process of using historical debate for strategic purposes (Suddaby, et al., 2010). In contrast to traditional history, which seeks to understand the past in the context of history, rhetorical history seeks to understand the past from a "presentist" perspective (*ibid.*). Rhetorical history can then be used to analyse how critique of the past can help facilitate processes in the present. Additionally, it can be utilised as a persuasive influencing force on organisational stakeholders (*ibid*.). In this manner, history is considered a highly valuable, yet also highly malleable strategic asset of organisations (Foster et al., 2011; Mills et al., 2016; Suddaby et al., 2016). More recently, Wanderley and Barros (2019) built on the idea of creating space for more critical engagements with history. They posited a framework for organisational theory which considered both historic and geographical elements as significant for management and organisational knowledge; recognising the importance of geo-politics, particularly for the investigation of organisations in non-Westernised contexts.

Expanding the debate further, Deal et al. (2021) considered the idea of history as cultural memory; or mnemohistory. Different than conventional history, which is written to be an apparently accurate account of the past, mnemohistory is less concerned with what might actually have happened, moving beyond the politics of research ontology towards an ethic

that values the importance of unpacking how past events can be recollected and known in the present, often in very different ways. Mnemohistory reflects the ways in which the past is shaped, modelled, and reconstructed by organisational actors in the present (*ibid*.). Mills and Novicevic (2020) summarised the academic debate by stating that the overarching goal of all those researchers who consider value in the historic turn is to uncover multiple ways in which examination of the past can bring theoretical value to management and organisational studies. As such, there seems to be agreement that there is value in utilising history for organisational research; just no definitive consensus as to how this should be done. My study uses a historical perspective (Lawrence, 1984); with knowledge of the past used to enhance understanding of the present. Additionally, the concept of mnemohistory (Deal et al., 2021) was relevant for understanding how events of the past are recalled and reconstructed in the present. The following sections will now explore additional concepts closely related to organisational history which were also considered significant for organisational legacy.

3.1.2 Organisational Memory

The discussion on the significance of organisational history is closely linked to that on organisational memory, as organisations make sense of the present through narratives of their past (Rowlinson et al., 2014), and continually construct and reconstruct their cultures and identities through use of both history and memory (Linde, 2009). This process of remembering and forgetting is unavoidably selective, whether deliberate or not, as organisations continually evolve their history (Hegele and Kieser, 2001). Organizations are also both enabled and constrained by the narratives of their past (Hansen, 2007).

The work of Walsh and Ungson (1991) on the systematic formulation of organisational memory was one of the most notable early studies which aimed to synthesise the existing, but fragmented, thinking on organisational memory, into one coherent theory. They proposed the following definition;

> ". . . organisational memory refers to stored information from an organisation's history that can be brought to bear on present decisions. This information is stored as a consequence of implementing decisions to which they refer, by individual recollections, and through shared interpretations." (Walsh and Ungson, 1991: 61)

Their model contended organisational memory is comprised of the following information retention facilities: individuals, culture, transformations, structure and ecology. These act as a storehouse from which information can be recalled when required by the organisation (Anderson and Sun, 2010). This theory has been extensively cited in the literature since its conception, primarily within knowledge management and organisational learning scholarship, with organisational history, memory and stories considered 'knowledge assets' which can be tapped into as required (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Boje, 2008; Sun and Anderson, 2010; Zahra and George, 2002). Casey (1997) argued that primary issue with this model of organisational memory is that collective memory is not the same as a physical asset which can be retrieved at any time in the same form. It has been argued that their work, whilst highly influential, has not been sufficiently empirically investigated or challenged (Casey and Olivera, 2011).

Walsh and Ungson (1991) contended that information about decision making in organisations will become distorted as it is passed from person to person over time, recognising the role of the individual in information retention. As a result, they argued that an organisational culture may carry an explanation of why a decision was taken but this interpretation may or may not be accurate (*ibid*.). Arguably, for my research, there is inherent value in the way things are remembered by individuals in the case study organisation, and as such, the accuracy of memory becomes less significant than how events live on and the way they are recalled by members of the organisation. Expanding on the role of individuals, Walsh and Ungson (1991) considered use and misuse of information, which they argued may be more inadvertent and unintentional by individuals in organisations, whilst abuse of memory and information is more deliberate and tempting for individuals struggling for control in organisations. Thus, memory and information about the past can become a resource which is controlled and shaped to advance the interests of a particular group or groups within the organisation. Johannson and Jones (2020) wrote about the value of remembering past events as a source of knowledge which is both personal and social. They argued that whilst experiences of the past can be subjective and private, they are not disconnected from historical, cultural and political circumstances (*ibid*.). This was significant for my study in terms of understanding how past events were perceived and retold (or not) by different groups within my case study organisation, and any potential differences in the retelling by those groups.

Some researchers have subsequently further explored the role of individuals in memory; Morgeson and Hofmann (1999) argued that organisational memory is comprised of a set of interactions among individuals aimed at recalling past events through probing of their own memories and the organisation's information systems, and the subsequent sensemaking of those events. More dynamic views consider the social nature of memory; rather than defining memory as knowledge stored in a collection of retention vessels, the emphasis is on memory as continually constructed and reconstructed by humans interacting with each other and their environment (Booth et al., 2005; Corbett, 2000; Johnson and Paper, 1998; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Zakaria and Mamman, 2015). Casey and Olivera (2011) argued that we can improve our understanding of organisational memory by considering the dynamic nature of organisational knowledge, the role of time in how organisations retain this knowledge and the role of power dynamics in what and how organisations choose to remember (and indeed forget). Adorisio (2014) suggested that a focus on narrative may help reconcile the various issues with existing studies on organizational memory and integrate them around the concept of 'organizational remembering', as proposed by Feldman and Feldman (2006). Booth and Rowlinson (2006) contended that there is great potential to connect the concepts of organisational culture and identity with social and collective memory research. There is also scope for further dialogue between historical and ethnographic researchers regarding methodological and theoretical preferences for interpreting narrative and memory in organizations (Rowlinson et al., 2010; Rowlinson et al, 2014). Finally, Rowlinson et al. (2014) argued that the process of selective memory in organisations can have significant implications for culture and change as organisations can find themselves co-opted into the narratives of nations and capitalism.

Subsequent researchers proceeded to build on three primary topics developed by social memory scholars; firstly the concept of collective memory, or the shared representations of the past which serve stakeholders present goals (Halbwachs, 1992; Olick and Robbins, 1998); secondly the idea that such memories allow people to remember the past socially, as a collective rather than individual experience (Halbwachs, 1992; Zerubavel, 2003); and finally, the idea that collective memories are anchored to mnemonic devices, which are material artifacts that convey meanings and trigger physical responses which frame what is remembered and what is forgotten, both individually and collectively (Connerton, 1989; Zerubavel, 1996). Eisenman and Frenkel (2021) explored a 'material–relational' approach to organisational memory; they contended that the materiality of mnemonic

devices represents information about the past that is interpreted by members of a shared 'mnemonic community' as a narrative that is important in the present; thereby creating shared kinship amongst individuals as they remember together. Additionally, as collective memories and mnemonic communities mutually amplify and sustain each other (Foroughi, 2020), mnemonic devices help explain with whom individuals remember and how they do so (Eisenman and Frenkel, 2021).

Much of the academic debate around both organisational history and memory seems to centre around the methodological validity of utilising historical data, and how it can contribute to organisation and management studies. Additionally, the subjectivity of memory causes concerns for positivist researchers. Many scholars agree that taking a social perspective on history and memory offers valuable routes for interpretative exploration of organisations. Having considered the perspectives in the literature, I determined that I would utilise the history of my case study organisation to contextualise my understanding of the organisational present and to explore the current views of individuals in the organisation on past events. I would then use these views to develop an understanding of organisational memory; in particular how it is created and sustained, and how different organisational groups recall and describe specific events.

3.1.3 Organisational Identity

Another concept in the literature significant for my study is that of organisational identity. There is a large volume of data on the concept at macro level, located in the social identity literature (Erikson, 1959; Westin, 1983); however, I considered a review of this literature beyond the scope of this study; I have therefore concentrated on the concept of organisational identity. Albert and Whetten (1985) are usually credited with the formal introduction of the concept of organisational identity. Their definition of organisational identity had three primary components; the ideational component, or members' shared beliefs regarding "Who are we as an organization?"; the definitional component, which is comprised of the central, enduring and distinctive (CED) features of an organisation; and finally the phenomenological component; which correlates identity and profound organisational experiences (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Whetten, 2006). Whetten revisited this concept in his 2006 article, in which he responded to the academic debate and criticism which followed his and Albert's earlier definition. He contended that the CED attributes of an organisation

comprise its identity and distinguish it from other organisations. He defined these as organisational identity referents, which represent an organisation's self-determined, unique social space. His paper sought to clarify and strengthen the arguments from his earlier work; claiming that not all institutionalised organisational features qualify as identity referents, but that all identity referents are institutionalised features of an organisation. He further contextualised the identity debate by exploring the idea of threats to organisational identity; this typically involves the threatened loss of high-level identity referents, for example, proposed changes in the qualifying requirements for governmental contractors, or the threatened loss of strategically critical relationships, such as sole-source provider or distributor agreements. He posited that by considering identity in terms of potential loss, or identity crisis, this helps us to understand and appreciate the constituent parts of identity overall.

There is general agreement in the literature that organisational culture and identity are closely connected, and scholars initially struggled to explain how the two might be conceptualised separately (Hatch and Schultz, 2002). The concepts are inextricably linked by the fact that they are so often used to define one another (Hatch and Schultz, 2000). Further to this, Hatch and Schultz (2002) insisted that organisational identity is dynamic, and that the process of constructing identity never stops, but keeps moving in a continual set of interactions between organisational culture and organisational image. In terms of its value, the meaning of what an organisation is (in other words its identity), creates a sense of shared identification from its members. It can then leverage this to provide direction, maintain solidarity, and instil a sense of belonging from these individuals (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006).

Balmer (2008) noted that within the management literature, marketing and organisational behaviour are the dominant disciplinary traditions which have informed the understanding of identity in institutional contexts (Balmer 2008). The focus of each tradition is distinct; corporate identity, which focuses on external stakeholder and customer perspectives; is synonymous with marketing, whilst organisational identity, which concentrates more on the internal employee view; is seen in the organisational behaviour literature (ibid.). For me then, the organisational behaviour literature is most pertinent; however, that does not mean that corporate identity literature should be altogether dismissed, and as such I have included some references to corporate identity in this review.

The traits that define a corporation's identity are numerous and include company mission, philosophy, and culture (Van Tonder and Lessing, 2003). Other similar components considered significant for identity are company ethos, organisational activities, market position, location, geographical scope, organisational type, structure and procedures (Balmer, 2008). In his work, Balmer (2008) explored a range of perspectives which he believed have an implication for identity in corporations. He identified the following identity perspectives; individual, collective, juridical, national and ethnic; all of which add to the complexity of understanding identity components in organisations. He contended that social identity theory helps explain how individuals and groups define themselves by their relationships within an organisational culture. He also argued that an individual's membership of any such group is not fixed since individuals may migrate to other groups in order to leverage self-esteem and self-identity (Balmer, 2008). Similarly, there is significance in the meanings and interpretations by organisational members for comprehending the key identity traits of an organisation and highlighting the significance of those elements with which individuals most strongly identify (Balmer et al., 2015).

Bringing together the discussion on legacy and identity; in their work, Lamertz et al. (2016) examined the role of legacy in the beer brewing industry in Ontario Canada; for them taking a historical lens was crucial to understanding present day organisational phenomena. Their work was particularly useful, as the industry they were investigating had around two hundred years history in that location. They found that history still shaped the practices and processes as well as the narratives and identities within the newly emergent 'craft brewing' industry. In this way, I could see a real parallel for my study. Lamertz et al. (2016) built on the work of Pratt (2003:156) on collective identity, who argued that if 'we can figure out where collective identity resides, we may be able to backtrack and discover how collective identities come to be'. Lamertz et al. (2016) found that many of the practices that characterise new shared identities in the modern craft brewing industry are located in the vestiges of legacy populations. Therefore, the current identity is not a wholly new creation and instead borrows significantly from the institutional remnants laid down by previous generations of brewers and breweries. They therefore argued that remnants of the past, if managed appropriately, can be significant for how organisational members and stakeholders understand who they are and the cultural meanings of the environment they are operating in. They used historical records and narratives from the past along with insights and concepts

from organisational theory literature to develop a story of the collective identity in the Canadian beer brewing industry from its origins to the early twenty-first century. They also identified major events and phases in the history of the industry so they could paint a rich picture of the meanings and practices and how they changed over time. Again, there was a parallel with my study, emphasising the validity of research which utilises historical perspectives alongside organisational theory to create meaningful analyses of contemporary organisational identity.

Walsh and Glynn (2008) examined how an organisation's identity can endure as a legacy beyond the existence of the originating organisation. They defined legacy organisational identity as the shared claim by organisational members about 'who we were as an organisation'; this clearly draws on the Albert and Whetten (1985) definition of identity as covered earlier in this section. Walsh and Glynn (2008) argued that this shared claim pulls central and valued organisational identity elements from the past into the present and is enacted regularly through collectively shared activities and artifacts. They conceptualised how legacy identities arise from organisational processes and critical events, such as death, decline, cost-cutting measures, or restructuring, that profoundly change the organisation's existence as a recognisable entity. As such, I thought it extremely important to capture some of the critical moments in my case study organisation; both from a historical perspective (as outlined in Chapter 2), but also events from the recent past, which I experienced as a practitioner researcher and believed were significant to understanding the organisation and making sense of the perspectives expressed by individuals I spoke with throughout the course of my research.

3.1.4 Storytelling

An additional concept I wanted to explore in relation to organisational legacy was storytelling. Storytelling has been a component of human communication for millennia and continues to play a critical role in the passing on of knowledge between generations (Gill, 2011). It is one of the oldest and most established teaching methods (Spagnoli, 1995). "Stories help us to make sense of what we are, where we come from, and what we want to be" (Soin and Scheytt, 2006: 55). Boje (1991) defined a story as an exchange between two or more persons during which a past or anticipated experience was being referenced, recounted, interpreted or challenged.   Stories in organisations are used to exchange

information, help provide direction to others, and articulate the future (Boje, 2003). They also help organisational members to navigate and collectively make sense of the organisation (*ibid.*).

Many benefits of storytelling in organisations have been established; most notably the concept of Narrative Paradigm Theory (NPT), which conceptualises storytelling as a way for people breakdown complex knowledge into narratives that are shared among groups (Fisher, 1989). Stories, and therefore the information they contain, are memorable, easy to comprehend, and establish common ground between individuals (Barker and Gower, 2010). Narration in stories can enhance shared meaning in a group, as individuals interpret the narration in line with their own experiences, allowing personalised understandings of problems, solutions and explanations (Denning, 2005; Simmons, 2006). These narratives also create cognitive and emotional empathy which helps people to understand the experiences and world views of others (Lämsä and Sintonen, 2006). Barker and Gower (2010) argued that a storytelling-based communication model can be utilised to transfer information quickly and effectively throughout increasingly complex and diverse organisations, in service of organisational goals like increased productivity and swifter action (*ibid.*).

As well as the work on the significance of storytelling for communication, it is also explored in the management literature as a knowledge management mechanism (Hannabuss, 2000), a vehicle for organisational learning (Lämsä and Sintonen, 2006) and a tool which can be utilised by management to engage and maintain loyalty from employees through organisational change (Gill, 2011). Kahan (2006) published a study on collaboration in new work groups, particularly those designed to affect change; he argued that encouraging individuals to tell a story had a positive impact on the participation of all members of the group. Similarly, Denning (2006) argued that stories with negative connotations fail to inspire action and as such, the types of stories that are told in organisations should be based on the desired results. In terms of leadership and storytelling, Driscoll and McKie (2007) provided a balanced view, arguing that storytelling can be seen from either a leader controlling perspective or from a participatory, co-creation perspective. Storytelling can be used to either control, dehumanise, and manipulate employees, or to develop their potential and sense of well-being (Boyce, 1996). Ultimately, storytelling is seen by organisations as another tool which they can utilise to better leverage human capital (McLellan, 2006).

As with the debate on organisational memory, there is a danger that storytelling can be used to support the agenda of specific groups within an organisation; Boje (1991) recounted the role he played in understanding, enforcing and changing narratives within an organisation, with the aim of creating what he termed a 'healthy storytelling organisation'. He conceptualised this as an organisation in which the storytelling was an accurate reflection of the lived experiences for all stakeholders. For him, in an 'unhealthy storytelling organisation', the processing of data into story and the recall of stories does not accurately reflect the organisational environment, and not all stakeholders are given a prominent voice (*ibid.*). In a similar critical vein, stories can be used to rewrite history to legitimise decisions in the organisational present (Boje, 2003). At the extreme end of the spectrum, storytelling can oppress by subjugating all individuals and their experiences under one grand narrative, in which 'official' stories are given more weighting and legitimacy at the expense of more marginalised ones (*ibid*.). Boje (1995) argued that most stories used by management are told without acknowledging the plurality and diversity of the workforce.

This is closely linked to the discussion on use and abuse of organisational memory from earlier, both of which suggest that the ability to control and potentially manipulate narratives, including the ability to influence those which survive and are passed on, carries a great deal of organisational power and control. Much of the existing research on storytelling seems to take a more managerial perspective, disregarding the potentially problematic aspects of regarding storytelling as a 'tool' which can (and should) be used for the benefit of the organisation. Consequently, I believed there was space for more research on stories and storytelling which tackle the subject from a more critical perspective and seek to unpack the 'motives' of different organisational groups. Additionally, I felt there was an opportunity to explore ownership of stories, control of narratives, and how employees and different organisational groups experience and utilise storytelling.

3.2 Organisational Ghosts

The final element related to legacy I wanted to explore in this review was the concept of organisational ghosts. There is a small but ever-growing body of literature which has sought

to explore the idea of ghosts, uncanny experiences and hauntings in organisations. The idea of ghosts, or spectres has been present in the literature for some time; it is a central metaphor in Derrida's Specters of Marx, in which Derrida utilises a quote from Hamlet to present his argument that the figure of Marx and history of communism haunts 'old Europe', just as Hamlet was haunted by the ghost of his dead father (Derrida, 1994). Derrida utilised this metaphor to explore the themes of inheritance and mourning; for him, inheritance is an active task, it remains unquestionably relevant as we are all heirs (of the past) whether we want to be or not, and, like all inheritors, we are in mourning for that which has passed. The ideas of inheritance and mourning in relation to past events presented in this way helps us to better understand individual reaction to, and relationship with, past events, and in particular the emotive nature of such responses. Derrida's work inspired a trend in 'hauntology', rehabilitating ghosts as a respectable subject of academic enquiry. Hauntology replaces the figure of the ghost as a real and present entity with that which is neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive (Davis, 2005). Hauntology allows us to examine our relationship with the dead, examine the identities of the living, and explore the boundaries between the thought and the unthought (*ibid.*). Jameson (1995) argued that spectrality does not involve the belief that ghosts exist or that the past is still alive and at work within the living present. Instead, it is the idea that the living present is not as self-sufficient as it claims to be, that its density and solidity might not be as reliable as we think, and it may sometimes deceive (*ibid.*).

For Pors (2016) inheritances are a call to question and explore which questions can and should be asked in certain places at certain times; ghosts are figments of these inheritances, and therefore signifiers of when and where to ask questions. Thinking about the ghostly in organisations is about noticing and questioning what is going on in the day to day, and how there is more to it than that which is presented by the linear orders of time and events as presented through strategic narratives (Pors, 2016). It is about being alert to the ways in which the different pasts and alternative futures that corporate narratives manage to forget or disregard, can sometimes bubble to the surface (*ibid.*). Similarly, being attentive to ghostly matters is also about noticing how the past lingers although organisations claim to move quickly towards the new, and work to bring that which was neglected and forgotten back into consciousness and circulation (Blackman, 2019).

Central for my study was the work of Orr (2014); his conceptualisation of ghosts proposed a lens through which to analyse the ways in which legacies of the past 'haunt' the

organisational present. In his paper, Orr began by visiting the axiology of ghosts; the roots of the word, the associations and representations in classical literature and popular culture. He then moved into a discussion of the context for organisational studies, arguing a recent dark turn in the literature, particularly in relation to organisational change research, in which we see an increasing prevalence of macabre metaphors, such as death. In addition to this, he argued that as with those who visit Scrooge in A Christmas Carol (Dickens, 1842): ". . . ghosts can look in at least three directions: to the past (organisational inheritances); to the present (current practices, or how traditions are reproduced); and to futures yet to come (with fateful choices of continuity or transformation)." (Orr, 2014: 1044). Similarly, Simmons (2011) argued that spectrality has disorienting effects, in particular the experience of time and place. In terms of the temporality of ghosts, he argued that the phantom comes as much from the future as the past; ghosts never die, they remain to return again and again. I found the above point on temporality as outlined by Orr (2014) particularly valuable for my research as I got into the analysis phase, as a way of structuring my discussion, and I will return to it in later analyses chapters.

For Orr (2014), organisational ghosts should be understood as being more alive than dead; they are more than just a metaphor, in fact they are figures deserving of respect and appreciation in terms of their role in organisational life. His work therefore pushed the existing organisational debate on ghosts, by giving ghostly figures and occurrences greater substance and significance than previous contributions. He suggested that organisational researchers should seek to explore individual experiences with ghosts and their accounts of 'hauntings,' to further our understanding within the field of organisational studies. Based on my earlier review of the organisational history, memory and identity literature, I felt that Orr's work illustrated a way for me to utilise social theory elements namely, the ways in which individuals in my case study organisation interpreted the history of the organisation and the broader industry, the role of identity for those individuals, and the stories which were told; and understanding how all of those legacy inheritances are still being experienced and impacting on the organisational practices today in a very tangible way.

The concept of organisational ghosts was developed further in a special collection of articles in Culture and Organisation in 2021. In their introduction to the collection, Hunter and Baxter (2021) highlighted how organisational scholars may at times get the impression that that there is something going on which is somewhat intangible, unseen, or occurring

underneath the surface, which might be indicative of, or explained by, 'ghosts in the organisation'. They identified the following key themes which emerged from the collection of articles; ghosts as symbolic signifiers which appear in organisational life and can disrupt but also call organisational members into action through their haunting; the role of ghosts in the materiality, spatiality and temporality of organisational life which present an opportunity to explore space and time in ways that blur the distinctions between past, present, physical and imaginary; and finally ghostly encounters as a mechanism for highlighting the entanglement of affect and hauntings which may suddenly emerge in organisations. Furthermore, Pors (2021) argued that the study of ghostly encounters should be seized by organisational scholars eager to push the boundaries of the discipline, and as a way of helping to understand rather than disregard or omit those elements which may at first be considered odd, uncanny, or unreliable in empirical data.

For Pors (2021), researching ghostly matters is about using analytical sensitivities to attune to uncanny atmospheres, so that we notice those seemingly small and unimportant moments. She argued that organisational scholars, have inherited a bias towards growth, development, and progress and rarely study organisations in grander time scales, where questions are considered about what conditions, values, problems and purposes particular organisations have inherited and what problems, challenges and values they pass on to future generations. She argues that these are significant questions, and that by positioning organisations in grander temporalities, there is an opportunity to draw more attention to the relationships between organisations and past or future generations, and consider the relationships between organisations and current transformations of our planet and natural environments (Pors, 2021).

Jung and Orr (2021) explored the idea of spectrality; for them it is a dichotomy; it can provide a sense of comfort and continuity, through which memory provides a basis for understanding the development of the current reality. It can also have a darker, more oppressive side if left unexplored (ibid.). Shadows may resurface to amplify echoes of exclusion and exploitation; for example, the ghosts of colonialism (Baloy, 2016). Jung and Orr (2021) argued that engaging with concepts of the spectral enables more critical approaches in which 'official' accounts can be challenged by scholars, allowing the reframing of research to include those voices often relegated to the margins of organisational discussions. They suggested that there is an opportunity to connect organisational

scholarship with the long-standing work on spectres and ghosts across the social sciences. For them, engaging with ideas and concepts about the spectral can better equip researchers to understand the conventions and dynamics of contemporary phenomena as well as their roots, politics and prospects (Jung and Orr, 2021).

Developing on the idea of the uncanny, Orr (2023) considered the potential of this concept for organisational studies. In his paper, Orr (2023) used vivid descriptions of imagery from the CV19 pandemic as manifestations of 'uncanny strangeness' in relation to events of the time, to set the scene for his analysis of crises in public sector contexts. For Orr, these depictions dwell upon what he terms 'uncanny moments' which help to depict scenarios and spaces we might find odd and disturbing, bordering on intrusive in their ability to persist within the consciousness. The author suggested that if the ability of organisations to continue to function is dependent on ignoring thoughts of decay and decline, the uncanny represents disturbances which disrupt those attempts at repression. In addition, Orr also suggested that the organisational uncanny has a direct relationship with organisational ghosts; helping to provide an explanation for those strange sensations felt time and again in organisations, which are not easily explained or swept aside.

As a consequence of considering the developing literature in this area, I concluded that I had an opportunity to contribute to this growing discourse, through understanding temporality, and specifically the relationship between the past, present and future in my research organisation, exploring the extent to which organisational ghosts or spectres might be prevalent, and the underlying sense of the uncanny, that I myself had experienced.

3.3 Organisational Trust

As previously articulated, prior to undertaking my study, I wanted to investigate the concept of trust in my case study organisation, particularly given the history of industrial action and conflict on the Clyde. The next section of this chapter outlines some of the key perspectives in the literature on organisational trust; it touches briefly on the concept of trust at macro level but concentrates more on the organisational trust discourse.

Historical definitions of trust within the literature are sometimes hard to follow because trust is defined in many different, often seemingly disparate ways (McKnight and Chervany, 2001) and is seen as a complex and multi-dimensional construct (Sanders et al., 2006). For example, trust has been defined as both a noun and a verb, a personality trait, a belief, a social structure and a behavioural intention (Currall and Judge, 1995; Rotter, 1971; Shaprio, 1987). A multitude of definitions also exist within the organisational literature, predominantly conceptualising trust at the individual level, and numerous reviews have focused on these definitions; Castaldo et al. (2010); McKnight et al. (2002); Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, (2000). Despite the many definitions and conceptualisations of trust in the literature, a common theme consistently emerges of trust as a fundamentally psychological state (Kramer, 1999; Rousseau et al, 1998). Two key facets of trust are also widely accepted in the literature; the willingness to be vulnerable and the expectation of favourable treatment by another party (Colquitt at al., 2007; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Ferrin et al., 2008; Lewicki et al. 1998; Mayer et al., 1995; Mollering, 2006; Tan et al., 2009).

3.3.1 Intra- Organisational Trust

In terms of organisational trust Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) noted that trust exists and can be impacted upon at different levels within an organisation, at the individual level, at group or team level, and at a macro level within an organisation as a whole. Similarly, trust can be conceptualised in relation to the trustee or trust referent within the trust relationship. It can therefore be interpersonal trust (i.e. person to person), group trust (trust between members of a group), and organisational trust (i.e. trust in an organisation or entity) (*ibid*.).

Despite growing evidence that trust is important for organisations; and the recognition that organisations are inherently multilevel systems, and that trust, like many other constructs, operates at these various levels (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012); existing research predominantly focuses on trust at the individual level (Lewicki et al., 2006; Kramer, 1999; Rousseau et al., 1998). Furthermore it remains unclear as to whether antecedents and consequences currently identified in the trust literature at specific levels are unique to said level or applicable across multiple levels (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012). Furthermore, as social processes differ across cultures (Markus and Kitayama, 1991) and trust is essentially a social psychological concept, Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) argued that trust at each level will likely differ and further research is required to examine trust from a cultural perspective.

In recent times, issues of trust in organisational relationships have increased in significance on the agendas of organisational researchers (Bijlsma and Coopman, 2003). Organisational trust was defined by Grey and Garsten (2001) as a precarious accomplishment achieved through the interplay of social structures and individual subjects within the work environment. Tyler (2003) contended that that trust is important because it is a key enabler of effective co-operation within organisations, which is highly significant within an ever-evolving world of work.

3.3.2 Distrust

Previously, trust has been hypothesised as a scale bounded at each end by trust and distrust (Hosmer, 1995). However, in their notable paper, Lewicki et al. (1998) asserted that trust and distrust are separate but linked dimensions; that there are elements that contribute to the growth and decline of trust, and there are elements that contribute to the growth and decline of distrust. That is not to say the two are not connected, more that the absence of trust does not equal a high level of distrust, and vice versa (Lumineau, 2015). It had therefore been argued that there is value in examining distrust, not solely in terms of its correlation with trust, but also as concept in its own right (Hardin, 2004). The work of Saunders et al. (2014) built on this idea, providing support for the Lewicki et al. (1998) theory that trust and distrust are distinct rather than symmetrical constructs. They suggested that the ways in which employees process and experience trust and distrust judgements can be shaped, to a significant degree, by managerial action, but contend that further research into the precise antecedents of trust and distrust would provide a valuable line of enquiry. So, whilst academic interest in distrust is growing, many issues surrounding distrust remain poorly understood and further research is required (Lumineau, 2015).

Tanghe et al. (2010), argued that distrust involves the belief that the other party does not have good intentions and that mutual- cooperation is improbable. Distrust has also been defined as a 'lack of confidence in the other, a concern that the other may act so as to harm one, that he does not care about one's welfare or intends to act harmfully, or is hostile' (Grovier 1994, p. 240; in Kramer, 1999). Kramer (1999) noted that distrust and suspicion are common and recurring problem within many organisations, and McKnight and Chervany

(2001) argued that this may mean, to an extent, that distrust is displacing trust as a social mechanism for dealing with risk in organisations.

3.3.3 Leadership and Trust

Kramer (2009, 2010) argued that the signals organisational leaders send constitute an especially potent source of trust; leaders tend to be focal points for organisational sense making and employees pay a great deal of attention to the behaviours of those in those leadership roles, in other words; trust starts at the top and travels downwards through the hierarchy. The role of leadership in the creation of trust has been widely discussed in the literature and it is generally accepted that trust in leaders leads to better organisational outcomes (Dirks, 2006; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Dirks and Skarlicki, 2004) and in fact, it is the role of leaders to create and proliferate an environment conducive to trust (McCauley and Kuhnert, 1992).

3.3.4 Opportunities for Trust Research

Many existing research studies focus on intra-organisational trust relationships; such as the trust between an employee and their direct supervisor, employee trust in the senior leadership of an organisation, and trust relations between peers (Aryee et al. 2002; Dirks and Ferrin 2002). In their paper, Siebert et al. (2015) proposed three distinct issues with existing intra-organisational trust research; firstly, they noted that much of it has strong unitarist foundations, which predominantly support the managerial agenda rather than that of the employee. Secondly, they contended that most research does not consider how trust in organisations is rooted in societal institutions and would be more robust if it considered the wider context 'beyond the factory gates' (Siebert et al., 2015). They suggested that by looking at organisations through the lens of Fox's (1974) pluralist and radical perspectives (which are discussed in greater detail in the next section of this chapter); new lines of enquiry may be achieved. Finally, they argued that Fox's (1974) explanation of how trust dynamics in organisations interrelate with wider social factors may help facilitate alternative inquiry into intra-organisational trust than has previously been undertaken. In contrast to the arguments posited by Siebert et al (2015), Ackers (2014) argues a neo-pluralist sociological perspective should be adopted in relation to exploration of the employment relationship. However, he too notes that structural insights into the fundamental nature of power and

conflict for paid work can only be explored by empirical research into local context and institutions (Ackers, 2014).

As such, research into specific organisations and broader social context is called for in furthering understanding in the field. Applying this to my research, I determined that an exploration of intra-organisational trust within an organisation with a socially significant history, as well as a history of workforce militance and collectivism offered an opportunity to consider some of the factors 'beyond the factory gates' which impact on trust relations.

3.5 Employee Relations

One of the other key aspects I wanted to explore through my research was the contemporary employee relations (ER) climate in the organisation, to understand whether the historical complexity of industrial relations on the Clyde is still evident in the organisation today. Whilst the evolution of trade unionism was captured at the end of my previous chapter, the next section of this review will cover some of the concepts and perspectives in the broader employment relations literature.

The employment relationship is complex and variable, mainly due to the different ways in which it can be conceptualised and the different components which contribute to its makeup (Dundon and Rollinson, 2011). It is the context in which employees; both individually and collectively; interact with their employers (Blyton and Turnbull, 1998). Such interactions should be considered within the dynamics of the organisation in which they are taking place, but also in the wider socio-cultural context (Dibben et al, 2011). The traditional 'industrial relations' perspective has its origins in the late 19th century and the Industrial Revolution, which gave rise to the formation of collective groups of workers, from which trade unionism emerged (Dundon and Rollinson, 2011); my previous chapter provided a more detailed review of the history of Industrial Relations within shipbuilding on the Clyde and an overview of the evolution of trade unionism in the UK. Until the late 1970s, employee voice and participation in the UK was mainly union led (Welch and Leighton, 1996). As a result of extensive legislative and economic changes, the nature of the UK employment relations climate fundamentally shifted (Purcell, 1991; Welch and Leighton, 1996), with more direct and individualistic forms of participation taking precedence (Edwards, 1995). Although

there has not been an outright displacement of collectivism by individualism, there has been a marked shift in emphasis (Storey and Bacon, 1993). Consequently, there has been a move away from traditional collectivist understandings of employee relations (Edwards, 1995), with researchers focusing on analyses of all the complex factors at play within the workplace today (Blyton and Turnbull, 2004).

The work of Purcell is probably the most notable in terms of contribution to the exploration of individualism and collectivism and management approaches to employee relations. In 1987, Purcell sought to identify the range of tactics which management could use to create a mix of individualist and collectivist policies. He determined individualism to be 'the extent to which employment policies are focused on the rights and capabilities of individual workers' (1987: 533). The scale ranged from labour control (low individualism) to paternalism and then employee development (high individualism). He defined the collectivist scale as 'the extent to which management policy is directed towards limiting or encouraging the development of collective representation by employees and allowing employees a collective voice in management decision making' (p. 533). This scale is considered highly unitary at the one end of the scale, through to adversarial and then co-operative at the other end.

An underlying common feature in such management policy was the move towards 'high individualism', including the introduction of practices and policies such as; individual performance appraisals, individual goal setting, individual systems of pay, direct communication with individuals, and, at the same time, a move away from former 'collectivistic' aspects such as extended collective bargaining, jointly agreed procedures and reliance upon communication through trade unions (Storey and Bacon, 1993). Some academics sought to correlate the rise in Human Resource Management (HRM) practices with the decline in collectivist approaches (Storey, 1992; Guest, 1989). In terms of HRM then, the CIPD gives the following description of employee relations on their website:

"'Employee relations' describes the relationship between employers and employees. Today's interpretation of employee relations refers to individual as well as collective workplace relationships. It reflects the increasing individualisation of the employment relationship following the rise of individual workplace rights. Individual voice channels are very

important. But collective channels, that use union and/or non-union representatives, give employees a collective voice that can complement and reinforce individual channels." (CIPD, 2022)

This description makes clear the evolution of employee relations from a discipline primarily concerned with collectivist approaches to one which recognises the increasing individualisation of the employment relationship. It does however also reinforce the continued importance of collectivism; with the CIPD signalling to the HR profession that they should appreciate the value that collective employee voice channels bring to organisations.

Connecting back to the perspectives explored earlier in relation to the decline of trade unionism, Bacon and Storey (1993) considered the implications of increased individualisation of the employment relationship for trade unions. With the introduction of legislation limiting the power of collective bargaining, key areas which had previously been subject to regulation were reabsorbed into the sphere of management prerogative (ibid). They argued that trade unions would need to adopt more positive approaches to engaging with management strategies to remain relevant, and to ensure they have a role in workplace discussions. Further to this, they suggested that collective bargaining was no longer the primary driver for trade unions, and as a result unions needed to reframe their role as collective representatives through participation and partnership approaches.

Exploring some of the other reasons for the movement towards individualism also involves understanding that the workforce today is far more complex due to the heterogeneous mix of individuals who make up the labour market (Barker and Gower, 2010). It is the most diverse it has ever been in terms of representation of age, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation (Wrigley, 2023). These diverse characteristics have resulted in a multitude of different learning, training and management requirements (Barker and Gower, 2010). In his work, Madsen (1997) identified a shift in identities amongst workers from collectivist values which emphasise solidarity and equality, towards more individualistic orientations which emphasise self-interest and personal development (1997). He also argued that increasing feminisation and differentiation of the workforce, growing numbers of white-collar workers and the rise of HRM techniques were evidence of a society that has become more

individualised. Kelly (1998) found that, despite feminisation, the decline in trade union membership has been less marked for women, that white-collar workers have in fact increased their union membership and that HRM practices are more likely to be found in unionised organisations. As such, workforce differentiation does not unilaterally lead to individualisation, but instead highlights the complexity of collectivism today and the challenges for trade unions (Healy et al., 2004a). Researchers have highlighted the importance of women (Healy and Kirkton, 2000; Kirton and Healy, 1999), and ethnic minorities, in particular black workers (Healy et al., 2004b) for trade union renewal. Consequently, there is a need to recognise that workforce differentiation can lead to new forms of collectivism (Healy et al., 2004a).

A decline in unionisation among young workers has prompted the claim that new generations of workers have fundamentally different values than their older counterparts, and more individualistic (Allvin and Sverke, 2000; Oliver, 2006). Allvin and Sverke (2000) found that younger union members were attracted to the functional or transactional benefits of union membership; namely representation that protects their employment and improves their conditions, whilst older generations identified more with the ideological stance associated with unionism, such as economic democracy. In their 2002 work, Waddington and Kerr found no evidence that the generation of what they termed 'Thatcher's children' in the UK had more individualistic, anti-union attitudes. Oliver (2006) also concluded that there is no consistent pattern to demonstrate that young workers in the UK have become more individualistic and less interested in unions, rather, they have been inhibited from union membership by a combination of employer hostility and union absence. In his US based study, Cates (2014) found consistently lower union membership in the 'Millennial' generation compared with the older Generation X and Baby Boomer counterparts, across multiple trade unions and professional groups. However, he determined that very little generational based research had been done to understand why these generational differences in union membership exist.

To help situate this within the academic discourse, the term generation or 'generational cohort' describes "a group of individuals born within the same historical and socio-cultural context, who experience the same formative experiences and develop unifying commonalities as a result." (Lyons and Kuron, 2014: 140). McNamara (2005) considered the idea of generational diversity, observing the phenomena of four different generational

cohorts working together for the first time in history. She outlined the four generational cohorts present in the workforce at that time, detailing the unique social, economic and political experiences of each generation (albeit from a US centric perspective) and how this may have shaped attitudes and expectations around work. Tay (2011) explored the concept of generational diversity further, considering the tensions which many researchers believe manifest in the workplace between individuals of different generational cohorts, due to their different attitudes and expectations. Other researchers dismiss these tensions as a myth and suggest there is more common ground between the generations than differences (Deal, 2007; Garner and McCaffrey, 2013; Tay, 2011). Linked to this is the idea of 'generational identity', which Joshi et al. (2010) defined as an individual's knowledge that they belong to a specific generational group, together with some emotional value to that individual of membership in that group. Dencker et al. (2008) posited that such generational identities emerge in the workplace based on collective memories of shared events that take place within the formative years of that generation. Shared generational identity will often result in common work-related expectations, expressed as psychological contracts (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). Garner and McCaffrey (2013) argued that the concept of generational cohorts has not been fully tested through academic research and is instead based on anecdotal evidence, supported by management consultant and practitioner-based articles, which have perpetuated the myth that the concept is grounded in formal theory. Despite the criticisms, the debate continues in literature, with the 'generational cohort' lens now being applied to the exploration of other organisational concepts, such as attitudes towards trade unions, as introduced earlier.

Considering this further, Smith and Duxbury (2019) sought to address some questions in relation to generational cohorts and their attitudes towards unions, which they felt were unanswered in the existing literature. Their US based study found that baby boomers believed their generation perceived unions through an ideological lens and felt that their generation was generally pro-union. Those in Gen X suggested that their generation evaluated unions using more instrumental criteria, and that they believed their generation was anti-union. Millennials felt that their generation viewed unions through an ideological lens, acknowledging that they do not understand or appreciate the role of the union. They also acknowledged that the perceptions of their generation tended to be based on what unions could do for them, and that Millennials feel that unions do not provide benefits that outweigh the financial costs of being a union member (Smith and Duxbury, 2019). Bryson and Davies (2019) sought to explore the intergenerational transmission of union membership in the UK.

In other words, the extent to which parental attitudes towards unions, and indeed union membership, is passed on from parents to younger workers. They found that union membership among parents has a positive effect on union joining behaviour of young workers and is most effectively encouraged when both parents are union members. Evidence of this intergenerational transmission only emerges within areas of high union density.

The literature I have explored highlights the complexity of the workforce today and the challenges associated with understanding contemporary employee relations. Workforce diversity, and the different ways in which the workforce can be segmented, is a crucial consideration when analysing employee attitudes and responses towards trade unions and collectivism.

3.6 Fox's Frames of Reference

Returning to the industrial relations literature, one of the fundamental pieces of work is that of Alan Fox (1966). His 'frames of reference' are still widely used today to understand the different interpretations of the employment relationship as outlined within different schools of thought in the literature (Heery in Johnstone and Ackers, 2015). It is worth noting that the work of Purcell (1987) on management styles, as referenced in the earlier section of this chapter, echoed many of the ideas of Fox; such that within much of the industrial relations literature the terms individualism and collectivism are used as near equivalents to, and in some cases interchangeably with, unitarism and pluralism (Storey and Bacon, 1993). As such, understanding these concepts is essential for framing any discussion around individualism and collectivism.

3.6.1 Unitarism

For unitarists, it is assumed that the interests of workers and employers are fully aligned and that this facilitates continued willing cooperation within the employment relationship. When conflict occurs, it is viewed as dysfunctional, arising due to the failure of management or external influences, such as state regulation or disruptive trade unions. In recent years, following the emergence of human resource management as a major field of study, unitarist perspectives have become influential within the academic debate on work and employment practices (Heery, in Johnstone and Ackers, 2015). There are two forms of unitarism in the

literature; firstly, 'soft unitarism', which originates in psychology; this view sees the basis for shared interests at work in the ability of management to create jobs that are rewarding and satisfying for individuals (Gratton and Truss, 2003). The other perspective is 'hard unitarism', which contends it is management's ability to offer financial incentives that produces the alignment of employer and employee interests (Heery, in Johnstone and Ackers, 2015).

3.6.2 Pluralism

For pluralists, the employment relationship has at its core an inherent conflict of interest, which encompasses both issues relating to remuneration and working time, and the ways in which work is organised and deployed (Sisson, 2008). At the same time, the pluralist perspective identifies common interests in the employment relationship, in that both parties have a stake in the survival and success of the employing organisation (Kochan and Osterman 1994). Furthermore, pluralists do not consider the divergence of interests so deep as to be irreconcilable. In this school of thought, conflict is unavoidable, but not habitual, and can be resolved through mutual compromise and agreement (Heery, in Johnstone and Ackers, 2015). In the early pluralist literature, it was assumed that mutually beneficial outcomes could be secured through the formulation of industrial relations systems, founded on trade union representation and collective bargaining (Dunlop 1993). The mainstream industrial relations literature primarily leans towards the pluralist position, however in recent times more critical perspectives have emerged in response to the erosion of the pluralist 'mutual gains' approach within state policy and general business practice (Heery, in Johnstone and Ackers, 2015), these critical perspectives are explored further below.

3.6.3 The Radical Perspective

To understand the critical views in the literature, it is essential to explore Fox's third frame of reference, which emerged as his work evolved. This third frame is known as the radical perspective, in which Fox sought to explain the duress under which employees are bound within the employment contract (Siebert et al., 2015). Fox (1974) argued that employment is an entirely unequal relationship characterised by domination, and existing solely to satisfy the interests of the dominant party (i.e. the employer). This perspective dismisses the arguments of pluralism, as pluralism does not account for the power imbalance inherent in

the employment relationship; whereby capital controls the distribution of economic resources upon which labour is reliant (Burawoy, 1979; Siebert et al., 2015).

Richard Hyman is one of the most notable authors on Marxism and Industrial Relations, with his 1975 work Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction providing a foundation for much of the subsequent academic debate on the employment relationship (Blyton and Turnbull, 2004; Frege et al., 2011; Müller-Jentsch, 2004). The traditional Marxist view contends that the interests of labour and capital are fundamentally opposed, and as such capitalism ultimately oppresses the working class. Organisations can therefore be seen as capitalist tools designed to control and suppress workers, maximising the exertion of effort for the benefit of capital (Hyman, 1975). Similarly, any increase in the power of workers adversely affects the interests of capitalists; since the profits of capitalism are closely tied to the exploitation of workers, the material interests of each group are inherently opposed (Wright, 2000). Further, anything that strengthens the capacity of workers to fight for their own interests will negatively impact the interests of capitalists (*ibid*.). In his 2000 work, Wright explored the concept of class compromise. Class compromise is defined a situation in which people in compromising classes make concessions or give up something of value in favour of the interests of people in the opposing class (*ibid*.).

For some, the idea of class compromise is illusory; leaders of working-class organisations, such as unions, make opportunistic deals with the capitalist class that promise general benefits for workers but are largely meaningless. In this view, class compromises are, at their core, one-sided submissions rather than reciprocal bargains representing true mutual concessions (*ibid*.). A differing view draws a picture of class compromise as a battlefield stalemate, in which two armies of similar force are engaged in battle; each army is strong enough to inflict significant damage to the other, but neither is strong enough to definitively conquer their opponent (*ibid.*). In such situations, the competing forces may agree to a "compromise" to prevent mutual damage, in exchange for concessions on both sides (*ibid.*). These concessions are real, but do not represent a process of true cooperation between opposing class forces (*ibid.*). The final view sees class compromise as a form of mutual co-operation between opposing classes (*ibid*.). It is not seen as a situation in which the outcome of conflict falls somewhere between a complete victory or a complete defeat for either party (*ibid*). Instead, there is a possibility that both parties can improve their position through various forms of active, mutual collaboration (*ibid*.).

Wright (2000) explored an alternative understanding of the relationship between worker power and capitalist interests. In this theory, capitalist-class interests remain best satisfied when the working class is highly disorganised, when workers compete and lack significant forms of associational power. As working-class power increases, capital class interests are initially adversely affected. However, once working-class power crosses some threshold, working class associational power begins to have positive effects on capitalist interests (*ibid.*). Such conditions allow for significant gains in productivity and profit due to high levels of co-operation between workers and capital, systems of skill upgrading and job training, enhanced capacity for macroeconomic problem solving, and a greater willingness of workers to accept technological change given the relative job security they achieve as a result of union protection (*ibid.*). This theory of class compromise is in keeping with the traditional core of Marxism, in that power and struggle are fundamental elements of capitalistic societies, however this model also argues that capitalist and worker interests are not simply determined by capitalism itself, but depend upon a wide variety of economic, institutional, and political factors (*ibid.*).

3.7 Labour Process Theory

In the organisational literature, authors exploring perspectives emergent from Marxist theory tend to sit within a critical frame of reference. The hallmark of which is acknowledging the perspective that the interests of workers and employers are starkly opposed. The employment relationship is regarded as exploitative and dehumanising (Heery, 2015), and employees are forced into accepting structural inequalities and subjugation as part of their conditions of employment (Siebert et al., 2015). Consequently, workers have an interest in continued resistance, conflict is inherent within the employment relationship, and should be welcomed as it is only through challenging employers' interests that workers can affect improvement in their situation (Heery, 2015). Another defining feature of the critical frame is its focus on critique; with authors tending to concentrate on appraising both actual practice in employment relations and the associated defence in literature from the other traditions (*ibid*.). On the traditional wing of the critical frame, analyses focus on activist trade unionism, established systems of industrial relations, and the pluralists who support and promote these practices (Kelly 2010). Hyman (1975, 1989) presents the concept of contradiction; where trade unions are torn between accommodation and conflict; where they

work with employers to improve the terms and conditions of their members, whilst at the same time attempting to challenge the excesses of capitalism.

Continuing the exploration of organisational literature from the critical paradigm, Braverman's 1974 book Labor and Monopoly Capital was a seminal piece in the discussion on the nature of work, presenting the issue of the 'labour process' in a capitalist society. This 'labour process' perspective on the organisation of work suggests that managerial action is chiefly motivated by capital-labour relations, with management acting as agents of the organisation, deploying strategies to control the 'unruly' factor of production, namely employees (Thompson and Smith 2001). The unpredictability of labour as an asset can be attributed to the fact that when someone is hired; the employer buys an embodied capacity that walks in and out of the workplace, which must be managed in order to be productive. Control of labour is therefore the whole purpose of management, and the only reason it functions as a separate category of authority representing the interests of capital; otherwise, it would just be another form of labour like other skilled workers (Thompson; in Alvesson et al., 2009). The evolution of management thought has therefore followed a similar path to the evolution of labour organisation; with increasing sophistication, education and expectations of work requiring employers to develop ever more sophisticated control techniques and practices to maintain their power in the employment relationship (*ibid.*). Braverman's work significantly influenced the subsequent critical discussion on the nature of work, however, it is also argued that whilst his contribution to the field was significant, his conceptualisation of the capitalist labour process also somewhat limited the broader sociological argument (Littler and Salaman, 1982), and as such his work has been subject to scrutiny and further debate in several areas.

In his work, Burawoy (1979) contended that the employment relationship between capital and labour has evolved, with outright intimidation or suppression on the part of capital bring supplemented or replaced by forms of organised consent. Instead of viewing capitalistic control as autocratic, Burawoy argued that a more subtle form of co-optation and coercion has been introduced. Burawoy considered the conundrum of why workers work as hard as they do (knowing their efforts make more money for the company). Based on his own experiences on the factory floor, he concluded that management controls workers by giving them an "illusion of choice" in what is actually a highly restrictive environment. This creates consent and minimises the potential for class consciousness and conflict between

workers and management, whilst maximising productivity. Such employee consent is crucial to the realisation of surplus value and the continuity of capitalism, as it is only by employee belief that it serves their own interests to consent to partake in the labour process that capital can realise surplus value through them. Consequently, he argued that instead of alienating workers, modern capitalism has succeeded in persuading workers to embrace the very system that constrains them (*ibid.*).

In Industry and Labour (1977) Friedman contended that capacity to work (labour power) is a strange commodity, for two reasons; first, workers are particularly malleable; as it is possible to get somebody, once employed, to undertake tasks beyond those specified in their original employment contract. Secondly, workers are ultimately controlled by an independent and often hostile will. He therefore suggested that two types of strategies; Responsible Autonomy and Direct Control; could be used by management for the maintenance of authority and control within the labour process. In the Responsible Autonomy category managers try to draw on the malleability aspect of labour capacity; employees are given responsibility, status, light supervision, and their loyalty towards the organisation is solicited by encouraging vitriolic attitudes towards competitors, by investment in fancy facilities, through co-option trade union leaders, and other similar 'soft' strategies. In the Direct Control type of strategy, managers attempt to directly reduce the agency of each individual worker by close supervision and by setting out in advance and in great detail the specific tasks for each person. Both types of strategy have serious contradictions at their core which stem from their common aim; to maintain and extend managerial authority over people who are essentially free and independent, but who have sold their labour capacity. Ultimately, the Direct Control type of strategy treats workers as though they were machines, assuming that they can be forced, by financial circumstances or close supervision, to relinquish control over what they do. The Responsible Autonomy type treats workers as though they were not alienated from their labour capacity by trying to convince them that the aims of management are allied to their own. The contradictions are that people do have independent and often hostile wills which cannot be entirely removed, and the primary aim of managers is to make steady and high profits, rather than to cater to employee needs (Friedman, 1977; 1986).

Littler (1990) surmised the three main components of the LPT debate as; questions about deskilling of workers, questions about capitalistic labour markets and questions about

managerial strategy and control. Littler (1990) presented work design as an important element of the labour process theory discussion. He split work design into two dimensions, task discretion and task range. Task discretion is the degree of discretion an employee is allowed over which tasks to carry out and in what order, depending on the degree of direct control managers try to exert over them. Task range is a characteristic of task organisation; it may be that a worker is given a wide range or considerable variety of work to carry out, but ultimately most individual tasks are in themselves boring. Requiring workers to perform a wide range of short tasks is very different from giving them a wide range of tasks of very different lengths. The rhythm of work can therefore also be an important factor relating to worker satisfaction as well as ease of control over workers.

As the labour process theory discussion developed through the 1980s and 1990s, the debate expanded to include additional dimensions likely to have an impact on labour process dynamics. First was the process of job broadening, commonly referred to as multi-skilling (Allan et al., 1999). Employers sought to increase productivity and competitiveness by making work organisation more flexible and sensitive to market demands (Ozai, 1996). By breaking down the rigid horizontal divisions of labour, multi-skilled workers can perform a wide range of tasks and be quickly redeployed between activities; allowing organisations to easily adapt to changes in product and process in the short and medium term (Atkinson, 1984). Broadening job boundaries may also involve the incorporation of supervisory, co-ordination or quality control responsibilities into operational jobs (Allan et al., 1999). Some scholars consider job broadening as a positive; arguing that by expanding the task range of jobs, workers will become more skilled and adept in responding to customer and production demands. Furthermore, it is argued that giving greater responsibility and autonomy increases employee motivation and work satisfaction (Atkinson, 1987; Mathews, 1989). Critical scholars however see it simply as a form of work intensification (Elger, 1991; Junor et al., 1993); a concept which is explored further below.

The second trend has been growing employment insecurity and the expansion of atypical forms of employment such as part-time, temporary, casual, contract and agency labour (Allan et al., 1999). Whilst part of the shift away from full-time employment can be attributed to broader demographic and structural factors, there is also evidence that the changing structure of employment reflects the outcome of deliberate business policies to achieve greater labour flexibility (Burgess, 1997; Burgess and Campbell, 1997). Atypical

forms of employment are commonly (but not universally) characterised by insecurity in terms of income, employment and working time (Allan et al., 1999), with the terms 'precarious employment' and 'non-standard employment' often used interchangeably (Treu, 1992).

The final major trend in labour utilisation is work intensification. Work intensification represents a separate and significant form of labour utilisation (Allan, 1998). A common employer strategy is to provide insufficient staff for an increasing workload, and to expect employees to produce more and/or work longer hours, for no real increase in salary (Allan et al., 1999). Intensification of work has also been associated with various other mechanisms including work-study agreements, tighter surveillance, disciplinary methods, and the use of performance-related pay (Allan et al., 1999; Barker, 1993). Another intensification strategy is to not replace staff who leave, thereby increasing the workload for continuing staff (Allan et al., 1999).

Another element of the LPT discussion is the evolution of management practices from systems of employee control to systems designed to illicit commitment from employees. The traditional control-oriented approach to work-force management took shape during the early part of the nineteenth century in response to the division of work into small, fixed jobs for which individuals could be held accountable. The actual definition of jobs and acceptable standards of performance were characterised by assumptions about workers' skill and motivation. To monitor and control effort, management was organised into a hierarchy of specialised roles, a top-down allocation of authority and status symbols attached to positions in the hierarchy (Walton, 1985). At the heart of this model was the desire to establish order, exercise control, and achieve efficiency in the application of labour. This model has its origins in Fredick Taylor's scientific management systems (*ibid*.). Scarnati (2002) argued that the use of control is an acceptable management practice within dysfunctional organisations. From the early 1970s onwards, there was a shift in focus from control-based management policies to a series of employment practices which sought to inspire high levels of commitment from employees (Walton, 1985). The general view in the labour process theory literature is that such management practices are just ever more sophisticated methods of organisational control. Thus, the debate in much of the labour process literature developed into critique of specific strategic management practices.

In their work however, Edwards (1990) and Thompson (1990) both sought to revisit LPT as a structural debate, separating the labour process at the organisational level from the macro environmental context. They argued that in certain organisations employees may choose to resist the labour process, but in general societal terms, employee consent to participate in the process remains. This divergence serves to leave capitalism intact whilst only questioning and challenging the conditions in individual settings and sites of conflict. They argued this constitutes a shift away from the labour process in general as a site for radical analyses, and towards a situation in which repressive conditions in a particular setting are dismissed as site specific and not indicative of the wider labour process, or a critique of the nature of capitalism itself (Spencer, 2000).

With the onset of deindustrialisation and the decline in class discourse in the public sphere, LPT largely diminished from view (Spencer, 2000). Some scholars returned to LPT through the concept of the "collective worker" to reposition the workplace as a site for potential collective action (Martinez Lucio and Stewart, 1997). The central claim in this debate is that the process of individualisation (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) creates a false delineation between collectivism and individualism, and when HR and management strategies and practices promote the individual, it is at the expense of or facilitates a decline in collective struggles and identification (Lloyd, 2017). However, if the "collective worker" is considered in the labour process, this transcends the individualist and collectivist debate; as surplus value is never created by a single individual worker acting alone (Martinez Lucio and Stewart, 1997). Mulholland (2004) suggested that employees today tend to demonstrate solidarity in a tacit and covert manner, defying management in the process. Resistance and disobedience in the workplace therefore need to be framed in this context with sabotage, work avoidance, absenteeism and turnover considered as expressions of hostility (*ibid*.). Consequently, by rejecting the individual worker concept, analysis of the labour process and employee engagement uncovers tacit and less visible collective responses which highlight the contradictory and conflict-ridden nature of modern employment relations (*ibid*.). Building on this, Lloyd (2017) contended that within the modern workplace, employee rage and resistance manifests itself in the search for dignity and recognition denied by a work process that treats individuals as interchangeable parts to be replaced upon burnout.

3.8 Strategic Human Resource Management

As a practitioner researcher, I knew that I was undertaking research in an organisation in which I was also involved in designing and deploying sophisticated management practices, and therefore I needed to understand the development of HRM as a discipline and its theoretical underpinnings to provide a balanced and informed analysis of my own experiences. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) scholarship comes from a different perspective to the LPT literature. As touched on earlier in this chapter, much of the HRM and SHRM literature (and indeed HR practice) evolved alongside, and in response to, the development of sophisticated management techniques. The field of strategic human resource management (SHRM) has grown steadily since the mid-1980s, with much of the research focusing on evaluating the significance and effectiveness of organisational management practices for maximising organisational performance (Boxall and Purcell, 2000).

As touched on earlier in this chapter, some scholars have argued that HRM is unitarist in its approach, in contrast with the collectivist approach of traditional industrial relations and puts emphasis on the management at an individual level (Guest, 1989; Storey, 1989; Sisson, 1989). Storey (1992) noted that the distinguishing feature of HRM is that people are considered as an organisational 'resource', and therefore decisions which are made about the deployment of individuals assume a strategic significance within the broader business context. In their 1994 paper, Truss and Gratton defined strategic human resource management as the linking of HRM with strategic goals and organisational objectives to improve business performance and develop organisational cultures that foster innovation and flexibility. At that time, they argued, organisations at all levels and in both the public and the private sectors were increasingly turning to SHRM techniques to pave the way for these changes, bringing the traditional 'personnel' department to the forefront of organisational activities (Truss and Gratton, 1994).

This was the beginning of the evolution of human resources from a primarily administratively focused function to a discipline concerned with active, aligned and strategically significant management activities, designed to maximise value from human capital (*ibid*.). The evolution of HRM was connected to the rise in high performance work systems (HPWS); which originated in the United States, gaining momentum in the

discussion regarding the decline of US manufacturing competitiveness (Boxall, 2012). A key catalyst for this was the rise of Japanese lean production systems in the 1970s and 1980s, which helped to improve quality, cost, flexibility and delivery (Womack et al., 1990). This led to US (and Western) models of work being seen as inferior in key respects, including their restriction in the use of worker abilities and harnessing discretionary effort (Boxall, 2012).

Much of the recognition in the field of HRM came from research in the 1980s which sought to take a strategic perspective, arguing that management, and not just those in the HR profession, should be concerned with HRM and aware of its strategic advantages for organisations (Beer et al. 1984). HRM scholarship covers theory and research in strategic management, industrial relations and organisational behaviour (Boxall and Purcell 2003; Boxall et al., 2007). Chadwick and Cappelli (1999) noted that "strategic" refers to either; research which demonstrates the impact of HRM practices on strategic organisational goals, such as profitability, strategic choices made within organisations which then impact on HRM systems, or the relationship between organisational strategies and HRM systems. Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall (1988) proposed that if HRM practices seek to create value for organisations through calculated use of human resources, SHRM research should focus on determining whether companies that systematically consider human resources and competitive strategy together perform better over the long term than firms that do not integrate such human resources considerations. Many strategic HRM researchers have therefore focused on demonstrating statistically significant links between HRM practices and enhanced organisational performance (Guthrie, 2000; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995). Boxall and Purcell (2000) stated that strategic HRM research is concerned with identifying the strategic choices in relation to the use of labour and explaining why some companies manage them more effectively than others. There are now multiple different perspectives in the SHRM research, including the resource-based view, the behavioural perspective, human capital theory, social exchange theory, AMO framework, and others (Jiang and Messersmith, 2018). However, there is a common thread across the SHRM research in that it provides evidence that the philosophies, practices and policies within the HRM discipline are important for building successful organisations (Jackson et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2012; Jiang and Messersmith, 2018).

In their 2000 work, Boxall and Purcell argued that the route for strategic HRM research should extend beyond organisational boundaries, to broader debates about work structures which can create more secure, rewarding work for a greater section of society. They noted that this was becoming a critical topic for the social science community because of widespread concern about income inequality, work life balance, and social fragility within knowledge-based economies. Similarly, other critical perspectives in the literature highlight the harmful aspects of work intensification that can result from the use of strategic HRM practices (Ramsay et al., 2000). Mariappanadar (2014) found strong evidence that increased workload and overwork, resultant from work intensification, had negative effects on social well-being outcomes for employees, their lives outside of work, and their families. Strategic HR practices and systems therefore have the potential to harm employees whilst improving organisational performance (Ehnert, 2009). Paradoxically however, organisations also have a responsibility to intervene and reduce the harm imposed on their employees to improve the sustainability of their people related practices (Ehnert, 2009; 2014).

There is now a growing body of literature on Sustainable HRM, which seeks to explore the intersectionality between corporate sustainability agendas and HRM practices (Ehnert 2009; Kramar 2013). Sustainable HRM broadly refers to HRM practices aimed at helping organisations achieve economic, social, environmental and human sustainability (Guerci et al., 2019); of these, the human sustainability aspect is the most relevant for my study as it links to the critical perspectives around work intensification. In addition, strategic HRM remains the most common and generally accepted view of HRM for practitioners (Greenwood, 2013), which (as explored earlier) primarily supports the managerial prerogative and aims to improve organisational performance (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2009). As a result, strategic HRM systems are the norm in practice, and encourage behaviours within the HR profession which aim to maximise economic benefit on behalf of organisations (Guerci et al., 2019).

Ehnert et al. (2016) defined sustainable human resources management as a set of HRM strategies and practices which enable the achievement of organisational goals, while limiting unintended negative outcomes. Much of the existing literature in the sustainable HRM space focuses on HRM practices which can help organisations be more sustainable (Harvey et al., 2013; Zibarras and Coan, 2015), or on how organisational sustainability can be used to support recruitment and retention of employees (Guerci et al., 2016; Renwick et al., 2013).

These are examples of the use of sustainable HRM both as a "means" for organisations to reach sustainability objectives and as an "end" in the design of HRM practices and processes; as per the early suggestion of Taylor et al. (2012).

Further developing the sustainable HRM discussion, Aust et al. (2020) proposed a new model; Common Good HRM, in which they argue HRM practices should seek to address some of the fundamental global challenges in our existing work structures. They attempt to navigate some of the issues identified within the body of critical literature by proposing 'Common Good' policy areas on business human rights, workplace democracy and creation of employment. They emphasise the need for HR to take on a guiding role in the implementation of such policies, including fairer pay, more participative organisational structures, and community investment. In this way, they propose a paradigm shift for the HR function and a move towards leadership in a space committed to more ethical business practices. This is an interesting prospect for HRM research; I am particularly interested in whether there can be any reconciliation between the LPT and HRM literature; to find a route which seeks not only to deconstruct managerial practices as per the views of Spicer et al. (2009), but to rebuild a model which is more ethical but still realistic and constructive, as per the arguments proposed by Aust et al. (2020).

3.9 Literature Summary

As previously articulated, at the outset of my study, I was most interested in exploring the concepts of organisational trust and employee relations and therefore began my literature review with these concepts in mind. However, the other key concepts covered in this review were determined as a result of the inductive research process I undertook, and an ongoing iterative process of revisiting the literature whilst working through my data analysis. It became clear early in the research process that I needed to explore the literature on organisational history and memory; I knew I wanted to investigate contemporary employee relations in the organisation, but for that discussion to be meaningful I could not ignore the history of the industry and industrial relations on the Clyde. As such, I delved into the literature on organisational history and memory; realising that these concepts were significant for my work. It also became clear that the work of Orr (2014) and the concept of organisational ghosts were extremely relevant for helping me to understand and analyse the relationship between the organisational past and present. As my research developed, I began

to see patterns in my data regarding divisions in the organisation, related to the conversations I was having on trust; thus, the trust literature remained significant, but was a facet of the broader exploration of the literature on the evolution of employee relations. Finally, in order to more fully understand the employee relations dynamics, I knew I needed to consider more critical perspectives from the literature; therefore, I looked at the labour process theory scholarship, and then explored the HRM literature, as I knew this would help me to provide a more balanced view of the organisation's management practices and reflect on my own role in the organisation as an HRM practitioner.

My overarching primary research question is as follows:

What is the significance of history in shaping contemporary employee relations within shipbuilding on the river Clyde?

The following additional research objectives were also set:

- To investigate the impact of organisational memory on current employee relations climate;
- To examine the impact of historical legacy on employee relations and trust in the organisation;

Through addressing the above research question and supplementary objectives, my study offers a contribution to the literature in a number of areas. Firstly, the organisational legacy literature, by identifying the components which are most significant for creating and perpetuating an organisational legacy. Related to this is a contribution to the organisational memory literature, in particular the literature which explores memory as a social construct. My study also contributes to the growing body of research on organisational ghosts; exploring aspects of temporality and spatiality to help explain the ways in which the past, present and future interact in organisations. In addition, this study adds to the discussion on contemporary employee relations, outlining the changing role of trade unions, and the challenges presented by workforce division and differentiation. Finally, as a result of my research, my study identifies some implications for the labour process theory and HRM

literature, echoing recent calls for a more open debate about the future of work and sustainability of current work structures.

Chapter 4: Methodology

The research methodology is the framework on which research is built (Saunders et al., 2012). Holden and Lynch (2004) argued that choosing a research methodology involves something much deeper than just practical considerations; they claimed it necessitates a philosophical explanation of the 'why' of conducting research. In Chapter 1: Introduction, the research questions for my study were presented; this chapter will now provide an overview of the overall research methodology I utilised to address these research questions and discuss in greater detail my research design choices and how they were deployed in the context of this study.

4.1 Research Philosophy

The philosophical foundation of research is the set of beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge and reality, and the ways in which said reality is investigated (Collis and Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012). Researchers must be aware of the philosophical commitments in their research, as they have a significant impact on both how research is conducted, but also how knowledge is framed and subsequently understood (Cresswell, 2014; Neuman, 2011). In their influential publication, Burrell and Morgan (1979) contended that all social scientists approach their research through implicit or explicit beliefs about the nature of society and the manner in which it should be researched; and that these assumptions underpin the overall research philosophy. Researchers should be able to critically reflect on their own philosophical position in relation to others; firstly to defend their own work and choices, but also to appreciate the inherent strengths of both their position and those of other researchers (Saunders et al., 2012). As such, the first section of this chapter explores my research philosophy, including the underlying paradigmatic assumptions, in order to situate my study appropriately within the broader academic debate, and position my subsequent data collection and analysis techniques.

4.1.1 Research Paradigm

In his work, Kuhn (1970) noted that particular research fields and disciplines share certain conceptions of how subjects should be studied, how research should be done, and how results

should be interpreted; these are research paradigms. Collis and Hussey (2014) described the research paradigm as the conceptual infrastructure which helps to guide the manner in which any research is carried out. Likewise, Jonker and Pennink (2010) contend that the research paradigm is a set of fundamental beliefs about how the world is perceived which then serves as a framework to guide the behaviour of the researcher. Different research paradigms are fundamentally inconsistent with each other because of the divergence in the elementary assumptions and methods associated with them (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

In terms of the social sciences, positivism is a research paradigm which argues that social scientists should explore observable social reality using highly structured methodologies and should strive towards true empirical knowledge similar to that produced within the natural sciences (Saunders et al., 2003). As ideas about the nature of knowledge developed, other arguments emerged which contend that the nature of human consciousness combined with social interaction make it impossible to study people or communities in this way, as there are subjective elements which must be taken into account (Hughes and Sharrock, 1997; Willis, 2007).

In response to the apparent limitations of a positivistic approach, an alternative paradigm known as interpretivism emerged (Collis and Hussey, 2014). The interpretivist position is underpinned by the view that social reality is highly subjective as it is shaped by the perceptions of individuals (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Interpretivists see the positivist tradition as too limiting, with rich insights lost through the process of generalisation (Saunders et al., 2012). Interpretivism focuses on exploration of complex phenomena, seeking to describe and find meaning within the social world (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Interpretivist researchers must enter the social world of research subjects and attempt to understand the world from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2012; Wilson, 2010). Saunders et al. (2012) contended that interpretivism is highly significant for business and management research; particularly that which seeks to understand the uniqueness and complexity of a certain set of organisational circumstances.

I determined very early on in the research process that my research would sit within the interpretivist research paradigm; interpretivism recognises the uniqueness of organisational situations as a product of a particular set of circumstances and individuals (Saunders et al.,

2012). The research questions set out at the beginning of this study emphasised the exploratory nature of my research, how I wanted to find out the ways in which employees within the research context experience the organisation, and the factors which impact them at the individual level. This type of investigation would not lend itself to a positivist method of enquiry. Additionally, I felt strongly that I wanted to explore and describe the organisation in a multidimensional way, considering the potential impact of organisational history, recent events and employee experiences, with context being critical to understanding all of these. As such, it felt natural for my research to be situated within the interpretivist paradigm.

Several theoretical approaches have developed under the broad interpretivist paradigm, including symbolic interaction; ethno-methodology; phenomenology; hermeneutics and postmodernism; I utilised a phenomenological approach for my study. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) was considered the founder of phenomenology and the descriptive approach to inquiry (Maggs-Rapport, 2000). Husserl's (1970) perspective was that phenomenology should focus on "the science of the essence of consciousness" and central to his work was defining the meaning of lived experience, from the first-person perspective. An important element of his approach was the belief that the meaning of lived experiences can be understood through one-to-one interactions between the researcher and their research subjects. These transactions should involve attentive listening to create a sophisticated understanding of reality (Husserl, 1970). Similarly, Tymieniecka (2003) described phenomenology as throwing light on the previously underappreciated research facet of the human experience. It is widely accepted that the core of phenomenology is an attempt to understand and describe phenomena as experienced by individuals who have lived through them (Draucker, 1999; Moran, 2000). Phenomenological studies therefore focus on understanding how people actively construct the cultures they take part in (Van Maanen, 1983), and subjective experiences by gaining insights into the motivations and actions of individuals (Kvale, 1996). It was therefore clear to me that my work would be located within the phenomenological paradigm, as I sought to investigate the nature of reality within an organisation as experienced by the members of that organisation. Having established my overarching research philosophy and paradigm; the next section of this chapter explores the underlying ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions associated with interpretivist research, in order to further situate my study.

4.1.2 Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality (Collis and Hussey, 2014; Holden and Lynch, 2004); and what things, if any, have existence or whether reality is a product of the mind (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). The view of reality is the cornerstone to all other research assumptions (Holden and Lynch, 2004). At the different ends of the spectrum, each research paradigm contains ontological assumptions which are either firmly objectivist or subjectivist (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

The subjectivist view is associated with my research paradigm; interpretivism (as discussed previously). Subjectivism developed in response to the discussion around the differences between the natural sciences and social sciences, and questions over the appropriateness of utilising natural science methods to investigate social phenomena (Holden and Lynch, 2004). Subjectivism contends that the social world is subjective and personal, and a research context is socially constructed by the individuals within it (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Bryman and Bell, 2015). This means that each individual has their own sense of reality and that multiple realities can exist (Collis and Hussey, 2014). In their research textbook, Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) further explored the ontological school of thought, contending that within the social sciences there are four main ontological positions; realism, internal realism, relativism and nominalism; with realism sitting in the strong positivist position, and nominalism sitting in the strong interpretivist position. After consideration of the practical implications of each of these, I found myself identifying with the nominalist ontological perspective; as this is concerned with investigating human behaviours; and in the case of my research, how people in the organisation are impacted by, and respond to, management processes and decisions.

In addition to ontology, research orientation is also underpinned by the epistemological stance of the researcher. Epistemology is the study of how knowledge is constructed (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018). The epistemological assumption is concerned with the nature of knowledge, what constitutes valid knowledge, and what is the best way of creating such knowledge (Colis and Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012). Within positivism, the assumption is that knowledge from management research should come from objective evidence about measurable and observable phenomena, and that the researcher should be distant from the phenomena under investigation (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Conversely, an

interpretivist approach assumes that the social sciences are fundamentally different to the natural sciences and that social research requires significantly different approaches (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) centred their epistemological debate around positivism versus social constructivism and described four different epistemological stances; strong constructionism is the epistemology most commonly associated with an interpretivist research paradigm.

Constructionism is the assumption that humans are self-aware and attribute meaning to the world in which they live (Thomas, 2004). Therefore, people construct their own meaning and reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967); and as such human behaviour can only be understood if the researcher understands the meanings and the contexts in which the meaning has developed (Thomas, 2004). According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2018), social constructionism has at its core the idea that social reality is determined by people, rather than by objective and external factors. Therefore, they contended that the task of the researcher is to appreciate and understand the different constructions that people place on their experiences, as well as to gather factual information surrounding social behaviour. Furthermore, the focus is on how people feel and what they think, and how they communicate with one another; both verbally and non-verbally (*ibid.*). The researcher therefore tries to appreciate the human experience, as opposed to trying to look for external explanations of behaviour (Easterby-Smith et al.). The assumptions of a strong constructionist approach in terms of the desire to understand the ways in which people construct the realities of their social world, were highly relevant for the line of enquiry I was pursuing through my research; as I was concerned with the meaning that individuals in the case study organisation attributed to specific organisational events, as well as their experiences and perceptions of those events.

Axiology is concerned with values (Collis and Hussey, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012); and the role of the individual in the wider environment (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). Within the world of social research, it pertains to the role the values of the researcher play in the research process (Saunders et al., 2012). Burrell and Morgan (1979) explored the idea of the individual either being seen as a product of the environment and conditioned by external circumstances; or as having a more central, creative role in which they create their own environment. Returning to the philosophical debate, the axiological assumption associated with positivism is that research is free of values, and that researchers are detached and

independent from their research phenomena (Collis and Hussey, 2014). This axiological assumption is often difficult to reconcile within the social sciences (*ibid.*). In contrast, the axiological assumption associated with interpretivism is that researchers do have values, and that these values will have a positive impact on the research process (*ibid.*). The view is essentially that researchers are engaged; they do not simply observe the world but interpret it at the same time (Thomas, 2004). In addition, the researcher is inherently involved in the research, and that there is value associated with this (Collis and Hussey, 2014). As a researcher with a strong interpretivist paradigmatic position, this rang particularly true for me; add to this the fact that I was a practitioner researcher within my case study organisation; then it follows that the inherent axiological assumptions within interpretivism were consistent with my position as a researcher, as I was not an independent researcher but an actively engaged agent in the organisation I was studying.

To surmise, my research was concerned with investigating the nature of reality within an organisation, as experienced by the members of that organisation. As the interpretivist paradigm and its underlying ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions deem that the social world is too complex and subjective to be dealt with using a positivist approach; it felt like the appropriate paradigm within which to position my research. My research methods were therefore chosen with an interpretivist paradigmatic position in mind.

4.2 Research Strategy and Design

The identification of a suitable research strategy is influenced by both the overall aims of the research, as well as the nature of the topic under investigation (Yin, 2003). I knew from the outset of this study that I wanted to adopt a qualitative research design as I was keen to undertake an exploratory study. I did not have concrete theories or assumptions to test, and instead wanted to allow the theoretical contribution to emerge through the research process. In taking the time to understand the underpinning philosophical assumptions associated with the interpretivist paradigm, as detailed above, this only served to further emphasise the appropriateness of qualitative methods for my study.

In terms of research design, I chose to undertake a single case study, through immersive research as an agent within a case study organisation. Robert Yin, the foremost author on case study as a methodology, provides the following definition: "An empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g. a "case"), set within its real-world context- especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." (Yin, 2009: 18) A case study approach involves close, in-depth examination and analysis of a single case (Anderson, 2008; Bryman and Bell, 2015; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). The closeness of the examination aims to obtain a rich, contextual and insightful understanding of the subject being studied (Cooper and Schindler, 2011; Yin, 2012). It is focused on a bounded single entity; be that within a single organisation, a single location, or even a single event, and as such it is distinct from other research designs (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Additionally, there is an emphasis on a review of a small number of events and the relationships between said events (Cooper and Schindler, 2011).

Case studies are more commonly concerned with theory generation rather than theory testing (Bryman and Bell, 2015); and tend to be exploratory or explanatory in nature (Saunders et al., 2012; Yin, 2012), with research questions focused around the how or why of a certain situation (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). Case studies are also generally associated with qualitative methods (Dul and Hak, 2008), and favour the collection of data within real life, 'natural' settings (Yin, 2012). When designed appropriately, a case study can provide a valuable source of new ideas within the research field (Cooper and Schindler, 2011).

Yin (2012: 8) presented the four main types of case study as follows:

Figure 2.1: Basic Types of Designs for Case Studies (Yin, 2012)
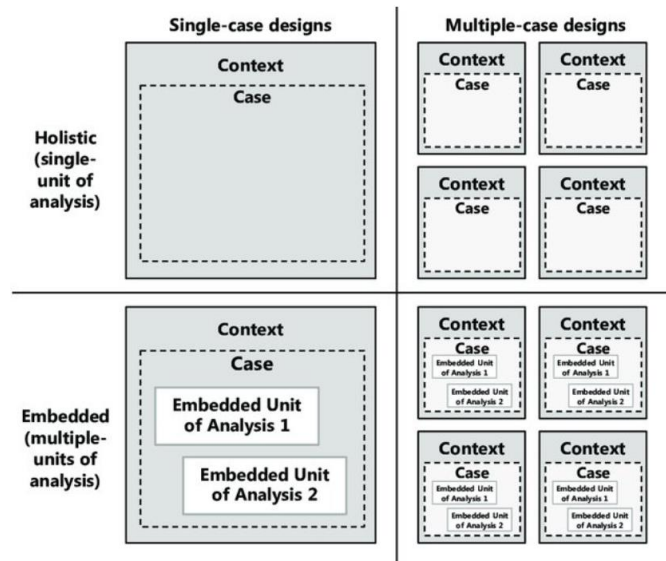
My study took the form of a single case study; one single organisation in which multiple sources of data were explored.

The process of undertaking case studies produces a critical type of context specific knowledge which greatly enhances the process of human learning, and that traditional, 'rule based' knowledge is regressive for those seeking to transform into 'subject matter experts' (Flyvberg, 2006). Further to this, there cannot be predictive theory in social science and that human behaviour cannot be properly understood as being a simple set of rule governed actions (*ibid*.). Case studies are also relatively common within the field of business and management research and are considered particularly useful when the topic under investigation is broad or complex, or when context is particularly significant (Jans and Dittrich in Dul and Hak, 2008). In relation to my study, the context of the case study organisation was fundamental to the relevance, uniqueness and ultimately the value of my research. Consequently, I determined a case study methodology the most appropriate choice for my study.

Data collection techniques utilised within case studies can be various and used in combination; to collect data from a number of different sources, obtaining multiple perspectives, and building a more cohesive picture of the phenomena under investigation (Cooper and Schindler, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012). Applying the embedded single case study perspective as proposed by Yin (2012), the next section will further detail the research

design I utilised to undertake my case study, as well as the data collection methods I employed.

4.3.1 Access

Access to the case study organisation was negotiated through the Human Resources Director, who granted organisational consent for me to undertake my research. At one point, prior to commencement of data collection, I encountered some resistance from a colleague in HR, who was reluctant to allow me to proceed with my interviews as there was a feeling from that individual that they wanted to direct and control my research. Following further discussion over a couple of months, this individual changed their view and stopped being as obstructive. The support from the HR Director was therefore very important in ensuring I had the 'approval' to proceed from a high level in the organisation. This also directly enabled access to my first set of interview participants from the senior management population. For the second phase of interviews, I made use of my pre-existing relationships within the organisation to gain access to participants from across the employee population. Easterby-Smith et al. (2018) note that management researchers will often enter into mutual exchange agreements with organisations, in order to help facilitate access. In exchange for access and ongoing organisational support throughout my research, I offered to produce a short, anonymised report, tailored to a practitioner audience, to present my findings back to my case study organisation. As I have since left the organisation without any formal agreement in place regarding the provision of a summary, I will only be producing this if I am asked by the organisation to do so.

4.4 Methods

In terms of primary data collection, my study was multi-method, with a focus on qualitative data. Multi-method is often considered helpful for individuals conducting business research (Tasshakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Bryman, 2008), as it utilises different data collection techniques, to attain data from a number of different sources; thereby enhancing its richness and increasing the scope for deeper analysis and interpretation (Saunders et al, 2012; Wilson, 2012). I undertook thirty-two individual qualitative interviews with participants from across the organisation. Additionally, throughout the course of my study in my role as an embedded researcher, I observed events and behaviours within the organisation. In order to negotiate

some of the ethical issues associated with practitioner-research, I chose to record these in a researcher reflective journal. The ethical implications which led to this decision are discussed in further detail later in this chapter. In seeking to formalise my understanding of the recent history of the organisation for the purposes of this study, I also captured descriptions of what I determined to be 'key impacting events' based on my own knowledge and prior experiences in the organisation. These were also influenced by conversations I had with others in the organisation, my experiences of events, and work I was involved in as a practitioner, prior to starting my research project. I believed these events were incredibly important for understanding the contemporary organisation and acknowledged the need to articulate these events in a format that could later be revisited for the purposes of analysis.

4.4.1 Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews are often used in social research due to their potential for open enquiry into situational meanings or motives, the ability for collecting self-interpretation and discursive understanding of participants' experiences (Hopf, in Flick et al., 2004). Qualitative interviews are particularly useful for exploratory research as they provide the researcher with an understanding of events from the point of view of the interviewee, and potentially offer new insights on existing situations (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Furthermore, they allow the researcher to examine varying perspectives on the same issue; such as those of management versus employees, or different departments within the same organisation (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). I utilised qualitative interviews for my research study, as I believed that having rich discussions with individuals from across the organisation, and exploring their perspectives on the key impacting events, would be critical for my understanding of the organisation and employee relations climate.

Qu and Dumay (2011) note that when preparing for interviews, the researcher should design a guiding framework for the interview that includes the issues they wish to cover and can be used to direct the conversation toward the themes the interviewer wishes to explore. The framework should be flexible to allow for probing (Qu and Dumay, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012), and allow the interviewer to modify the pace and order of questions to illicit the fullest responses from the respondent (Qu and Dumay, 2011). This approach enables respondents to answer in their own terms and in their own language; which is of particular significance

when attempting to understand the world from their perspective (ibid.). For my study, I designed an interview framework, including open prompting questions, to ensure I covered all of the topics I wanted to cover, and helping me to keep the conversation natural knowing that I could always refer back to my prompting questions to keep the interview on track. I undertook two initial pilot interviews to test my framework and trial my prompting techniques; from these I took the opportunity to refine some of the questions prior to beginning the formal data collection phase. Each interview was designed to last up to an hour; this timeframe was chosen to allow enough time to have a meaningful conversation and for me to probe specific areas, depending on the direction of the discussion. The interview lengths varied; from around twenty-five minutes at the shortest, to one hour and fifteen minutes at the longest. Some individuals were more comfortable with talking and sharing their views, and others were less forthcoming and required more extensive prompts.

4.4.2 Interview Data and Storage

Each interview was audio recorded, with explicit consent to do this obtained from all participants. I later transcribed the audio recordings. Both the audio files and the transcripts were stored in secure, password protected online systems which only I had access to, and all content was anonymised. I was particularly careful to ensure none of my data passed through my workplace email or laptop and was only held on my personal devices and accounts, thereby ensuring my raw data was not at any point available to the organisation, and that nothing could be traced back to an individual.

4.4.3 Interview Sampling

Robinson (2014) outlined the four considerations for sampling in interview based qualitative studies: defining the sample universe, deciding on sample size, selecting a sample strategy and sourcing cases. The more explicitly and systematically a researcher can define the above, the greater the validity of that study and the stronger the quality of any corresponding write-up (*ibid.*). Pope and May (2000) cite wide sampling as one key factor in enhancing the quality of qualitative research. They also further discuss quality in sampling through the idea of 'fair dealing'; this is about ensuring that the research design explicitly

incorporates a wide range of perspectives so that the viewpoint of one group is never presented as if it represents the whole truth.

It was therefore important for me to identify a widely representative sample of willing research participants from across the employee and management population within the case study organisation. My sampling was purposive, as this approach allows for the selection of individuals who will be most likely to enable the research questions to be answered (Miles and Humberman, 1994). For my interviews, sampling was conducted by first splitting the workforce into obvious core groups; senior management, office-based employees, production manufacturing employees, trade union convenors and human resources. Individuals from across these groups were identified, and I contacted them to set up interview slots. By being deliberate about my sampling in this way, I ensured all functions and levels of employees were represented, to give as broad and balanced a view of the organisation as possible. An element of convenience sampling was also involved due to the nature of conducting research within a workplace; I worked with the individuals who were willing and available to participate, depending on their work commitments. Practical considerations like this are often required given the reality of conducting research within a business environment.

4.4.4 Interview Index

To provide context and clarity for the later Analysis and Discussion chapters, I created the following table which details the organisational descriptor and approximate generational cohort of each interviewee. The generational cohorts were based on generational groupings which are broadly accepted in the literature (Clark, 2017; Heyns and Kerr, 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Moore et al, 2015;).

Table 1.1: Interview Index

Interview Number	Organisational Descriptor	Generational Cohort (approx.)	M/F
1	White Collar (WC)	Y	M
2	Senior Management (SM)	X	M
3	Senior Management (SM)	Baby Boomer	M
4	Senior Management (SM)	Baby Boomer	M
5	Senior Management (SM)	X	F
6	Senior Management (SM)	Baby Boomer	M
7	Senior Management (SM)	Y	F
8	Management (M)	X	M
9	Management (M)	X	M
10	White Collar (WC)	X	M
11	White Collar (WC)	X	M
12	White Collar (WC)	Y	M
13	White Collar (WC)	Y	M
14	White Collar (WC)	X	M
15	Blue Collar (BC)	X	M
16	Blue Collar (BC)	Baby Boomer	M
17	Blue Collar (BC)	Baby Boomer	M
18	Blue Collar (BC)	X	M
19	Blue Collar (BC)	X	M
20	White Collar (WC)	Y	F
21	White Collar (WC)	X	M
22	Management (M)	X	M
23	Management (M)	Y	M
24	Management (M)	Y	F
25	Management (M)	X	M
26	White Collar (WC)	Y	M
27	White Collar (WC)	Y	M
28	White Collar (WC)	Y	F
29	Trade Union- Blue Collar (TU)	Baby Boomer	M
30	Trade Union- White Collar (TU)	X	F
31	HR	Y	F
32	HR	Y	F
33	Blue Collar	Baby Boomer	M

4.4.5 Researcher Reflective Journal

Undertaking participant observation, which is quite commonly deployed for case studies, was made more complicated by my role as an embedded practitioner researcher, as the line between myself and research participants was significantly blurred on a day-to-day basis. This raised concerns with overt versus covert research and the extent to which I would be being open and honest about my role with participants (Bryman, 2008; Saunders et al, 2012).

This is explored further in the ethical considerations section of this chapter. To help me maintain an ethically appropriate distance from my subjects, I determined that a researcher reflective journal would be a more appropriate additional data collection method. This is an established method, considered useful for the researcher to capture short notes on their own thoughts throughout the research process (Maxwell, 1996; 2005). Writing these notes helps to reveal to the researcher further insight into the research phenomena, which the researcher may miss or not realise at the time (Woods, 1999). By engaging in ongoing dialogue with themselves through journaling, researchers may be able to better determine what they know and how they came to know it; and as such start the process of data analysis (Watt, 2007). A reflective record also helps researchers to objectively examine their own feelings, thoughts, and any potential biases; and helps them to appreciate the ways in which these may be influencing their research (*ibid.*).

I used a reflective journal to capture my thoughts and reflections on my own experiences in the organisation whilst I was conducting my research. This gave me the opportunity to revisit my own impressions more objectively at a later point in time as I was going through my analysis. I used these observations to keep me on track through the synthesis of data and literature, rather than as a primary data source. They were helpful for recalling my own thoughts and feelings from within the organisation particularly when capturing heightened emotions in relation to certain events. This helped me gain a deeper appreciation of my interviewee responses, which were captured in my primary data, as I had my own record of how I felt at that time.

4.4.6 Key Impacting Events

To add further richness to my study, descriptions of key impacting events from the recent past of the organisation are provided within the next chapter (Chapter 5: Organisational Context). These descriptions were based on my own knowledge and experience as a practitioner in the organisation, alongside notes captured in my reflective journal. I used these event descriptions to provide additional organisational context, and they therefore sat alongside my primary data, but were not themselves treated as data. They allowed me to present aspects of the organisational reality for my reader which enhanced my overall depiction of 'organisational life' in my study. They helped me in the sense making process when analysing my primary data; for example, when my interviewees referred to specific

events or individuals in the organisation, I was able to better understand and therefore analyse these comments.

4.5 Analysis

Saunders et al. (2012) posed two approaches to research; deductive reasoning in which concrete theories are tested, and inductive reasoning in which theories are generated. Very early in the research process, I determined that I would utilise an inductive approach, due to the exploratory nature of my study. As such, and in keeping with the fundamental assumptions associated with a phenomenological interpretivist paradigm, inductive reasoning was identified as most appropriate approach for this study. An inductive approach is a theory building process which aims to establish generalisations about the phenomena being investigated (Wilson, 2010). Furthermore, it uses data to: ". . . explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework." (Saunders et al., 2012: 144)

Applying this to business research, inductive approaches involve investigation into the actions of human subjects, the context of the situation is then incorporated into the analysis, as this can further enhance the understanding of the logic behind such actions (Anderson, 2008). The outcome of such investigation is to build a credible explanation for the observed behaviours (*ibid*.). An inductive approach allows for the uniqueness of each organisational context to be taken into account when exploring the research issue and supports the use of small samples (Saunders et al., 2012).

4.5.1 A Thematic Approach

One of the most common issues for qualitative researchers is how to convert a large volume of complex and context specific data into meaningful information which tells a convincing story to others (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). In keeping with my research philosophy, I chose to adopt a thematic approach to data analysis, utilising the framework as proposed by Corley and Gioia (2004).

The 'Gioia methodology' was developed in response to scholarly criticism of the rigour surrounding qualitative data analysis, to demonstrate that data gathering and analysis had been executed in a systematic way (Gioia et al., 2012). This approach allows for a systematic presentation of both a ''1st-order''analysis; which is analysis using terms and codes derived from informants, and a ''2nd-order'' analysis; which utilises researcher derived themes, and then translates these to broader aggregate dimensions (*ibid*.). The reporting of both voices at the same time facilitates not only a qualitatively rigorous demonstration of the links between the data and the inductive process and subsequent thematic outcomes, but also allows for the type of sense making insight that is the considered integral to robust qualitative research (*ibid.*). I worked through my interview transcripts, utilising the Gioia methodology to identify the first order concepts emergent from my data. I was then able to cluster these into second order themes, by identifying those first order concepts which were linked, and from there identify and articulate my broader aggregate dimensions. I found this approach particularly helpful given that I had a large amount of 'messy' data. By applying an analytical framework to this data, it helped me to draw out correlations in my data.

4.5.2 Coding Strategy

In order to identify the first order concepts in my data, I employed a manual coding strategy to my raw data. I first employed an 'open' or 'first cycle' coding technique. Open coding is defined as the creation of short words or phrases which summarise the meaning of a quantity of data and start the process of creating connections in the data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). The next stage is conceptualisation; this involves the researcher trying to find patterns in terms of similarity or frequency between the codes (Saldana, 2009).

As I worked through my interview transcripts, I began to spot patterns in the data finding similar themes recurring throughout my interviews. Throughout this process, I was continually revisiting the literature, to help me draw correlations between the emergent 1st order concepts and how these translated into 2nd order themes, and then the aggregate dimensions. As I re-read the literature, the related areas of in terms of the academic debate also became clear; and my own areas of contribution began to develop. It was a highly interpretivist process, with the eventual structure of my empirical chapters and overall areas of focus emergent from the data.

Figure 4.1 at the end of this chapter provides an overview of my first order concepts and second order themes, as derived from Gioia and Corley (2012).

4.6 Research Ethics

It is commonly acknowledged that establishing firm ethical boundaries is fundamental for conducting good quality research (Cesario et al., 2002; Sandelowski and Barroso, 2002; Spencer et al., 2003; Yardley, 2000). Bryman and Bell (2007) detailed four key areas under which ethical issues in business research can be categorised; harm done to participants, informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception. It is the responsibility of the researcher to carefully assess the possibility of harm to research participants and take steps to minimise this (ibid.). Furthermore, data should be carefully managed so as to ensure confidentiality for participants; this minimises potential for harm and protects the privacy of participants (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Anderson, 2008). Issues surrounding confidentiality should be made explicit to participants in advance, and their consent negotiated and agreed accordingly (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Similarly, informed consent should be addressed; research subjects must be told as much information about the components of the study as possible before they voluntarily decide to participate (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Anderson, 2008). Deception occurs when researchers represent their research as something other than it is and can be a widespread problem because researchers wish to minimise participants understanding of the subject matter to ensure the most natural responses (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

As per the best practice approach to ethical procedures in research outlined by Walsh and Downe (2006), ethical approval documentation required for non-clinical research with human participants with was completed and submitted to the University ethics committee for approval prior to commencement of my data collection. This process required explicit commitment, on my part, to conduct my research with integrity, honesty, transparency, equality, and mutual respect in my relationships with participants. Further to this, I had to provide an outline of how autonomy, consent, confidentiality, anonymity through my research would be managed. The ethical approval was granted for my study by the college ethics committee.

4.6.1 Ethical Data Collection

Acknowledging my role as a practitioner researcher within the research context, the work of Brannan (2005) was of particular interest, as he undertook the role of an embedded researcher for the purposes of his paper "Once More with Feeling"; in which he observed people within a call centre environment whilst undertaking a customer service role within the case study organisation. Brannan believed this approach was appropriate as his research phenomena: ". . . required a data collection technique which had the capacity to record workplace behaviour in the context in which it naturally occurred. . ." (Brannan, 2005: 425). Brannan was able to report on the conversations and interactions he observed whilst fully immersed in his research context and was therefore able to achieve a high level of truth and reality; and apply his own knowledge of the organisational context, thus helping him to achieve a greater depth of insight into his data than researchers who seek to maintain a relatively impartial disconnect from the organisations they study. I believe that my research benefitted from some of the same positive attributes due to my proximity to the research context than might have been achieved had I been a wholly independent researcher.

Conversely, it could be argued that at times when undertaking research as a practitioner researcher, participants do not fully understand the implications of the researcher's role whilst interacting with them. Gray (2004) considered the ways in which practitioner researchers, as organisational insiders, can easily become implicated with ethical issues. For example, people may not necessarily be aware that they are being researched (*ibid*.). It may therefore be possible to stray over the boundary into 'semi-concealed research' in which motivations are not fully disclosed by the researcher, thereby allowing them to gain access to settings which may otherwise be closed (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). When conducting my primary research, I did ensure I had informed consent from all my participants, and that they were fully briefed on the purpose of my study and how all my data would be treated, as per the requirements of the university ethics committee. However, reflecting on my position when observing and interacting within the research environment, I admit that at times my role as practitioner and researcher did become blurred, as it is not always possible to only work as either a researcher or a practitioner; there were times when I was observing the situation as both, and drawing conclusions which were relevant for both my day job and research. I would therefore argue that a high level of pragmatism and professionalism is required when working as a practitioner researcher, combined with a high level of personal integrity so that you are not overstepping ethical research boundaries, or taking advantage

of your position as an organisational 'insider' (Gray, 2004). As stated earlier, I employed the use of a researcher reflective journal, which helped mitigate some of these boundary issues by allowing me to revisit my own experiences in a more objective manner at a later point in time as I was going through my analysis. I also remained cognisant of my ethical responsibilities throughout the research process and took mitigating actions where necessary to minimise any potential risk to my research participants. As outlined earlier in this chapter, I ensured all data was securely and privately stored to protect the individuals who participated in my research.

4.6.2 Summary of Ethics

To surmise the discussion on ethics; this research study was approved by the ASBS Ethics Committee and underpinned by the University of Glasgow's ethical principles of research. Extensive consideration was given to the ethical issues associated with research utilising human participants; and some of my data collection methods were chosen specifically in recognition of these issues to minimise potential harm for participants. I was open and honest about my research and its intent, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and consent forms were completed. Data was stored and managed in a way that ensures the confidentiality and anonymity of the people involved in the study and was GDPR compliant. Consequently, despite the additional ethical challenges for practitioner researchers, I found working in this way was incredibly valuable for gaining an in-depth insight into my case study organisation.

4.7 Researcher Reflexivity

Another factor which is increasingly regarded as significant for qualitative research is reflexivity (Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Pope and Mays, 2000; Walsh and Downe, 2005; Watt, 2007). Researcher reflexivity involves the researcher discussing their relationship with participants during fieldwork, acknowledging their influence on the research process and demonstrating evidence of their own self-awareness (Walsh and Downe, 2005). Reflexive research acknowledges the ways in which the researcher has shaped the collected data, including the role of prior assumptions and experience, and any personal or intellectual biases should be made clear in order to enhance the credibility of the research findings (Pope and Mays, 2000; Walsh and Downe, 2005). The effects of personal characteristics such as

age, sex, social class, and professional status on the data and on the objective "distance" between the researcher and those researched should also be discussed (*ibid.*).

Similarly, in her work, Tracey (2010) considered sincerity a characteristic of excellent qualitative research. By her definition, a work is sincere if it is characterized by, self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher, as well as transparency about the methods and challenges faced during the research process. Such openness around research choices and the role of the researcher in the process of analysis and knowledge construction is, for Anfara et al. (2002), a key part of qualitative research. My reflective journal helped with this; allowing me to 'reflect on my own reflections' (Brannick, and Coghlan, 2006) when I revisited it through my data analysis. I have also included a reflexive element to my analysis; considering the extent to which my role in the organisation impacted the direction of my research.

4.8 Summary of Methods

Orr (2014) located his research on organisational ghosts firmly in the narrative approach to organisational studies, with an emphasis on the use of descriptive language and the crafting of stories to evoke depictions of organisational life. My research has taken a similar approach; I used my reflective journal and my own recollections of events alongside the data collected from my interviews, to help construct a depiction of the organisation which conveys a sense of the reality for organisational members. Later in the study I have developed these into theoretical interpretations, as per the suggestion of Rosen (2000; in Orr, 2014). The next chapter will present the organisational context of my study, to help add to the richness of my depiction of the organisation, and also to help position the discussion in my subsequent analysis chapters.

The below diagram summarises the first order concepts, second order themes and aggregate dimensions which emerged from my data analysis. This structure was based on the framework developed by Gioia and Corley (2012).

Figure 4.1: Summary of Data Analysis

1st Order Concepts   **2nd Order Themes**   **Aggregate Dimension**

History of shipbuilding on the Clyde
Pride
Memory
Identity
Storytelling

Past

Recent 'history'
Present day
Impact of past mistakes
Abandoned spaces
Spaces as mnemonic devices
The past alive in the present

Present

Legacy

.

Ensuring continuation of legacy
Passing on knowledge and skills
Learning lessons from past mistakes
Organisational Transformation

Future

1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate Dimension

Lack of trust
Fear of failure
Blame for mistakes/ repercussions
Lack of accountability
Finger pointing between different teams

→ Trust

Management and workforce
Blue collar and white collar
Work environment
Nature of work
Underlying class division
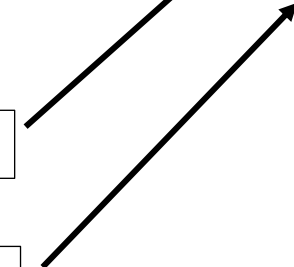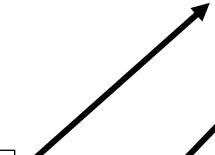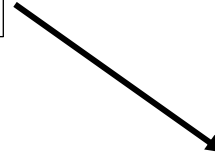Site division
Generational differences

→ Divisions

→ Employee Relations

Trade union influence in the organisation
Ongoing prevalence of collectivism
TU partnership working
Attitudes towards Trade Unions
Individualism vs collectivism
Management decisions
Key impacting events
HRM interventions
HR behaviour

→ Role of the Trade Unions

→ HRM

Chapter 5: Organisational Context

5.0 Introduction

Whilst I have discussed the organisational history and legacy in Chapter 2, I felt it was important to contextualise the discussion in the following empirical chapters by providing an overview of the contemporary organisation, based on my experiences as a practitioner. This chapter begins with an overview of the workforce and description of the diversity of roles and individuals, and then moves into what was determined to be some of the 'key impacting events' from the recent history of the organisation. As touched on in my Methodology chapter, it is important to note that I captured the information contained in the key impacting events section of this chapter in my research notes (reflective diary) whilst I was working as an embedded HR practitioner in the organisation. The insights I have gleaned are therefore based on my experiences of professional conversations, meetings, work activity and company communications over a number of years. These key impacting events will be analysed throughout my empirical chapters; Chapter 7 in particular utilises some of these events as examples of sophisticated HRM practices.

5.1 Workforce Profile

The case study organisation at the time of my research was comprised of a workforce of just under 5000 employees; roughly one quarter of that population were traditional 'blue-collar' manufacturing and operational focused roles, split evenly across 2 primary manufacturing sites in Glasgow. The remainder of employees were in office-based 'white-collar' roles; with the majority in engineering, or in other supporting functions; the majority of these employees were also based in Glasgow, with a small engineering focused population in field office type locations in the South of England.

Operational roles spanned a variety of skilled trade disciplines, as well as supervisory and management roles. Individuals in the skilled trades had undertaken apprenticeships which involved formal education elements as well as on the job learning, to achieve the required level of professional accreditation to be recognised as a skilled tradesperson. Some were highly specialised roles which involved specific technical skillsets and working in dangerous

environments. There were also some individuals within the organisation who had very long service (up to 50 years in some cases), and the skilled status for some of these individuals pre-dated modern formal education routes and was therefore likely achieved through on the job training and time served. It was intimated to me that some of those individuals did not have great literacy skills or were extremely nervous about using technology such as laptops, tablets and smart phones; this is something I heard first-hand from trade union representatives and others who worked in the 'shop floor' environment. These individuals were undoubtedly skilled at performing their job roles, would likely struggle to do anything different and were therefore highly reliant on the organisation for the continuation of their employment. In addition to the operational roles, there were quality control, supervisory and management roles in the manufacturing environment which involved auditing, overseeing and coordinating the activities of the different trade groups and third-party contractors. The manufacturing workforce was therefore made up of a broad group of employees in terms of role types, technical capabilities and levels of responsibility. The manufacturing workforce was predominantly white and male, with female and ethnic minority representation negligible.

Within the office based or 'white collar' environment, individuals undertook an even wider variety of roles and tasks; from administrative support roles, through to complex engineering and design work, and specialist functional support activities, such as prospective new bid work, project management and supply chain. There were also various levels of managerial roles which had either functional or project leadership accountability. Once again, the education and professional qualifications held by individuals in the white-collar group varied significantly. To provide additional insights around the workforce, headcount data was interrogated, and the relevant information summarised into two charts. The graph below shows the split of employees across different functions:

Figure 5.1: Functional Split of Workforce
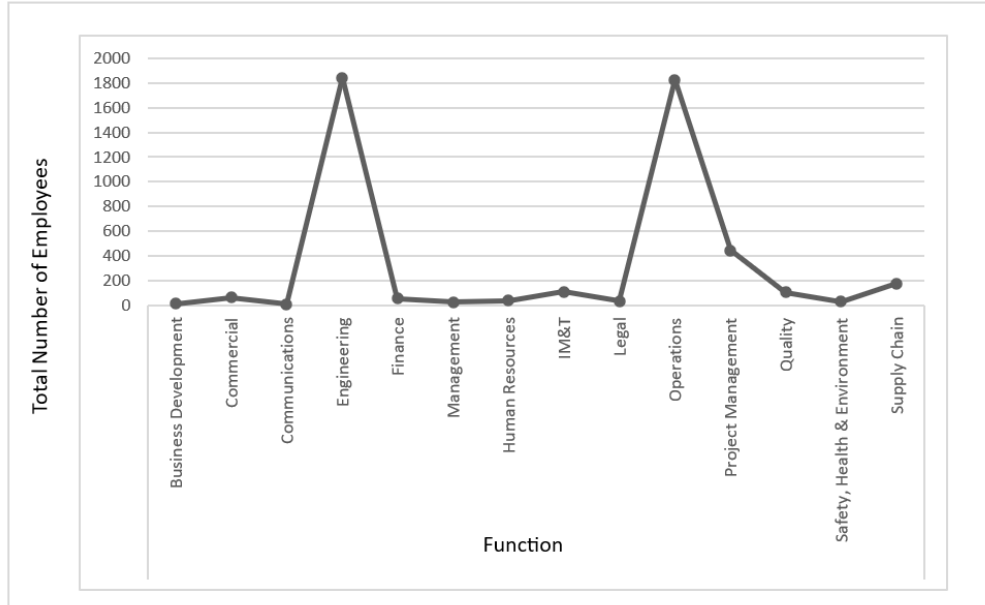
In terms of the age profile of the workforce, the oldest employees were in their 70s and the youngest were 16- and 17-year-olds. The workforce age profile is shown in in the graph below:

Figure 6.1: Workforce Age Profile
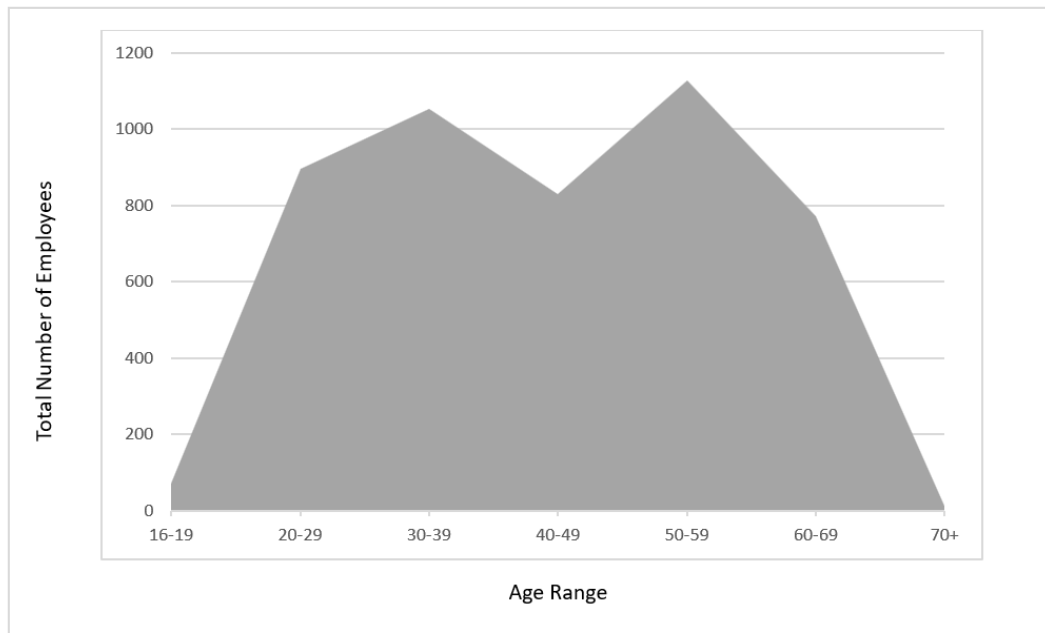
5.2 Key Impacting Events

This section is presented as a series of short case study style descriptors. These descriptors outline critical moments which were significant events in the recent history of the organisation and had an impact on the culture and employee relations climate. As per the iterative element of my research, it is worth noting that the events described below were all emergent from my data as being significant in shaping the individual experiences of the organisation. I have therefore included these to give additional insight into the organisational context at this stage but will return to analyse these events in more detail in Chapter 7.

5.2.1 Schedule Based Working (SBW)

Schedule based working was an initiative introduced within the production environments, to give greater autonomy to the workforce and allowing production employees to manage their own hours, as long as the team achieved certain output targets within a week. Under the scheme, teams were given targets in the form of 'work schedules', which are essentially plans for packages of work which should be completed within a given time period; if the teams completed those packages of work, they were free to leave. This meant that often teams would complete work by Thursday afternoon, giving them Friday mornings off (there was half day working on a Friday in the shipyard).

This was a significant departure from past practice where production employees worked set shifts, and teams were required to log a certain number of hours in the week as a measurement of their performance; this approach focused more on hours recorded rather than what was actually achieved in the hours. Employees clocked in and out at set times, they were given set tasks to complete and were offered very little freedom in terms of how they manage their work. In contrast, SBW was designed to encourage 'self-managed teams' and release discretionary effort from employees by giving them greater freedom and empowerment to determine amongst themselves how best to undertake the assigned work. This approach has its origins in Japanese 'Lean management' and other high performance work systems. The scheme was gradually rolled out across the manufacturing shops and then within the wider production environment.

Based on the pilot within the manufacturing pipe shop, the scheme was regarded as highly successful; the team won the highest recognition award available in the company, awarded at plc. level by the Chairman of the Board, and was widely promoted both internally and externally by the senior business leaders as revolutionary and innovative. Production employees in the pilot areas were exhibiting discretionary behaviours, finding new ways of working, self-managing, openly asking for help and raising issues with management. Individuals also volunteered to come in on Fridays to look after the apprentices, even although the schedules of work had been completed for the week. Overall, the scheme was considered a success, and the business decided to continue to roll it out across the production areas.

SBW was subsequently implemented throughout the manufacturing shops, prep and panel lines and sub assembly areas of production. A critical moment was its introduction into the Unit Fabrication area. As it moved into Unit Fabrication, some evidence emerged to suggest that SBW was more difficult to manage across larger teams and multiple trades and where both the scope and plan of work was less easy to define for the purposes of weekly scheduling. Many issues in engineering design (i.e. the plans and drawings which were used by the production employees to guide their work) and supply chain were identified by employees as being barriers to completion of work on schedule. The adoption of SBW was therefore harder to achieve and the issues identified would take longer than initially anticipated to resolve.

When the business introduced the scheme, it was agreed with the trade unions that the arrangements would eventually be rolled out to everyone to ensure parity across the production workforce. The length of time it was taking to introduce SBW arrangements across the production population was therefore divisive; with some of the population on enhanced terms and conditions associated with SBW (including a 5% pay increase which was negotiated to compensate individuals participating in the scheme for zero overtime) and some of the population not yet included in these arrangements. As such, trade union representatives called for harmonisation of the two-tier pay and working conditions as part of their pay negotiations, creating greater urgency around resolution of the issues which were delaying the roll out of the scheme. Ultimately, the issues with introducing SBW in the

larger production areas resulted in the initiative being seen as too complex to fully enact, and after extensive consultation with the trade unions, it was agreed that the initiative would be brought to an end. The next section briefly covers some views from individuals within the business which offer additional context about the factors which may have contributed to the failure of the SBW scheme. These views were expressed to me during my time as a practitioner, and therefore did not form part of my primary data set for this study. Instead, I captured these within my researcher reflective journal to ensure the valuable insights were recorded appropriately.

It was indicated to me that the individual appointed as the business Managing Director (MD) around the time that SBW was being trialled was never fully supportive of the scheme. His role prior was as a Programme Director (overall leadership of delivery of one of the large production projects); the programme was significantly behind schedule, and he struggled to understand how the employees in the production areas could be achieving what was asked of them on a weekly basis but the programme was still behind. As the Programme Director, he had to maintain the relationship with the customer and was often asked to explain why the programme was behind. Under the previous working arrangements, it was often the production team who took the 'blame' for schedule slippages. With SBW however, the production team could legitimately justify (for the first time) their output and productivity levels, which meant the 'blame' had to go elsewhere, putting pressure on the engineering, supply chain and project management functions for not providing the 'raw materials' into the production process to ensure delivery to required project timescales. This created tension between the senior leadership team, with some continuing to champion SBW, and others arguing that it was not delivering what the business needed it to do (delivery of the programmes on schedule). The individual in question was a vocal critic of the SBW approach, and when he took on the managing director role, he made it clear he didn't support the continuation of the scheme. Further to this, around the time he was appointed, a number of other long standing senior leaders either left the business or moved to other roles in the wider organisation.

In terms of making the scheme work in practice, when SBW was introduced within the Unit Fabrication area, it was not implemented in the same way that it had been within the successful pilot areas. I was told the planning needed to be much more robust, as the scope and complexity of the work being undertaken in the fabrication area was greater. The pilot areas were manufacturing 'shops', which were structured similar to single production lines;

producing smaller parts which are then fitted into the ship later. The fabrication production areas had a far greater number of people working in them, with many different trades working side by side; the production process was therefore less straightforward. In addition, one of the issues identified as a result of SBW was that more robust planning for the whole ship was required; with very clear scopes of work and timelines for each job, which would then allow teams to proactively plan their daily and weekly work schedules.

I heard the view from people in the business that production managers in the Fabrication area resisted the SBW principles as they wanted to remain in control; many of them could not understand the rationale for the scheme and could not see a way of doing things which was different from the way they had been operating for most of their career. The leaders in those areas also did not support the premise and there was a lot of non-committal behaviour from key influencers. When the SBW scheme was rolled out, a number of changes were made to the design which fundamentally eroded the essence of what the scheme was set up to achieve; management took away the transparency and ownership which should have been passed down to the team level, pressure increased on supervisors, and they then did not fully relinquish control to the operators. It was suggested to me that the culture and characters in the Fabrication area were too 'archaic' for SBW to work; and that were four or five key individuals in this area (in management roles) who were 'in with the roots' in that area, and that if they had been removed, then SBW would have been more successful.

The fabrication area was therefore not able to successfully implement SBW, and more time and effort needed to be invested to make this successful before the business would consider rolling out SBW to other parts of manufacturing. At this point, the trade unions approached pay negotiations with the view that the business had to go all or nothing with SBW as the 'two tier' system within the production workforce had gone on for longer than anticipated. Some people believed that the business would give in and roll out the enhanced terms and conditions associated with SBW to everyone in the production workforce, regardless of whether the scheme was fully operational in all areas. However, the business made the decision it could not see things through and decided to bring the scheme to an end. The failure of the scheme in fabrication meant it was removed for everyone; even in the successful pilot areas, which only served to heighten the existing sense of division between the different production areas and teams.

5.2.2 Consolidation of Shipbuilding on the Clyde

In late 2013, a large restructuring and associated redundancy programme was initiated. There were total job losses of approximately 900 in Glasgow, and the business made the decision to cease all shipbuilding and manufacturing activities at a Southern site, and to consolidate shipbuilding capability on the Clyde. As part of this, the business also made a strategic decision to move to a subcontracting approach for a number of skilled trades: painters, plumbers, joiners and electricians; retaining only a small number of these roles 'in house'. As a result, many skilled tradesmen were made redundant.

Having worked in the HR team dealing with the redundancy programme at the time, I had the sense that this programme was the latest in a very long line of redundancy programmes in the business. Some individuals were keen to take advantage of the opportunity to leave the business, as they felt optimistic about their chances of getting work externally and opted to leave through voluntary redundancy; whilst other people were very apprehensive about their futures, and we were eventually required to make some skilled tradesmen compulsory redundant. Some of these individuals were able to secure roles with subcontracting organisations, but not all. My experience was that it tended to be older employees who were unable to secure new employment with subcontractors, whilst younger employees were taken on more readily, and were also more willing to move; evidenced by a quick uptake of 'voluntary redundancy' by this population.

This was a very politically sensitive situation, with a lot of tension between Glasgow and Portsmouth; there were claims in the press at the time that the decision to retain shipbuilding capability on the Clyde was directly related to the upcoming independence referendum in Scotland. I was present during many of the trade union consultation meetings in Glasgow at that time, and there was a great deal of emotion expressed during those sessions; the trade unions were somewhat prepared for potential job losses, but they were initially shocked by the total proposed headcount reduction, particularly in certain trade groups. The employee relations climate in the initial phase was quite adversarial; the trade unions pushed the business hard to look at potential mitigation routes (both short and long term), through complementary voluntary redundancy and retraining programmes. They also heavily

questioned the business decision to utilise third party contractors, and they were adamant that they wanted the business to explicitly guarantee the protection of those on early careers development programmes (graduates and apprentices). The trade unions were successful in getting the organisation to commit to greater mitigation activity; including expanding the offer of voluntary redundancy to other employees and then retraining individuals from the affected populations to take on those roles (complementary voluntary redundancy). The organisation also committed to a significant spend with an outplacement provider to support employees looking for jobs externally, and to paying for individuals to obtain Construction Skills Certification (CSCS accreditation), which would allow them to work in the construction industry, and to financial support for other retraining and qualifications.

5.2.3 Site Transformation and Investment

The Glasgow site transformation and investment project encapsulates a set of activities aimed at modernisation of both the manufacturing and office spaces at both Glasgow shipyard sites. These activities were first discussed when the cessation of shipbuilding activities at Portsmouth Naval Base was announced in November 2013 (as detailed above). Prior to the decision being made on the future of ship building capability in the UK, one of the options discussed with the UK customer was the closure of the manufacturing sites in Portsmouth, along with some job losses in Glasgow, coupled with significant investment on the Clyde to establish a 'world class' shipbuilding facility. It should be noted that the discussions with the customer involved the contract for a new type of frigate, with the company requesting that the customer make a contractual commitment to a certain level of financial investment in infrastructure, in order to maintain sovereign shipbuilding capability in the UK. The relationship and any contractual discussions between the company and the customer are inherently connected to the government position on defence spending, and as such are highly politically sensitive.

The ideal scenario discussed with the customer at this time was investment to create a single shipbuilding facility on a single site in Glasgow. The costs and the feasibility studies were done on this option and the business made it publicly known that a single site was the preferred option. Senior managers also ran employee briefing sessions to communicate the plans and the company position on the preferred option. The idea behind this option was to

create one single shipbuilding site with extensive onsite facilities for employees, including a gym, restaurants and a nursery. The company started to publicly consult on the plans for creating a single site, and these consultations were reported in the press and media. It quickly became clear that escalating costs (approx. £250million) made this option too expensive for inclusion within the contract negotiations with the customer, and as such this option was not considered viable.

As a result, the business needed to explore an alternative for the necessary site improvements (further context on the need for investment are provided below) and moved to an alternative option. The proposal for this option involved retaining two sites but making significant investment in new buildings and facilities on both sites. This was a much cheaper option than the preferred single site option, however it was also costly. The cost challenges faced by the customer meant that this option was also no longer feasible. The organisation instead had to move to option three; creating an 'initial enabling infrastructure' which involved a minimal amount of investment to upgrade the facilities across both sites. Prior to this decision, preparation for the preferred options had commenced; initial infrastructure work had begun on the sites, which involved many of the old buildings being demolished, and part of one site being closed and mothballed. It soon became apparent to employees that the planned investment was not going to happen as previously communicated.

5.2.4 Facilities Investment

The organisation had previously been somewhat reluctant to invest in site transformation activities as a result of what was described to me by HR colleagues as long standing 'behavioural issues' exhibited by employees across the sites, most notably within the production areas. There had been minimal investment made across the sites for a number of years, and the only improvements which had been made were in situations where significant health and safety issues were prevalent. There was a tendency toward short term fixes or 'sticking plasters' to deal with issues. The management view was that there was little or no point in investing in facilities due to negative and destructive behaviours exhibited by employees.

Some things I heard from individuals regarding the environment prior to the commencement of facilities investment activities were as follows; roofs in the production areas were leaking, people would report faults, but long periods of time (18 months in some cases) would go by and nothing was done. There were pigeons nesting in the roof spaces of open buildings, with people sitting having their lunch or tea breaks in areas covered with bird droppings. The toilet facilities were filthy, with no toilet roll available and extensive offensive graffiti on the walls. Some people took to reading newspapers in the toilet whilst on shift; the organisational response at the time was to cut the power so there was no lighting and to cut sections off the stall doors to allow supervisors to monitor amount of time spent in the stalls. On one occasion there was soiled underwear and a pair of trousers left in the middle of a bathroom. There was also reportedly an incidence of intravenous drug use in the bathroom, so blue lights were installed. Supervisors ended up standing outside the doors to the bathroom, essentially policing the use of the facilities. The phrase I heard used to describe the situation at the time was: "zero trust, zero pride and zero respect".

The 'welfare' facilities investment work signalled a change in approach from the business, with extensive refurbishments taking place across the production areas, including the shared amenity areas where employees had their breaks, new lockers designed by the employees themselves and built in house in the outfitting shop, new drying rooms and total bathroom overhauls. The work also included systematic improvements to the office spaces for those based in office environments, and regular cleaning and maintenance schedules put in place to ensure the facilities were kept to a higher standard. There were other issues also tackled as part of the project, including; better provision and cleaning of workwear for those in production areas, and exploration of investment in technology to increase mechanisation (for example, introduction of welding robots). Interestingly, as part of this work, the organisation decided to change one of the more traditional elements of the production; overall colours. Previously there was a clear delineation on the shop floor between the trades people who wore dark blue overalls (blue collar), and any professional, supervisory or management level individuals who wore white overalls (white collar). This system remained in place until very recently, when it was determined that all people working in the production areas would move to navy blue overalls, and only visitors would wear white. Feedback on this was that supervisors felt they had lost out on something, so there was an obvious status associated with wearing white versus blue. Additionally, there was a new 'colour coding' scheme introduced; instead of overalls, safety hats were colour coded for different trade groups, including different colours for apprentices and supervisors and management. It felt therefore

like switching one type of hierarchy for another, although the company argued that colour coding was required for safety purposes and so that it was easy to identify at a glance which trades were present in a particular area at a particular time.

The budget for the initial improvements in the production areas was circa £200K, but once the works were started, there was some flooding and the company had to fix the foundations of the some of the buildings, which meant the costs escalated to circa £670K. The overall budget for facilities investment was £5 million, with a planned timeline of 5 years in total to complete the works. The trade unions played a key role in getting the organisational commitment to invest in the facilities, by escalating their concerns to the parent company CEO. They were also able to influence their members to look after the facilities once the improvement works had taken place. The 'behaviours' of workers in these areas improved greatly with minimal smoking in the toilets and only two instances of graffiti; with both of those instances (somewhat bizarrely) being inside the toilet roll dispenser and therefore not actually visible. In terms of the role of leadership in this process, the view I have heard expressed is that the previous 'Head of Facilities' was old fashioned, only willing to make minimal investment, and not really interested in making a change. The new incumbent played an instrumental role in changing the organisational position on this; he was passionate about the change, wanted to challenge the norm, garnered support from the trade unions and leveraged that to get the commitment for investment from the parent company CEO.

5.2.5 Customer Relationship and Politics

The organisation has a close relationship as an organisation with their primary UK defence customer. Due to the highly political nature of this relationship, it is wholly dependent on which political party is in power within the UK Government. Recent governmental budget challenges in relation to defence spending have forced the UK customer to become more demanding in their contracts with suppliers. Previously there was a '*cost plus*' model; in which defence contractors would promise to deliver products to an agreed budget and schedule, but any budget overspend or cost of schedule slippage would still be picked up by the customer. This approach has changed in recent years, with contracts designed to force suppliers to take the financial hit for budget overspend and schedule overrun. From a company perspective, this was having a direct impact on business profitability; both at the

individual business unit level and enterprise wide, which was then having an impact on shareholder return levels. This created pressure on the workforce for cost reduction and greater productivity. Additionally, there was increased outsourcing of previously in-house roles and services. As an example of this, during my time in the organisation, all warehousing and logistics activity was outsourced and included a TUPE exercise to an external third-party logistics company. This was a cost reduction exercise and was undertaken in addition to the previously described redundancy programme.

5.2.6 Covid 19 Pandemic

The Covid 19 pandemic occurred after the primary data collection phase of my research had been completed, however I continued to be employed by the case study organisation throughout this time and afterwards and was able to capture my own understandings of events within my reflective journal. These events were significant in signalling another shift in the employee relations climate. During the pandemic, the production workforce continued to work onsite, as they were deemed to be providing an essential service, due to the nature of the work for the defence industry. As such, production employees came onsite as normal, whilst those in the 'professional' population worked remotely from home. This caused tension, with the production trade unions claiming the emergence of a 'two tier' workforce. They argued that the production employees were putting themselves at risk, and that the 'professional' population now had even greater work flexibility, whilst the production employees were being left behind. As time went on and home working became an ongoing 'norm', with onsite access still limited, the professional trade unions began to argue that their members were now in the less favourable position as they were having to fund increased energy bills, that their work life boundaries had become blurred, and this was contributing to mental health issues. This created an interesting sub-division in employee relations concerns between the production and professional trade union representatives. This also created a strange dynamic in the onsite spaces, as the production areas remained busy (albeit with the required restrictions in place), whilst the office areas were empty. If you did find yourself in the office (as I did on 2 occasions), you might be the only person on a whole floor, which was quite disconcerting.

5.3 Summary

The overview provided in this chapter was intended to help the reader appreciate the complexity of the case study organisation and contextualise the analysis which now follows in my subsequent empirical chapters. The following two chapters are structured with data and analytical discussions presented together.

Chapter 6: Organisational Legacy

6.0 Introduction

Prior to undertaking my formal research, I had a strong sense that the legacy of my case study organisation was critical for understanding its depth and complexity, and I wanted to explore how history was playing out in the contemporary employment context (if indeed it was). I also had a perhaps romanticised notion of the organisation as a vestige of the broader shipbuilding industry and a symbol of Glasgow's industrial heritage. There remains an enduring interest in the media in the shipbuilding industry; there is still extensive news coverage of ship launches, contracts, and issues at the other operational shipyard on the Clyde which was nationalised in 2019. In addition, there are constant references to the history of the yards on television; in historic documentaries and other popular culture programmes, and there is a bar in the Scottish Exhibition Centre called 'Clydebuilt'. Physical representations of the industry can also still be seen in the fabric of the city, in stonework and stained glass. All these elements help highlight the enduring nature of the shipbuilding industry in the collective consciousness of the West of Scotland, and it is certainly something that I have experienced growing up here.

Through the analysis of my primary data, I identified a number of first order concepts and second order themes which suggested key elements of the past were still playing a role in present day organisational life. I therefore chose to utilise the concept of organisational ghosts as posited by Orr (2014) to help me understanding these inheritances. I considered these in terms of the organisational past, present and future; as per the suggestion of Orr (2014), utilising this as a framework for structuring my analysis, and as an aid to unpacking the temporality of ghosts in organisations.

6.1 History, Memory and Storytelling

As previously stated, my case study organisation is characterised by its rich and socially significant past and I explored this in my earlier historical context chapter in order to develop a 'historical perspective' as per Lawrence (1984); helping me to better understand the present organisation by gaining insight into how that present state came to be (Blackman and Connelly, 2001). Developing on this, I wanted to understand the ways in which the historical

events I had researched impacted on the current organisation. From my research, there was notable overlap between the concepts of organisational history, memory, identity and storytelling; and as such I will deal with those themes together in the first section of this chapter.

When discussing the concept of history with my interview participants, there was a consensus that the shipbuilding industry has not really changed that much in the last century. One of my blue-collar interviewees said the following:

> "Historically, you're building a ship, and really and truly apart from what's going into that ship ... A ship's a ship." (Interview 33, Blue-Collar)

This quote describes the view, from an employee working within the operations function, that ships as a product have stayed consistent throughout history and that as a result, the shipbuilding manufacturing process has not actually changed that much. This may be one of the reasons the organisation still feels bound to its history; there has not been the same burning platform from a product evolution perspective as other industries, and therefore there has not been the same organisational drive to change. As such, the history still feels embedded in the way the organisation operates in a very tangible way in the day to day, and therefore remains relevant and close due to its proximity to the ways in which people work. This is the first indication I found from my data which suggested the past is still alive in the organisational present.

I got the sense that there was a generally positive view of the organisational history from most of my interviewees; this view was mainly connected to elements of identity and pride, and I will discuss this further in the below section on identity. One senior manager described the difference to me between the Glasgow based part of the business compared with some of the operational site locations in England:

> "I think that part of the business is less steeped in a kind of stereotypical history. Where you can have a bit of a stereotypical Clyde history picture painted here. I don't know how much is real and how much is rose tinted spectacles. The pride on the Clyde, and all that sort of stuff. Get less of a feeling for that down south. There's not the same harking back to history." (Interview 2, Senior manager).

Interestingly, the word 'stereotypical' came up twice in this quote, which illustrates the level of familiarity with, and acceptance of, history on the Clyde, within the organisation and in the broader industry. The use of the phrase 'rose-tinted spectacles' shows how shipbuilding history has taken on a form which goes beyond the reality and is something which individuals have potentially retrospectively sentimentalised. Strangleman (1999) wrote about this in his work on organisational nostalgia as a sentimental emotional attachment to the past; in which the past is viewed as a 'golden age' (Gabriel, 1993). This helps to show that history in my case study organisation had taken on a form which was bigger and more significant within the present day, than it normally might be in an organisation. This interviewee used the phrase 'rose tinted spectacles' somewhat cynically, suggestive of a potentially nostophobic attitude; nostophobia is the opposite of nostalgia, in which the past is viewed in more negative terms (Strangleman, 1999). I heard similar views from a small number of my other interviewees; these individuals were all younger employees (millennial or Gen Y cohort). The senior manager also mentioned 'harking back to history'; which is indicative of an ongoing relationship with the past. There was an almost derisive tone to this statement, once again suggesting that this particular senior manager was not the biggest fan of the continuing influence of the past in the organisation. When probed, this attitude seemed to be coming from the idea that the ties to the past were hampering the organisation from evolving quickly enough to secure its long-term future; this is again further evidence of a nostophobic attitude, in which the past is seen as an era to be escaped from and the new to be actively embraced (Gabriel, 1993). When probed on their feelings about the organisational history, younger employees suggested that the ongoing relationship with history was creating an organisation which did not feel modern, progressive or open to new ways of working; again, this is similar to views expressed in the nostophobia literature (Munro, 1998; Strangleman, 1999). All of this is evidence of mnemohistory as posited by Deal et al. (2021), with history being socially reconstructed and understood in varying ways in the present, relative to the values (and agendas) of different organisational actors. It shows the complexity of the relationship between history and the present, through the different individual reactions and feelings it provokes. It is also illustrative of the ways in which organisations can be both simultaneously enabled and constrained by the narratives of their past (Hansen, 2007).

I found that those employees who had more of a connection to the manufacturing part of the organisation had a much more positive attitude towards history. The below quote from a blue-collar employee attributes the history to the number of applications for apprenticeships in the organisation:

"I do think people recognise it (the history). I mean, you look at the intake of apprentices that's going on here. There is a lot of apprentices starting yearly, year on year. . . I mean, if the people didn't talk about the history and the various things that are getting built round here, you wouldn't have as many apprentices applying." (Interview 33, Blue-collar).

This interviewee described how people in the present talk about history and discuss how that history relates to the operations and shipbuilding processes in the organisation today. This verbal passing on of information about history is a facet of organisational memory; with individuals making sense of the present day through narratives of the past (Rowlinson et al., 2014). It is likely also evidence of storytelling, in the context of passing on knowledge between generations (Gill, 2011); in this case, passing on knowledge about organisational history to the next generation of employees (apprentices). The fact that the interviewee attributes apprenticeship popularity to this, implies that there is inherent value to the organisation in the history which is being re-told, and again suggests that the history plays an active role within the present. This link resonates with the work of Walsh and Glynn (2000) on organisational legacy and identity; in which the authors considered the ways legacy can exist beyond the limits of the originating organisation. It is also potentially evidence of organisational ghosts, as per the work of Orr (2014); in that there are elements of the organisational past which seem to have taken on a life of their own.

6.1.1 Identity

Building on the organisation history discussion, many of my interviewees spoke about elements of identity when they were asked about the organisational history. One recurrent theme was the idea of pride, and the phrase 'Pride on the Clyde' came up a number of times. This phrase references the connection to the shipbuilding heritage of the River Clyde, and the associated pride that organisational members feel as a result of being part of that heritage, and the role that they play in continuing the shipbuilding tradition. One interviewee told me:

"I think it is, I think the heritage of Glasgow, I mean you look at the likes of the transport museum down on the Clyde. I think back to stories that my grandfather telt me, he worked in the shipyards for a small period of time. My uncle, he worked in the shipyards in Govan a long, long time ago, so these are like older uncles. But even

today when you look through the news, well for example when that [contract] announcement was made last week that it might now happen, all these people on my Facebook feed who are just friends, who have no relations with the shipyards or the Clyde- or even engineering some of them- they were all posting saying that it's a great thing. . ." (Interview 10, White-collar)

This quote hints at the sense of collective pride in the shipbuilding industry and a connection to the yards which goes beyond the current organisational members. It also indicates that there is more interest in the organisation's continued success than perhaps there might be from the general public in relation to other large commercial organisations. I believe this touches on the emotional connection between the shipbuilding industry and the people of the West of Scotland; which exists because shipbuilding has been synonymous with the region for a long time, and is ultimately a part of how some individuals see the place they live, or how they grew up. This interviewee also discussed elements of individual identity and family connections; something which was brought up by multiple interviewees. It suggests that there is a shared sense of identity, as a result of the history of the yards, which exists both within the organisation and external to the organisation. I also found an element of individual identity tied to this; in that where there were family or friend connections to the history of the shipyards or the industry as a whole, there was a greater sense of individual connection to the organisation and what it represents.

Similarly, another interviewee discussed the pride associated with working in shipbuilding;

"I love the fact that it's such a source of pride in Glasgow and everything that it symbolises. And that's one of the reasons I came here. It was the 'we make warships'. How cool is that? It's a great industry." (Interview 28, White-collar).

This quotes again highlights the significance of the shipbuilding industry and, by association, the case study organisation, in Glasgow. I believe this use of the phrase 'everything that it symbolises' shows its emblematic nature, drawing on it as the representation of the shipbuilding industry as a whole and Glasgow's broader industrial heritage. This interviewee explicitly stated that this was one of his motivations for wanting to work in this organisation. This emphasises the connection between the broader shared sense of history and identity and the relationships people have at the individual level with the organisation. This quote also touches on the dual aspects of the organisational identity; both shipbuilding and defence. The organisation's role in defence was spoken about by many of my

interviewees, in terms of organisational purpose and individual connections. Individuals who spoke about the defence aspects of identity were either positive or neutral, there were no critical views about the organisation's role in the defence sector shared with me. In my experience, the defence aspect of identity was strongly played on by management and was often linked to the history of the armed forces in the UK. The relationship between history and individual identity therefore has a further complexity, in that there was this another additional element that individuals could feel a connection with (or vice versa), depending on their individual feelings about the armed forces and the defence sector in general. These two aspects of historical identity seemed to co-exist in the organisation; some individuals mentioned both aspects in their interviews, whilst others only mentioned aspects of the shipbuilding historical narrative, and none spoke about the defence elements alone. I therefore believe that shipbuilding had the stronger association for more individuals across the organisation, as that narrative came across more strongly from my interviews.

One of the things I did not directly investigate, but was certainly hinted at through my research, is the extent to which individual identity is linked to the degree of connection an individual has to the organisational identity. In other words, the extent to which individuals see themselves as Glaswegian (or from the West of Scotland) and if this impacts how connected they feel to the historical elements of the organisation's identity. Although I did not explicitly seek to investigate this, but I did get a sense from my interviews that those individuals who considered themselves Glaswegian, did in general have a more positive reaction to the discussion about the legacy of shipbuilding than those who did not. Further to this, something I noticed during my time within the case study organisation and whilst I was undertaking my research, but again did not directly investigate, was a connection between individual class identity and how they viewed the organisation. I observed that those individuals who potentially saw themselves as having working class roots within industry in the West of Scotland, again felt more connected to the historical aspects of the organisation's identity. Conversely, those who did not have those direct individual connections, did not engage as directly with the historical, 'Pride on the Clyde', elements of the organisation's identity. I am making these statements based on some of my own individual biases about both aspects of identity detailed above, as I did not explicitly ask my interviewees how they identified themselves. Instead, I made some assumptions based on what I knew or could deduce about their individual backgrounds and the extent to which they spoke about their 'working class' connections or connections to Glasgow. Nonetheless I believe the shipyards are a significant facet of working-class identity in the West of Scotland and shows how intertwined the organisation's identity is with social history. I do

recognise it would be beneficial to empirically investigate this further, to explore the relationship between individual connections to history, emotional reactions (positive and negative) and how individuals identify themselves.

Finally, as touched on earlier, it is worth noting that some of the younger employees I spoke with were less enthusiastic about the association with the past within the organisation. They were critical of the desire within the organisation to keep speaking about how things were or how they used to be done, which they felt glorified the past, perpetuated out-dated ways of working and made it feel like an old-fashioned place to work. This will be further explored in the next chapter, as I consider generational divisions within the workforce, but it raises an interesting point from a history and legacy perspective; the extent to which the organisation is hampered by its legacy identity elements. It starts to introduce the idea that the past is still actively playing a role in the organisational present, disrupting progress and impacting relationships within the organisation. And as such, this could be an indicator that the past is haunting the present as per the work of Orr (2014).

6.1.2 Storytelling

Connected to organisational identity is the concept of storytelling. Storytelling in organisations is a mechanism by which the past is remembered and shared by organisational members, and how those members create common meaning through those stories (Barker and Gower, 2010; Boje, 1991; Boje, 2003). Storytelling emerged as a theme from my research, although not so much in terms of what people said to me about storytelling, more from the ways in which information about the organisation was shared with me. Also, my own experiences in the organisation pointed to storytelling as a key mechanism for individuals passing on knowledge about the past (historical and recent). I heard lots of stories which were often told for entertainment purposes, but also conveyed a real sense of the organisational culture, the role of management and the employee relations climate.

One interview stood out to me as indicative of the storytelling I had experienced at various times during my employment in the case study organisation. I spent just over an hour with the interviewee, he was a shop floor, blue collar employee with long service in the organisation. The interview transcript was 19 pages and formed an almost single narrative of stories about his time spent working on shop floor; I barely had to prompt at all to keep

the conversation going. His style was open, engaging and funny, and I could have spent all day listening to his experiences. This was very representative of numerous other individuals I encountered and spent time with, as when I initially joined the organisation, I was given lots of opportunities to speak with and shadow long serving individuals. In addition to his style, the richness of his testimony painted a vivid picture of the organisation from the perspective of a blue-collar employee, and really emphasised the value of storytelling for transfer of knowledge between generations, and more broadly for qualitative researchers seeking to understand the lived experience of organisational members. I didn't specifically set out to ask interviewees to tell me stories about their experiences, but stories still played a role in how individuals described the organisation.

In my experience, the organisation tried to create and utilise stories for the benefit of the business; those in leadership positions shared their own experiences from the shop floor to try and create a legitimacy for themselves amongst the production workforce, to give reassurance that they understood what it was like for people working in those types of roles, and to try and generate sympathy and trust. This is congruent with much of the existing literature on storytelling, which considers storytelling as something organisations can use as a management tool, to influence employee perspectives (Boyce, 1996; Driscoll and McKie, 2007; McLellan, 2006). This view assumes that organisations have control over stories and can maintain that control, however my research suggested that stories have a life of their own; and often, I detected a significant dose of cynicism directed towards company attempts at storytelling, because there was almost always a corporate agenda behind the narrative. Tales about acts of employee resistance; were widely shared perhaps even to the extent that stories themselves become a vehicle for employee resistance. Such stories sprang up and were propagated by employees, who crafted the narrative to suit their agenda; whether that was to discredit management or simply to make colleagues laugh and lighten the day to day. Stories amongst employees were also shared as cautionary tales, as a way of passing on knowledge, and for entertainment value; and as such their value had greater currency for people than those stories generated and controlled by the company. In this way, I found stories were used as vehicles to keep the past alive and maintain collective memories.

6.2 Present

Returning to the concept of ghosts the evidence from my research did not suggest explicit or overt hauntings in the present day by historical 'ghostly' figures or past events; no one spoke to me about Jimmy Reid or other notable figures from the past, or about events such as the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work in. Instead, ghosts and hauntings emerged in the present in more subversive ways. Interviewees spoke more about recent history in the form of the key impacting events I outlined in Chapter 5, and how their impact were still being felt in the present. For my interviewees then, it seemed that the recent past had more significance for their day-to-day experience in the organisation than the 'historic past'. Additionally, criticism of the recent past was more prevalent than that of the 'historic past'. There was evidence that the past was viewed in rosy terms, often with emotion as individuals recalled links to the industrial heritage of Glasgow, and their own personal connections to the history of the shipyards. This often coloured the events of the present; with individuals choosing to recall that which was 'great' about the shipyards in their 'heyday', whilst holding more critical views about actions and events in the organisational present.

Although it was not something that I sought to specifically research, when I considered the idea of ghosts and hauntings, it began to make sense to me as an embedded researcher that spaces were extremely important in understanding the relationship between the past and the present. There was definitely an intangible and potentially haunting quality about the spaces themselves; how they look, how it feels to be in them, the sights, sounds and smells of the production process; all of which recall a sense of the industrial past, within these spaces occupied by so many workers over generations; whilst also in a small way (when compared with production at its peak on the Clyde) keeping that industrial heritage alive.

There were large areas within each of the shipyards which had been decommissioned or mothballed. Some parts of the yard were still there but sitting unused, whilst other buildings were demolished leaving large empty spaces. One of my interviewees spoke about this:

> It was a shame that this yard that we're in at the moment's got this land doing nothing. I think that's quite sad. . . I think sometimes people look at a big picture and they think to themselves, "Oh, that land's sitting doing nothing so what's going to happen to it? Is there going to be a house going up there? What's going to happen?" Then next thing, "Is this going to get taken away?" People can be quite ... not negative.

Weary, if you like, when they see things like that happening, things getting pulled down. (Interview 33, Blue-collar)

This quote describes an emotive reaction to the decommissioning process and illustrates the attachment that many individuals feel to these spaces. The fear for the future of the yards was a view I heard expressed a few times both in my interviews and in my experiences within the organisation:

". . . the shipyards on the Clyde when you look at old photos and you look at the post World War 2. It's thriving, you've got John Browns, you've got Yarrows, you've got Barclay Curle. . . We're pretty much it. You've got Ferguson's which are doing well when it comes to the ferries and such but us here, this is, this is war ships for our [customer] and ... if we lost this then it will be ... the shipyards on the Clyde will just be a story, nothing more. Something that happened for a few 100 years and then finished. That's how I feel and it's especially hard being here half my life. So it's hurting me at the moment. . ." (Interview 10, White-collar)

Likewise, I found further evidence of emotive reactions to the decommissioning of spaces: ". . . yes, it's a sad fact that shipyards have been knocked down" (Interview 16, Blue-collar). All these quotes represent a fear of loss and are suggestive of a state of mourning as posited by Derrida (1994); mourning for the industrial past which has gone and fear of what the future might hold for the yards. This idea of fear of the future and ensuring the continuation of shipbuilding was a theme throughout many of my interviews, and the workforce and management were united in feeling responsible (as Derrida suggested all inheritors do) for the continuation of this legacy. There was a sense from my interviews and my own experiences that the yards were dying, that this was the slow march to the end, the death knell of shipbuilding on the Clyde. Similarly, one of my management interviewees spoke about the fairly recent retiring of dynamic ship launches and de-commissioning of the associated cranes and launch machinery on the South bank of the river:

". . . there was a naming ceremony the other day there. I don't know how well attended it was, I don't know. So I generally don't know and I don't know because I didn't go. And it makes you wonder if it was an old launch would I have missed it? There's something different about the spectacle, whether people actually get that same feeling. . . used to be that there's groups of school kids, there was bring your family along, ticket to your neighbour or whatever. It was a great big thing, oh come

and see the ship being launched. I get we're not doing dynamic launches anymore, but I think we're missing a trick there to allow people, and in a way the community, connect with the product." (Interview 25, Management)

This again highlights the emotional connection between ships and members of the workforce, and the wider community; the sense of pride tied up in the spectacle of the dynamic ship launches, and how individuals used to invite their families, friends or neighbours to those events as a way of sharing what they do and giving them a connection with the products (ships). It shows the level of individual connection with the yards, and highlights the sadness felt at the 'retiring' of the dynamic launch process; this was again something I picked up from many individuals during my time in the organisation. It illustrates the ways in which spaces in the organisation help to maintain a connection to the past and a sense of shared identity and purpose; those dynamic launch cranes and slips were material artifacts, which acted as mnemonic devices, keeping people anchored to the sense that they were part of the 'shipbuilding' legacy on the Clyde. Again then, this gradual decay and loss of these spaces was inherently connected to the frightening prospect of the death of the industry. Orr (2014) suggested that ghosts congregate in dead spaces, and indeed I found that people did not enjoy walking through those parts of the yards which had been decommissioned, they found it unpleasant and did not want to see the evidence of decay in the empty spaces which were once so alive with the buzz of industry. This could be evidence of an aversion to such 'haunted' spaces in which ghosts and memories of the past are so evident. The emotive nature of the connection for individuals was summed up well by the management interviewee below:

"So, I think about the history, some people worked here for a long time. Some people's parents have worked here, all that kind of stuff. And for those guys it's quite ... it's still got that emotional attachment to ships, to the building, to the facility and what we're doing here. So I can still see that coming through." (Interview 25, Management)

This quote again describes the historical, generational relationship that many individuals have with the organisation. Additionally, this interviewee mentioned the building itself as something that people have a connection to, because of their own personal experiences and relationships, and how that is very much still prevalent in the current organisation. Again, this shows the connection to the work of Derrida (1994) and the idea of the modern workforce as inheritors of the whole shipbuilding industry; with all the pressure and sadness

that this brings. It highlights the ways in which the past has an emotional resonance in the present and impacts on how individuals feel about the organisation in the here and now. As such, it is evidence of the ghosts of shipbuilding past haunting individuals in the present and actively impacting on their relationship with, and view of, the organisation, thereby blurring the temporal boundaries.

Another interesting element of spatiality which came out of my research was the idea that specific spaces were allocated to different organisational groups. This resulted in segregation of the workforce, with management only spaces, and other spaces which were for the exclusive use of production employees; all of which very explicitly recall a supposedly bygone era. I will return to this debate in the following chapter which deals with divisions in greater detail. Further to this, there was a sense of archaic practices and norms which persisted in the organisation, through which spaces were symbolic and contested; further highlighting their significance for understanding the relationship between past and present. There was also a relationship history and spatiality which could be seen from a feminist perspective, based on my own experiences in what are still very male oriented spaces. As an example, there were no female toilets in one part of one of the yards, which resulted in women having to go outside and into another building to find a toilet. This shows, perhaps somewhat shockingly, the ways in which the organisation remains anchored to the past; as the spaces themselves are designed to meet the needs of an organisation from the past and this basic hygiene factor has not been catered to. This seems almost ridiculous in a modern working environment but is sadly not uncommon. Siebert (2023) found similar gender inequalities in her study of the Palace of Westminster, where the spaces also had inadequate provision of facilities for women. She also found spaces which 'felt' masculine in their look, design and the rituals they supported. This is very similar to the ultra-masculine associations of heavy industry which existed in my case study organisation; the manufacturing spaces were almost exclusively male in their presentation; dirty spaces, full of metal, tools, loud noises, and strong smells of welding. The protective equipment was all designed to suit the male physique, and anyone dressed in overalls, hard hat and protective shoes is effectively stripped of any gender identity; this is all symbolic of a space designed for, and still dominated by, men. Once again, then the ghosts of an archaic past are evidenced.

My analysis suggests that spaces within the organisation; and specifically, those spaces associated most closely with the shipbuilding manufacturing process; act as mnemonic devices. They recall the industrial past of the Clyde and trigger emotional reactions amongst organisational members. This tends to result in 'rose-tinted' views of the ways in which the past is remembered and what is forgotten, and what is spoken about and shared as part of a collective narrative between organisational members; as per Connerton (1989) and Zerubavel (1996). They also chain the organisation to the practices and inheritances of the past; for good or ill; and serve to perpetuate historical entitlements and divisions which have been taken for granted in the past, but should now ultimately be challenged for the sake of fairness and equality, and for the organisation to move past some of the darker aspects of its industrial legacy.

Finally, when considering the role of the trade unions today, and whether there was a legacy element to their role in the organisation; whilst there was no obvious evidence of hauntings of historical industrial action on the contemporary employee relations environment, however I did have the sense that the power still held by the trade unions was no coincidence. There was a level of respect given to the trade unions by the organisation which could be attributed to the historical power of the trade unions on Clydeside. One trade union convenor told me:

> "On the whole I'd say the relationship with the company is quite good. We get brought into a lot of meetings with the MD and told sensitive stuff, which is always kept in confidence and the unions have never broke that confidence." (Interview 29, Trade union)

This describes the relationship trade unions had with the senior leadership and the degree of inclusion in sensitive company discussions, which helps illustrate their ongoing level of influence in the organisation. Some of the individuals in trade union roles that I encountered in my time had taken on the mantle of power from those they succeeded and learned their ways of operating from previous generations. There was, for me, an echo of history within the employee relations climate, which served to sustain trade union power and influence; even if the majority of employees I spoke to did not discuss this. I will further explore employee relations and the role of the trade unions in my next chapter.

To summarise then, when considering whether the past resonates with the present there was a sense that every time an action happened in the present, there was a shadow of something from the past being recalled; whether that was the recent past or historical past. There was a lot of 'we've tried it before' rhetoric, or memories or stories from the past shared, critical voices, and wisdom passed on. I definitely got the sense, particularly from a spatiality perspective, that there were ghosts of the past very much alive in the present; with those spaces both haunted and acting as mnemonic devices which recalled the industrial past in the current day to day.

6.3 The Future

When speaking about history and legacy, many of my interviewees discussed the implications of the historical and recent past for the organisational future. Some expressed to me the unease they felt between the past, present, and future of the organisation, particularly their fears over the sustainability of the business in the longer term, and how they could ensure that legacy continues for future generations. There was a desire to ensure knowledge and skills were passed on for future generations, and to learn lessons from past mistakes. This was compounded by a backdrop of business transformation activities being pushed by management. The below view was expressed to me, which evidences this point:

> "I can actually see my career coming to an end in the not too distant future. I just wish that the guys, that the industry's still going to be here for them. See if it's still here for my grandsons looking for a job. It would be nice, but one can't guarantee anything." (Interview 16, Blue-collar)

This once again provides evidence of the 'inheritances' aspect of Derrida's work; with individuals today feeling a sense of responsibility for ensuring they are not accountable for the ultimate demise of the shipbuilding industry, and that instead it continues to create job opportunities for future generations. This also circles back round to the emotional and identity elements tied up in the legacy of the institution of shipbuilding, as discussed earlier. It demonstrates the fluid temporality of organisational ghosts and inheritances of the past, and the ways in which the past, present and future can interact in disorienting ways in organisations, as per the work of Simmons (2011), Orr (2014) and Pors (2016).

A number of my interviewees spoke about the attempts at business transformation activities; the organisation had tried multiple initiatives, but many of these were unsuccessful. There was a sense that something kept pulling them back; this was similar to the discussion by Blackman (2019) about the past lingering despite organisations claiming to move towards the new. There was a business desire to move forwards and transform, but based on my experience, the organisation did not attempt to understand or unpack the complexity of its history or inheritances of its industrial past or their potential impact on the organisation's ability to change. Instead, management chose to perpetuate a somewhat fatalistic narrative of 'evolve or die'. As explored previously, the emotional connection to the organisational and institutional legacy is something that captures people (both inside and outside the organisation), and that narrative was therefore effective in eliciting the commitment of the workforce to change to ensure the sustainability of the business for the future. Viewed from a critical perspective, this is an example of classic co-opting of labour into a narrative which suits capital; and is therefore skilful use of storytelling on behalf of the organisation; potentially touching on elements of emotional labour as argued by Hochschild (1983). I will explore this further in my next chapter, whilst discussing the use of HRM practices.

Paradoxically, whilst the organisation was comfortable in utilising narratives about the past to help harness employee commitment, it was also clear that senior management clearly saw it their role to banish the ghosts of the organisational past. In this way, I found similar evidence to that of Orr (2014). Senior leaders I spoke with were more dismissive of the organisational legacy, they did not think there was value in it, and were somewhat derisive about the emotional attachment to the past that seemed to endure. The overwhelming sense I got was that the past; through its continued influence in the present, was keeping the organisation in stasis, preventing it from moving forwards for the future. But that the past was also playing a massive role in how invested employees were in that future vision, and why they cared about the continued success of the organisation. As such, it would seem the presence of organisational ghosts was seen to be simultaneously destructive to, and beneficial for, the organisational future.

6.4 Summary

Whilst it may be argued that traditional scholarship does not consider adequately the existence of organisational "ghosts", I found through my research that the concepts of ghosts

and hauntings helped me to make sense of the difficult relationship between past, present and future. Elements of the organisational legacy were present in a very tangible way within my case study organisation, and these elements emerged from my data as factors which impacted on peoples' experience of employment.

Chapter 7: Employee Relations, the Role of Trade Unions and Management Practices

7.1 Introduction

Prior to undertaking this study, I had heard several anecdotes about humorous or unusual occurrences in relation to employee behaviour within the organisation. An example of this was an incident I was told about where a dead fish was placed within a toilet in a management building prior to the festive shutdown period. When the managers returned to site after the break, the fish was rotting and causing a bad smell within that building. This could be perceived as an example of workforce resistance, or it could be seen as simply a joke at the expense of management. When I started my study, I felt that whilst incidents such as these were interesting examples of employee behaviour, there was a risk associated with assuming they were indicative of the organisational culture overall. From a LPT perspective (Thompson, 2010; Thompson and Smith, 2009; Thompson and Vincent, 2010), it would be easy to allocate too much significance to such individual occurrences, given the history of militant collectivism prevalent within the industry, without fully understanding the breadth of factors impacting on employee relations today. Through my analysis, there were a number of key emergent themes in relation to the experience individuals had within the organisation, and therefore critical to understanding employee relations. This chapter will discuss each of these themes in further detail.

7.2 Trust

The first key theme emergent from my data was trust; it was derived from a series of first order concepts which appeared consistently throughout my interviews and pointed to trust as being a fundamental aspect of the employee experience within the organisation. Most of the interviewees who spoke about trust did so unprompted by any direct questions from me; I thought it would be unnatural to ask directly about trust and instead chose to utilise broad conversations on culture and their individual experiences within the organisation, which allowed concepts to emerge as part of the natural discussion. The high-level theme of trust emerged from individuals across the employee population.

As explored more fully in my earlier literature chapter, trust is a complex and multi-dimensional construct (Sanders et al., 2006). Kramer (2010) categorised the generalised trust found in organisations as 'collective trust', which he defined as shared positive expectations held by individuals within a social system, which is based on a set of background assumptions that individuals have about the behaviours of other organisational members. He further argued that individuals depend on a complex set of environmental factors; including structural, procedure and social indicators; when trying to assess the general level of trustworthiness of a group or collective to which we belong. Within my case study organisation, my research indicated issues with general levels of trustworthiness, which seemed to suggest a lack of 'collective trust'.

One interviewee stated: "As an organisation there's really low levels of trust in us as a business and line management and our commitment to actually deliver things and stuff like that" (Interview 20, White-collar). This quote hints at low levels of trust; both in terms of trust in the business, which refers to customer and individual employee trust in the organisation; and the intra-organisational trust dynamics between employees, teams, line managers and senior leaders.

During my interviews, I had several conversations in which interviewees spoke about their experiences of individuals not wanting to take any initiative in work or 'put themselves out there' as they were concerned about being blamed for something going wrong and them becoming a scapegoat for organisational failure. Interestingly, one of my senior interviewees openly acknowledged this, commenting (on the current organisational climate): ". . . until we get there, there's going to be that distrust, and that look after your back. Watch your back." (Interview 3, Senior manager). This quote suggests an absence of the 'expectation of favourable treatment by another party' element required for trust to be present. The use of the term distrust in this quote is interesting; however, it was a one off in the data, and the rest of my interviews did not imply outright distrust was prevalent within the organisation. Instead, I would contend that this quote is describing an underlying sense of unease felt by individual employees, and their lack of trust in both line managers and leaders. I got the sense of this more acutely from some individuals than others which seemed to be dependent on their relationship with their direct supervisor and line management, and on the perceived levels of support (or otherwise) offered by those in more senior positions. An engineer I spoke with offered the following view:

"I know I'm certainly not trusted to deliver on what I need to do. Because the amount of people that get involved, and the scrutiny that it goes to, I don't think that's a reflection on me, I just think that's the way the business is, that they don't trust things to operate on a lower level." (Interview 13, White-collar)

This quote refers to a situation in which management either did not trust employees to deliver in their jobs, or that employee perception was that management did not trust them to deliver. Either way, employees were not willing to be vulnerable and did not expect positive treatment by management; thereby suggesting an absence of trust, or certainly an absence of the main components of trust. Applying the Rousseau et al. (1998) continuum of degrees of intra-organisational trust, I would argue that employee trust in the case study organisation was hovering at the threshold of 'real trust'; somewhere close to 'calculus-based trust' (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996, p. 119) where trust was only considered a worthwhile strategy on the basis of a strict cost-benefit appraisal, but a deep suspicion remained in the relationship. My analysis suggested a pattern whereby employees did not feel confident that management would act in a manner which was likely to benefit them and trusted them only so far as ensuring the operational effectiveness of the organisation, thereby facilitating the continuation of employment, and subsequent distribution of resources.

Lewicki and Bunker (1996) contended that the trust threshold is crossed when suspicions recede to be replaced by positive expectations based on confident knowledge about the other party, including their motives, abilities and reliability. Based on my interviews, I surmised that there was an underlying suspicion about the actions and motivations of management. I appreciate there is a risk of reducing the trust discussion to just 'employees' and 'management'; Siebert et al. (2016) summarised trust relationships as: trust between employees, employees' trust in their direct supervisors or line managers, employees' trust in senior management, and employees' trust in the organisation as a whole. In my study the lack of employee trust discussed above was in relation to senior management, but that it also had a significant impact on employee trust in the organisation. The relationship between senior and mid-level management was described to me as follows: "I don't think senior management trusts their middle management to sort of progress things, and maybe that comes back to the support bit for line managers, of they're not empowered." (Interview 16, Blue-collar). This quote shows an absence of trust between different levels of management within the organisation, where those in senior positions do not trust those in mid-level

management positions. This suggested a lack of trust as an endemic issue between those at different levels of the organisational hierarchy.

Whilst there was evidence of an absence of trust between employees and management, and between different levels of management, my research indicated that intra-organisational trust did exist at an individual level; between employees and within teams. In their work, both Mayer et al. (1995), and Tan and Lim (2009) described this form of horizontal trust as the trust which exists between members of an organization who hold relatively equal power or levels of authority and with whom an employee interacts day to day. In terms of my case study organisation, such horizontal trust was evident from my interviews. One project manager commented to me; "I think we've got really good people. I think given the opportunity, we do work really well as teams, and I think. . . the majority of people are really committed." (Interview 20, White-collar). The discussion I had with this project manager was very much about the organisational culture and relationships within the business, and my interpretation of our conversation was that when individuals were perceived to be committed to their job roles, this created mutual respect and trust in their ability to deliver the work they were required to undertake; this therefore created an environment of mutual 'horizontal' trust between team members. Tan and Lim (2009) found a positive correlation between levels of trust in co-workers and trust in organisations, which they attributed to levels of social influence. They did acknowledge that social influences do not always result in positive interpretations of the organisation; and that those social influences can also work in the opposite direction in terms of trust when members of a social system have less favourable perceptions of the organisation and subsequently propagate those perceptions. In my case study organisation then, whilst trust existed between co-workers, that same trust did not exist more broadly within organisation; and that the levels of social influence present was having a detrimental impact on the wider trust dynamics in the organisation.

My interviews suggested a degree of employee apathy in terms of trust in leadership; there was no evidence of outright distrust in senior leaders, but at the same time there was an underlying suspicion in the motives of senior leadership, particularly within the professional employee groups. The production employees I spoke with did not express to me suspicion in the motives of senior leaders, and instead questioned the validity of managerial decision making. This infers a lack of trust in management capability, rather than an inherent suspicion in their actions; but essentially goes to the same outcome in that leaders are not

creating environments which are conducive to building trust. The disparity between the production and professional populations is interesting, and probably contrary to what I thought I would find in my data. I do wonder whether my production interviewees were guarded on this particular point and did not express their true thoughts to me, due to lack of trust of my motives, regarding their trust in management. Whilst I did make it clear that I was a neutral party and that nothing they said would be attributable to them directly, I still got the feeling that there was a reluctance to be overtly critical of management. In contrast, the professional population I spoke with were far more comfortable being open in their critique of management, and in expressing their views about whether they trusted their motives. This could be because I was also an office-based employee, and they therefore saw our conversation as a peer-to-peer interaction. This is an interesting point in itself about trust and suggests that trust between members of different groups in the organisation had to be earned, it was not automatically given.

My data pointed to an absence of hierarchical trust which worked both ways between management and employees. This was tinged with a degree of underlying employee cynicism regarding management in general (both motives and decision making), as opposed to manifesting as outright distrust in leadership. This could be seen as somewhat surprising given the legacy of conflict within the employee relations environment on the Clyde, as explored in the earlier Historical Context chapter, with perhaps the expectation of a greater prevalence of distrust to be evident. This was something I had assumed would be more obvious prior to undertaking my research, however my interviews did not suggest that distrust was inherent in the relationship between the workforce and senior management. All of this combined to create an uncomfortable employee relations climate, but the trust environment did not feel as hostile as I would have expected. There was clearly sufficient trust present to allow the functioning of the organisation day to day.

Adding a further dynamic to the trust discussion, some of my interviewees highlighted a lack of trust within the relationship between the organisation and their primary UK customer, evidenced by the following quote (on the customer relationship): "I think it's a complete lack of trust in us delivering anything." (Interview 28, White-collar). There is extensive literature on consumer and customer trust, and research into the relationship between the case study organisation and its primary customer within the case study organisation could likely constitute a separate (considerable) research study in its own right. However, I do believe it

is an important element to acknowledge in terms of the complexity of the trust dynamics within the organisation as several of my interviewees suggested that the nature of the relationship with the customer had a direct impact on the overall levels of trust in the organisation and on the broader employee relations climate. My interviewees described a relationship with the customer which was constantly in flux and is very dependent on the individuals in certain management roles on both sides. Some observed that the relationship had previously been better and was not in as positive a place at the time of my interviews. There was one particularly serious incident in relation to a product which occurred prior to my conducting interviews, when the customer discovered a serious defect on one of the ships. This issue seriously damaged the relationship between the organisation and the customer and caused one ship to be returned from sea trials. The financial implications for the company were significant, costing millions of pounds to fix, and ultimately impacting on the company profitability for that financial year. This incident was widely reported in the media which created additional pressure on the business and on the relationship with the customer, which again was felt by the workforce. It was something that many individuals on the shop floor expressed their dismay about, and their disappointment in the actions of a small number of people causing such reputational damage, and such damage to the trust relationship with the customer. The below quote illustrates this:

> "Why did that happen? Who engendered the atmosphere, where it took somebody a bit of time to do something wrong, instead of spending an extra half an hour and doing it right? That incident with the glue on bolt heads. . ." (Interview 16, Blue-collar).

It is likely that this incident constituted a breach of trust, and as such the organisation was attempting to rebuild customer trust in light of that incident, albeit I did not have direct access to any customer representatives to test this assumption. Nonetheless, the evidence from my interviews suggested that this incident had a serious and lasting impact. This was then perpetuating a lack of trust at all levels of the organisation; from the senior management down to employees on the shop floor, as highlighted by the following quotes:

> ". . . that (the incident) has brought around a lack of trust from the customers point of view, which in turn puts pressure all the way through." (Interview 25, Manager)

> "The supervisors get it in the neck from the managers, the guys get it in the neck from the supervisors. Everyone's just grumbling. . . And everyone gets pulled into

meetings, and their fingers get pointed and wagged. . . And that can be quite demoralizing for a lot of people." (Interview 17, Blue-collar)

The difficulty in the relationship between the organisation and customer was then creating a proliferation of 'blame culture' and fear throughout the levels of the organisation. There is a large body of literature on blame culture, which is mainly centred on health and social care settings (Walton, 2004; Gorini et al., 2012; Leigh, 2017); the main takeaway from which is that blame culture goes hand in hand with fear, and rarely results in positive outcomes for individuals or organisations. Many of these studies attribute a tendency to cover mistakes to the presence of blame and fear. In their study, Vince and Saleem (2004) explored the impact of blame, contending that blame culture creates an environment in which emotion can transform rationality into contested relations and disputed understanding. Further, these emotions are felt, communicated and become part of broader organisational power relations and politics. As such, we can begin to see the ripple effect that trust issues and the associated 'blame culture' was likely having within my case study organisation.

In the same vein, I heard the following statement from a senior leader: ". . . they don't want to do what should be done, because they're worried if it goes a bit wrong, there will be a consequence." (Interviewee 3, Senior manager). Throughout this interview, this senior leader described his interactions with employees which suggested an atmosphere of fear of negative consequences running throughout the organisation. Vince and Saleem (2004) summarised the interplay between blame, fear and trust in their study, contending that focusing on individual responsibility and the expectations which are created as a result of this focus, this creates fear of failure, which in turn manifests cautious, self-protective behaviours. When mistakes are made, caution turns into outright blame and individuals look to place responsibility with others as a protection mechanism. This then undermines managerial trust in the 'collective', and negatively impacts communications between and across organisational layers.

I found that people did fear the retribution associated with making mistakes in my case study organisation, and therefore tended to engage in self-protection behaviours by blaming or 'finger pointing' as the quote from my Interviewee 17 above articulated. This fear and blame existed at all levels of the organisation; starting at the top for senior managers who were fearful of the consequences of poor organisational performance; and permeating all the way

down to employees at the 'bottom' of the organisational hierarchy, who were consequently fearful of making mistakes. This fear of consequences and blame was creating a negative cycle which had a direct negative impact on collective trust within the organisation.

Further exploring the implications for intra-organisational trust and relationships between teams, one production supervisor described the relationships between teams as follows: ". . . you try and avoid conflicts, you try and avoid antagonizing people. You try and avoid getting angry. Sometimes it's not easy." (Interviewee 17, Blue-collar). Considering the relationship between emotional responses and rationality explored previously, and as per Vince and Saleem (2004), this quote suggests a highly emotionally charged environment, which was likely impacting on the ability of individuals and teams to make informed, rational decisions. Interviewees admitted to me that this emotion then manifested itself in passive aggressive behaviour and blame being passed from team to team. Which perpetuated a culture of division through organisational layers, and horizontally between different teams, as everyone engaged in 'protect your own' behaviours and refused to take ownership of difficult tasks in case they were blamed for failure.

In their notable work on trust, Bijlsma-Frankema and Koopman (2003, pp. 547, 551) highlighted the influence of the "shadow of the past" and the "shadow of the future". The events of the recent past in the organisation certainly seemed to have had an impact on employees as some of my interviewees made reference to headcount reduction activities. Interviewees discussed these as a loss of capability and knowledge from the business and hinted at a lack of trust in management decision making, with the suggestion that those headcount reduction activities have had a detrimental impact on the organisation. Bijlsma-Frankema and Koopman (2003) also discussed past behaviour as an indication of future behaviour. Within the research context then, the lack of faith in previous management decision making could indicate a similar lack of trust in the potential future actions of management.

In addition, if we consider the historical events of the past within the shipbuilding industry and those events which took place within the organisation in its previous incarnations; the shadow of the past was greater still. However, as discussed in my earlier chapter on organisational legacy, my interviews did not suggest the current workforce explicitly

recognised historical events as having an impact on the relationship between the workforce and management today, or on trust in the organisation. Nonetheless, as I touched on earlier, there was an underlying lack of trust in the relationship between the workforce and management, which ran deeper than the events of the recent past and could perhaps be attributed to the inherent conflict between labour and capital as discussed within the Labour Process Theory literature (Burawoy, 1979; Braverman, 1974; Littler, 1990). In this case then, the shadow of the past and shadow of the future (Bijlsma-Frankema and Koopman, 2003) seem to intersect in a way which does not indicate a specific past act (historical or recent) which fundamentally damaged the relationship between employees and management (i.e. breach of trust). Instead, the current trust dynamics may be indicative of the inherent conflict which exists in the employment relationship. Considering the view that misplaced trust can have a dark side (Kramer, 2010), it could also be argued that the cynical attitudes of employees in relation to management were a self-protection mechanism designed to partially shield them from any potentially destructive management initiatives.

Whilst my data suggested a lack of trust between groups and a lack of trust in management, there seemed to be an over-arching generalised trust at a higher level, what I would suggest felt like individual trust in the institution itself. This is tied to the discussion in the previous chapter on organisational legacy, in which employees spoke about their individual connections to the organisation which were linked to their own personal history and identity. Linked to this is the idea of shipbuilding as an institution, separate to, but inherently connected with, my case study organisation. There seemed to be a complex relationship between the trust that employees had in the institution of shipbuilding and the trust they had in the organisation, as if they were two separate entities. There was a hope that whilst the customer relationship may not have been at its best, there would continue to be a requirement for shipbuilding capability in the UK, and that therefore the business would continue.

Grey and Garsten (2001) contended that a full understanding of systemic or institutional trust is not possible without reference to the individuals who are members of that system, and a full understanding of interpersonal trust is not possible without understanding the systemic context in which such trust develops. This suggests that, converse to my argument above, it may be difficult for institutional trust in an organisation to exist if trust at an individual level was not present, as there is a close correlation between the two. However institutional trust goes beyond the degrees of trust as experienced at individual levels and comprises the sum

of all the structures, systems, roles and relationships within an organisation (Fox, 1974, 1985; Hassan and Semercïöz, 2010; McCauley and Kuhnert, 1992; Shamir and Lapidot, 2003; Straiter, 2005). Further to this, Lewicki and Bunker (1995) determined that 'institutional trust' refers to a phenomenon that 'develops when individuals must generalise their personal trust to large organisations made up of individuals with whom they have low familiarity, low interdependence and low continuity of interaction.'

By these definitions, I would argue that employees in my case study organisation had developed institutionalised trust as it is possible for individuals to have one set of experiences of trust at individual level (i.e. low levels of trust in line managers, senior leaders, between teams), and still maintained a different view at the macro-level. From my experiences as both a practitioner and researcher, I believe that as the institution has endured for so long, employees almost at times see it transcending any day-to-day lack of trust they experience. As such, trust in the institution of 'shipbuilding' endures and remained fairly static; whilst trust within the organisation was more fluid and subject to change depending on individual relationships and the impact of management practices at any given point in time. That being said, an element of fear remained which was an undercurrent to this institutional trust, with individuals feeling pressure, as custodians of the institution, to ensure its continued survival; this recalls my earlier exploration in relation to death and decay in the organisation. This blurring of trust boundaries is further evidence of the conflict between past, present and future; employees wanted to trust in the future and the hope of organisational 'rebirth' but they were still in mourning for the past organisation which was no more.

7.3 Divisions

As a further progression of the trust discussion, another key finding from my data was the prevalence of division across the organisation. It is possible to identify many distinct groups and this provides a further complex dynamic to the employee relations climate, in considering how those groups interact and the trust dynamics between them. One senior leader described the organisation to me as:

"I think it's somewhat of a tribes within tribes. . . It's not that the tribes don't barter, trade and function alongside each other, but they certainly don't think that they're really one tribe even though they are all in (the same organisation). They very much have their own identities. And that's inevitable given geography and/or type of work that you do. I think it's unrealistic to expect everybody to feel part of one tribe given the geographical spread and the history. . ." (Interview 5, Senior manager)

This quote highlights the ways in which the workforce is segmented and the complexities in how the organisational ecosystem operates. The reference to 'identities' is interesting, having considered organisational identity in my previous chapter, I will now explore the concept further in terms of understanding how people classify and segment themselves within the organisation. The following themes on division were emergent from my analysis.

7.3.1 Management and Workforce

As discussed in my literature review, one of the most significant factors impacting on the employee relations climate is the relationship between labour and capital. Given the acrimonious nature of the historical relationship between management and the workforce in shipbuilding; most notably the displays of outright workforce resistance in the 1970s, as discussed in my earlier chapter; I wanted to understand whether that relationship remains a divisive element of the employee relations climate today.

A few of my interviewees told me that the relationship is not as bad as it once would have been, and that they felt things were more progressive now. As discussed earlier, many senior leaders had been promoted through the company, which the company very much used to highlight the 'credentials' of those in top jobs and show their legitimacy because they have 'been there'. They tried to be actively visible to the workforce through regular 'briefing' sessions in which they gave business updates and took questions from employees. However, in my view the divide was still extremely obvious, and there were several practices which were indicative of this. For example, there were 'executive' bathrooms which only senior individuals in the organisation had the ability to access; these were removed prior to my time in employment, but only within the last ten to fifteen years based on my conversations with colleagues. In addition, I have found a reflective diary entry which illustrates some of the

other symbolic artefacts still present within the organisation at the time I conducted my primary research (pre Covid 19 pandemic):

> *"The continued use of separate senior management offices, within an executive suite, and executive car parking spaces are representative of 'exclusivity'- this feels very archaic. Senior leaders are very reluctant to change this arrangement as it is seen as a 'benefit', but it feels like it perpetuates the 'them and us' culture and causes real resentment."*

The fact that these archaic senior management 'privileges' have endured so long, and that senior leaders were very reluctant to make changes to practices which clearly favour them, is potentially quite telling about the nature of the relationship between leadership and the rest of the workforce. One of my interviewees spoke about this with some vehemence during our interview, he said:

> "This is almost the pinnacle, I think, from this place. The parking out the back, for directors and senior graded employees. I think that shows that. . . you know how they constantly talk about how it's a "We're all together" thing. That's not an 'all together' thing. That clearly states. . . You are creating by that alone a 'you and us' situation. You're not showing that you're going through the same issues that we are. You don't have to plan your trip to work and get into a car park before 7am to get into a car park space, otherwise you're walking two miles in the cold and wet. . ." (Interview 13, White-collar)

This interviewee clearly expressed frustration at what he perceived to be obvious divisions between leadership and the rest of the workforce. This was a young, office-based engineer, who was angry at the inequity of these practices and how they felt particularly old fashioned within a supposedly modern workplace. The emotion is clearly conveyed through the language used above. The statement itself was reflective of the reality of what was happening in the organisation at the time, and ultimately shows the continued prevalence of visibly outdated practices, with one set of rules for those in management positions and a different set of rules for the general workforce. This felt particularly unfair to this individual whose contempt for management was clear. Siebert (2023) discussed the mismatch between organisational inclusivity, diversity and equality goals and the inherent spatial boundaries and restrictions still prevalent in some organisations. She found that many of these spatial boundaries are physical manifestations of enduring elitism, divisions and power struggles.

My research suggested similar findings; with aspects of the organisational strategy which was communicated within the case study organisation linked to increasing representation at senior levels, empowering employees and breaking down boundaries between hierarchical layers. At the same time as the organisation was setting out these goals, extremely archaic practices around ownership of spaces enforced the traditional structures of authority and power persisted. It could be argued that my reflective diary entry and the quotation above illustrate a fragile veneer of empowerment which was being sold to the workforce, and that the car parking issue was illustrative of some of the true structural inequities at play, which were hidden just below the surface of the managerial narrative. Ultimately when management had the option to make decisions which would improve things for the workforce overall (such as opening the car park to all to allow first come, first served parking), they still made the choice which best suited them. As such, some elements of class compromise (as per Wright, 2000) were playing out; but there was no real desire to shift the fundamentals of the power dynamic between labour and capital such that management had to make any true concessions. This was not going unnoticed by employees and was continuing to perpetuate the division between those in senior leadership positions and the broader 'workforce'.

7.3.2 White-Collar and Blue-Collar

As a development of the discussion about division in the case study organisation, it was clear to me that the dividing lines between the traditional 'blue collar' roles within the production environment and the 'white collar' roles required further investigation. I was interested in understanding whether this division was also obvious to my interview participants, and whilst I didn't ask about it explicitly, it was something which was repeatedly brought up in my interviews.

Production employees did feel like it was an 'us and them' relationship with the professional population, and they felt that they got the blame for mistakes which were often rooted in design or supply chain errors. There was also bad feeling over different 'norms' which existed for the different populations; such as the fact that office workers can go for a tea or coffee or take a break from their work whenever they want. The shop floor trade unions negotiated out morning and afternoon tea breaks as part of a previous pay deal, and therefore

had no time in the day scheduled for tea breaks. This was further exacerbated by the widespread home working which was implemented during the CV19 pandemic, with shop floor employees feeling like they were working harder than their professional counterparts, who could take time away from their desk at any time and were not subject to the same level of supervisory scrutiny for doing so. Office workers acknowledged they were very removed from the production side, but partly blamed the trade unions for helping to further perpetuate that division: ". . . (the trade unions) create the us and them between the shop floor and the office workers. We shouldn't necessarily have TUs for each half. It should maybe just be for the workforce." (Interview 28, White-collar)

In my reflective journal, I made the following entry regarding the theme of division:

> *". . . there are some individuals within the manual populations who are on the lowest salaries in the organisation, work in the most difficult physical conditions, and ultimately are not considered as 'valuable' to the organisation, illustrated by considerably lower salaries and access to other benefits. Some of the make versus buy decisions over the past few years also shows how easily such populations are cast aside and replaced by contingent labour."*

This highlights the discrepancy between the different populations in terms of pay, but also potential value to the organisation and job security. I did experience during my time in the organisation, a movement to increase the amount of contingent labour within production. This was described in my earlier organisational context chapter, specifically the redundancy programme I worked on, and the TUPE exercise which also followed (see Chapter 5.2.2). This was an example of the growing trend of employment insecurity and the expansion of atypical forms of employment as per Allan et al. (1999). This served to increase the threat of employment insecurity for the production or blue-collar roles, marginalising them in comparison to those in the professional or 'white collar' jobs. At the same time, there was also much discussion across the organisation about expanding the use of engineering capability to further diversify the business and explore additional routes for generating profit. Building ships for export was no longer seen as a viable option given the high cost compared with cheaper production abroad, and an increasing desire within other countries to develop their own sovereign production capability. As a result, the idea was to sell 'blueprints' of ships to customers abroad and offer project management and production management capability to help oversee the build process for those customers in their own country. This could be seen as yet another way in which the production workforce were being sidelined,

with their critical roles almost being 'outsourced' abroad as part of these types of arrangements.

Exploring the disparity between these populations further; one interview with a blue collar employee provided some particularly graphic descriptions of the reality of working in the shop floor environment:

". . because of the restriction in the space, I was hitting it, to tighten it, I hit my finger. . . I took my glove off. I'd broke my finger! So the bone in that finger was popping through. . . I had to go to the hospital. They ripped the nail off, put the bone back in and stitched the top of it. I was in work the next day, and we were having a laugh about the fact that I'd done that job and he [the supervisor] was moaning about the paint having to get touched up, whereas in fact it was just a wet cloth because it was my blood over the pipe. . . It was quite funny, because you do hurt yourself. . . it's mental, because it's sore but I don't know, it's strange, you treat it as if, well, not a perk of the job, but that's what you need to take on, that everything we do there's a severe risk of you hurting yourself or hurting others." (Interview 15, Blue-collar)

This quote is potentially shocking, especially in the context of a supposed 'modern' workplace, but this graphic description highlights the level and nature of risk faced by those working in physical roles and the very real health and safety threats blue collar workers face. My interviewee used humour to deal with these serious injuries; this is often referred to as 'gallows humour' or 'black humour' which makes light of difficult or painful topics. The shipyards (and some might argue the West of Scotland as a whole) are notorious for this. I heard many jokes and 'banter' as a participant in the organisation which had a similarly dark undercurrent. Black humour is defined as a kind of humour that treats sinister subjects like death, disease and disability with bitter amusement (Mindess at al., 1985). It is perceived as morbid, nasty, psychopathic, twisted and is often very funny (Maxwell 2003). Obrslik (1942) contended that black humour has the social effect of strengthening the morale of the oppressed and undermines the morale of the oppressors. It is often used as a coping mechanism for certain professions which routinely have to deal with dark subject matter (Christopher, 2015). It is also often used during crisis situations (Maxwell, 2003). In my experience, humour played a significant role in the organisation. Billy Connolly (2009) wrote in his blog about his time working in the shipyards; "It was great for me because there

was a lot of funny guys in there who were just funny, they didn't tell jokes, they were just funny men."

It could be argued that such humour was used by employees to prevent them from having to confront the harsh reality of their day-to-day experiences of work, and as a leveller, strengthening their morale in the face of challenging and somewhat oppressive working conditions. I felt there was also sense of pride associated with these difficult experiences, and stories almost being like a badge of honour to prove value. This also all feels quite like machismo, and once again recalls the traditional image of shipbuilding, with a male dominated workplace where individuals shrug off serious injuries and laugh about their pain. It also once again recalls something of the macabre, with the spectre of death lingering within the production environments due to the dangerous nature of the work being undertaken. This is a distinct difference between the experience of work for those in production versus professional roles. The following view of office workers was given to me by a production (blue-collar) employee:

> "I love my job, see, and it's manual. . . You're then moved up to the ivory tower, as such, if you want to say it, in the office world. Oh, it's great, you don't get dirty, you're not doing the manual labour. . . " (Interview 16, Blue-collar)

The use of the phrase 'ivory tower' shows the attitude that the production workforce had towards those working in office or managerial roles; they believed that they were far removed from the reality of working life in the production environment. Much of the existing academic conversation regarding the concept of 'ivory tower' is focused on academia and research (Ashworth, 1985; Etzkowitz et al., 2000; Lenthall et al., 2009; Tornquist and Kallen, 1994), with the common emphasis being the difference between conceptual understandings of events and the reality of the lived experience. Simialry, Zhang et al. (2015) acknowledged the existence of a divide between management research and the usefulness of research for organisations. In short, the phrase is generally used to indicate the distance which exists between theory and practice. I know from my own experiences in the case study organisation that this phrase was similarly used to indicate the detachment of those in office-based roles from those who worked in the manufacturing parts of the business. Consequently, this phrase serves to highlight the alienation felt by those working in production roles.

The quote above also mentions the physical differences between the two populations; the dirty and manual nature of production work, in contrast to the images conjured up by 'ivory tower', of clean white offices. As explored previously, safety concerns and the challenging physical demands of the job were still very much reality for blue-collar employees. I was told by both my interviewees and in my day job by those who had worked in the shipyards for a long period of time, that things had drastically improved in 'recent times' in terms of health and safety, with stricter company policies and working practices put in place. Nonetheless, the production environment was still extremely dangerous with individuals working at height, in confined spaces, with dangerous tools and equipment around them, and in all weather conditions as the workspace was open to the elements. Some challenges of this environment were further described by a blue-collar trade union representative as follows

> ". . . parts of the ship are outside and so you're working in the elements. Summer can be warm inside a boat because of the heat, and in winter time it can be freezing cold because of the weather conditions as well." (Interview 29, Trade Union- Blue Collar)

There is much evidence in the health research that working in extremes of temperature; either too cold or too warm; carries a higher risk of accident or injury (Antonnen et al., 2009). Lack of workplace safety is considered a primary source of workplace stress (Langdon and Sawang, 2018; Rouhanizadeh and Kermanshachi, 2021). Work pressure, physical demands and safety concerns are all common features of manual roles and have been shown to cause significant mental health issues (Dollard and Bakker, 2010). As such, the challenging nature of work tasks and working environment remained a distinctive facet of the blue-collar experience. This all illustrates some of the physical contributing factors to the enduring divide between production (blue-collar) workers and those based in offices (white-collar).

This division was further complicated during the Covid 19 pandemic; with production employees continuing to work on site and all office-based employees working from home (as described in Chapter 5). This resulted in an escalation of tension between the groups in relation to the perceived inequity in the changing landscape of work. Additionally, whilst undertaking my data analysis, the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns further highlighted the differences in 'workplace safety' for both groups. In my time in the organisation there was no formal resolution to these issues; they were the topic of ongoing

conversations between the organisation and trade unions on the future of work. This does however serve to highlight the ongoing presence of a divide between the populations, which is difficult to reconcile due to the very nature of the work itself as well as how and where it is undertaken.

As discussed in my previous Organisational Context chapter, there was a decision during my time in the organisation to remove the traditional white and blue overalls within the production environment, in an attempt to remove the hierarchy system associated with them. However, very quickly a secondary system of classification sprang up in the form of safety hats; albeit a more complex hierarchy in which specific trade disciplines wore specific coloured hard hats, apprentices and graduates (trainees) wore a different colour from them, and office-based employees or senior management (traditionally those in the 'white collar' group) continued to wear white hard hats. As iterated earlier, the justification was so that it was possible to quickly identify who might be working in a particular area, or to know who to approach with specific questions. It could however be seen as a way to maintain the status quo, to subvert the attempt to break down the dividing lines between white and blue collar. I heard that the managers who worked on the shop floor were unhappy with what they saw as the removal of a privilege; they had worked their way up to that level of hierarchy and enjoyed the authority that their white overalls gave them. Additionally, it served to further delineate the production population, so that sub-hierarchies emerged as a result. This shows how individual identity was linked to the group or 'tribe' someone belonged to within the organisation, and that this was not easily undone simply by removing those symbols of belonging, in fact other symbols emerged in response to such managerial action as the workforce found a way around the new system.

The divide between blue- and white-collar workers was physical, in the form of the roles that individuals undertook and the environments they worked in. However, there was something more to it as there seemed to exist a different identity for those who had worked in the blue-collar environment and then moved into the white-collar population. I heard the following statement from one of my interviewees:

> "I remember [NAME REMOVED] he was very bad for it. . . He just looked down
> on everyone that wasn't like. . . Didn't work with their bare hands, tools, anyone that

came straight in the business he felt was just over-entitled, privileged. . . that's basically what he said. He used to rant all the time. . .” (Interview 27, White-collar)

This quote provides further evidence of the division between the populations, but also shows there was value associated with having been part of the blue-collar population. This is some way made you 'better' somehow, that perhaps you had 'earned your stripes' in some way. It once again, this has echoes of a bygone era of employment; in which employees were expected to 'serve their time' before being promoted. It is perhaps further evidence of some ghosts which linger within the production environment, recalling the working practices and norms of the past.

Related to the blue collar and white-collar divide is a discussion of class division. Class was not openly spoken about in the organisation; it was not explicitly raised in any of my interviews; perhaps because it felt uncomfortable to speak about or perhaps because it did not occur to individuals as a relevant aspect of a conversation about the workplace. Considering the work of Savage et al. (2013) on the class structures in the UK; it is possible to overlay their model of a new class system onto the case study organisation, in that everyone from their purported 'elite' grouping down to their 'traditional working class' were represented in the workforce. The organisation provided an interesting site for the study of class dynamics; given the breadth and complexity of the workforce, as outlined in Chapter 5. It is also interesting to consider how these class groups have evolved from the traditional 'blue collar' and 'white collar' distinctions explored in above and in my earlier Historical Context chapter. Furthermore, the extent to which these groupings have evolved to represent the diversity within broader society. Based on my experience, the shop floor (blue-collar) environment remained a white working-class, male dominated domain; and there was a lack of diversity in the candidates applying to join skilled trade apprenticeship programmes, suggesting that this might continue to be the case for the foreseeable future. The picture in the traditional 'white collar' office environment was more complex. Whilst previously this would have been a very exclusive group, with the broadening of access to further education in wider society, there is a more diverse pool of individuals who have had access to higher and further education. This has resulted in a greater number of individuals who may consider themselves as having a 'working class' background achieving qualifications which allow them to gain entry into those roles which were perhaps traditionally the preserve of the 'middle classes'.

It is hard to say for sure whether the Savage et al. (2013) definition of the 'Precariat' group was representative of any individuals in the case study organisation; however, based on my familiarity with the workforce, there were no 'Precariat' type roles, due to the level of skill required even for the most junior positions. There were also no 'emerging services workers'. It may be possible to draw a connection between the absence of these two 'lowest' of the class groups, and the prevalence of trade unions in the organisation; however, it is more complex than that as the organisation did require some 'precariat' roles, such as cleaners; but chose to outsource this work to a third-party supplier. A therefore question arises as to the extent the organisation and the trade unions were both complicit in allowing individuals in the lowest class groups to be marginalised, despite the picture within the 'workforce' (i.e. employees) telling quite a different, more positive, story. As such then, it is also possible to argue that the trade unions were complicit in proliferating a form of employment insecurity within the organisation, as they were only interested in representing the interests of their members; an example of functional unionism, rather than being concerned with broader social justice; or ideological unionism.

One further dimension which may be significant to the discussion on class is the economic position of individuals across the workforce and related to this, pay practices, as this has implications for the dependence of individuals on the organisation. Whilst the majority of employees were paid in line with standard 'market pay' practices, there were a small number of senior individuals who received very high salaries and very lucrative financial renumeration packages, including company share options. They therefore enjoyed a different level of financial stability to most of the workforce; and may not have experienced the same immediate pressures that are present for the 'average' employee (as is undoubtedly the case in many large corporate institutions). At the other end of the financial scale, the lowest paid employees in the organisation were paid well above minimum wage and received collectively bargained increases on an annual basis. However, I heard informally that there were employees in the lowest paid groups who faced significant financial barriers, for various reasons; one example being where an individual was the sole earner in a household. Whilst I recognise the risk of generalisation in drawing broad conclusions about the economic position of individuals, and accept it is difficult to fully identify the breadth of socio-economic factors which have an impact on the workforce without undertaking targeted research on this specifically; I nonetheless believe it is important to acknowledge the underlying inequity which exists at the heart of corporate pay structures in general. My

research context was no exception, and this is a significant element of any discussion on organisational divisions, as resource distribution has a clear implication for the labour versus capital debate. The context of this discussion will also most likely have changed since I undertook my research, as the increased pressures in the broader economic climate are felt by individuals in the organisation; no doubt further emphasising the inequities which exist across the organisation from a pay perspective.

7.3.3 Generational Divisions

Another dynamic of the employee relations climate was the 'generational diversity' of the workforce and the representation of multiple generational cohorts within the employee population. My data suggested that younger employees felt the organisation was not a modern place to work and were frustrated by the bureaucracy, the length of time everything takes, and what they believe to be 'micro-management'. On the experience of work, one younger employee said:

> ". . . (it is) frustrating and draining, if I compare it to the last place I worked. I struggle with understanding the command and control, sort of hierarchical or authoritarian approach. There seems to have a legacy culture that hasn't shifted. . . But it's incredibly frustrating, when work you do on a low-detail level, all of a sudden has to go up through like five or six people for the chief engineer to sign off on, when it's a case of, why should that person even be involved in this?" (Interview 13, White-collar).

There is much to consider in this quote; firstly, the frustration the individual is articulating about the management style and how this seems to be an enduring aspect of the organisational culture; such activities are commonly associated with 'command and control' management styles (Sneddon, 2005). The second part of the quote hints at a lack of job satisfaction due to lack of autonomy; Wollard and Shuck (2011) found in their review of the literature that feelings of choice and control in work are commonly identified as antecedents of employee engagement. The above individual described a situation in which their work was cross checked by multiple people, including the highest level of engineer, potentially reinforcing the idea of a blame led culture, underpinned by fear and lack of trust, as per

(Vince and Saleem, 2004). This was clearly negatively impacting on the individual's sense of value within the organisation.

Younger employees I spoke with also referenced the 'time served' mentality they experienced from older employees; they wanted to challenge convention and believed in their own capability, but this was not well received by older employees, who they felt were often reluctant to change their tried and tested ways of operating. This was a source of generational tension and resulted in many of the younger employees feeling disengaged, and in some cases leaving the organisation. In fact, this very situation occurred with one of my interviewees; shortly after our conversation during which they shared their frustrations, they found a job at another company and left the case study organisation. The following three quotes help show the generational attitudes of younger employees towards their older colleagues:

> "You see some of the older guys ... There was one of the older guys in the team, and he was a senior level. I was like, "Why'd you not want to do principal?" And his view was, "I want to do as least ... Well, as less amount of work as I can for the most amount of money,"" (Interview 27, White Collar)

> "No one really cares. Half the workforce is about to retire, so they just want to wait for their final salary pension." (Interview 13, White Collar).

> " As they would say, "We've been here for 20, 30, 40 years. I'm here until retirement, I've got a job for life, I'm not ... Why should I work at a different pace? I'm not ... I've been doing this all my days, why should I change?" (Interview 12, White Collar).

Espinoza and Ukleja (2016) argued that millennial employees expect their jobs to be challenging, creative and dynamic, whilst Sirota and Klien (2013) found that they value teamwork, expect support from colleagues and demand individual attention from their managers. The above quotes show the potential for tensions between younger and older generations in the workplace in terms of attitudes towards work, with younger employees perceiving less 'commitment' from their older colleagues due to their refusal to participate in change activities and work at a greater pace. There was also the sense from my conversations that they did not feel supported by older colleagues or managers, and as such

may have been experiencing a disconnect between their preferences and motivation factors and the reality of work.

Older employees I spoke to felt they have knowledge and experience, and that younger people are not willing to listen and learn from them. They also referenced the series of headcount reduction exercises (which I described previously) as having stripped the organisation of much of its tacit knowledge. Consequently, they believed that younger employees did not have the skills and capabilities required to execute work to the expected standards:

> ". . . now, bringing graduates in is great, graduates, very clever people. . . but it's knowing how to build a ship. So, it's all right looking at it on paper, you can read the requirements but actually getting the job done. . ." (Interview 16, Blue-collar)

This quote shows the slightly sceptical attitude of some of the older members of the workforce in relation to younger 'graduates' entering the business. They felt that younger employees may have been intelligent but lacked the contextual knowledge about how the business and the ship build process worked in practice. Older workers often possess significant knowledge and experience essential to the management of organisations, including tacit knowledge about company culture, politics and norms which has been built up over time (Joe at al., 2013). This includes why the organisation functions the way it does, past successes and failures, and why certain approaches are more effective than others (*ibid*.). Older employees in my case study organisation likely felt that their understandings of the organisation, built up over careers in shipbuilding, were being sidelined in favour of younger employees, and their tacit knowledge was being devalued in the process.

Conversely, younger employees I spoke with suggested that there were too many long-standing employees, who were negatively impacting the organisation and holding people back:

> "Seriously, there's a lot of people who it should be easier to get rid of, who are dragging the place down. And the good, and it is primarily young people, but it's not all young people, are not getting a chance to shine. Because, I'll be brutally honest,

f**king dinosaurs are eating them. And they need to be given the chance to get on."
(Interviewee 23, White-collar)

"From what I've heard, apparently it's very common, that old hat issue in engineering.
. . Even when I was dealing with other teams, it's still that attitude. That old hat. They
don't like change, they don't like anything. . . You'll find in units, in teams that are
quite new and young, young people tend to be a lot less like that." (Interview 27,
White-collar)

These quotes again highlight the frustrations that younger employees were feeling regarding
the organisation's inability to change. They attributed this to the ongoing influence of those
older, long serving employees who were, in their view, having a detrimental impact on the
organisation due to their attitudes. The word 'dinosaur' is particularly evocative, suggesting
that they feel such individuals are, or should be, extinct. The quote from Interview 23 above
seems to suggest that younger people are not able to progress or 'shine' because older
employees are somehow getting in the way. Some perspectives in the literature attempt to
unpack different generational 'motivations' and how these can sometimes conflict, causing
frustration and bad feeling between generational cohorts. Hershatter and Epstein (2010)
found Millennial employees have a strong preference for the structures and systems that
support them and that they are more confident in business environments and government
than other age cohorts. Suleman and Nelson (2011) found that Millennials are often
overconfident and have high expectations of work, including a desire to be continually
challenged. They argued that other generations tend to react negatively to such behaviour,
feeling that millennials need to "pay their dues" and earn the respect of their colleagues
before they are trusted with greater responsibility. What I find interesting about the above
quotes is the idea that older employees are perhaps more cynical about work and
organisational attempts to extract additional discretionary effort from them. It is therefore
possible that the attitudes of older employees represent a form of employee resistance; their
refusal to fully engage or participate is actually a challenge to the labour process.
Conversely, it could be argued that attitudes of younger employees towards their colleagues
and their enthusiasm for change show a degree of naivety, and a population which could be
more easily influenced by management practices.

The empirical academic evidence for generational differences in work values and
preferences is mixed, with many studies unable to find predicted differences in work values

between generational cohorts (Parry and Urwin, 2011). My research suggested tensions between those in different 'generational' groups; these tensions were centred willingness to change, management decision making which resulted in loss of knowledge from the organisation, and frustrations about hierarchical structures. As such, generational 'divisions' were not prevalent in terms of attitudes towards work itself, as everyone seemed to want to do a good job, rather they were evident in the different views on how this should be achieved. Older employees felt that continuity and leveraging of tacit knowledge and experience was crucial, whilst younger employees felt that change and innovation was the way to go.

A limitation of my research was that I did not ask employees to disclose their age as part of the research process, and therefore I was reliant on utilising my own knowledge of generational cohorts and retrospectively plotting individuals into rough groupings based on my perception of their age, when I realised it may be pertinent to my analysis. Furthermore, given the inductive nature of my research, the theme of generational divisions was emergent from my data, but more specific empirical enquiry would be required to further disentangle the impacts of age, career stage and cohort on work related values and attributes, as Perry and Urwin (2011) suggested. Nonetheless, I still consider this an interesting element of division which added to the complexity of the workforce and employee relations climate within my case study.

7.3.4 Site Division

Site division was another significant factor referenced by my interviewees; some spoke about it openly and others mentioned it as part of broader discussions. This overlaps on the discussion in the previous chapter on legacy and individual identity. One blue-collar employee said the following; "You know, there was always a rivalry between the different yards, and the guys had a pride in their yard." (Interview 17, Blue-collar)

This quote describes the fact that there was still an enduring rivalry between the two legacy sites, which were brought together to made up the contemporary organisation, and that individuals tended to see the site they were based at as 'their yard'. This division was compounded by the fact that different operations take place on each site; one site was set up for ship build, and one for ship outfitting. There is also a geographical barrier between the

sites in the form of the river Clyde. Additionally, the case study organisation owned one site outright within its asset portfolio but rented the other site. One conversation I had regarding a promotion opportunity was particularly telling, about the impact an association with one site or another could have. This interviewee was recounting his experience of asking for feedback after not being successful in gaining a promotion:

> ". . . why did you make that person up (promote them)? What do you mean? I said, well, how did you not make me up (promote me)?. . . Surely I'm better qualified? And he's like, no, no, right, I've made him up (promoted him) because he's a [site removed] person. I don't want to be seen to be making up [site removed] people. I was like, that's wrong, that's no right, you shouldn't be doing that, that's wrong." (Interview 15, Blue-collar)

This shows that progression or promotion could be based on their belonging to one site group over another one. I also know that some individuals tried to refuse to move between the sites when asked. This was an emotive topic, as they identified with being part of one of the sites and did not want to have to work within a different group. This connects back to the idea in the quotation at the top of this section which claims the existence of 'tribes within tribes'; and helps to show the different sub-layers of identity which exist even within one group; in this case the 'blue collar' population. This connects with the concepts of social identity, through which an individual identifies themselves within a particular group (Van Knippenburg, 2000). Within organisations, conflict or competition between work groups renders identity more salient (Kramer, 1991). However, identity components are not static, and the salience of specific features of identity can change or move depending on context (Knippenburg, 2000). Consequently, my data highlights the multitude of identity components in my case study organisation, and the ways in which social identity could shift or move. It is also an interesting component of organisational memory that the legacy 'site identity' aspect endures.

7.3.5 Further Divisions

Another potential route to explore within the organisation regarding divisions would be gender, given the traditionally male dominated nature of the shipbuilding industry. I do not want my research to be dismissed as predominantly based on 'male work' as Strangleman

(2005) suggests about the work of John Eldridge in 1968. However, I felt the scope of my research was already broad enough without building in a feminist perspective on organisational dynamics. I have touched upon gender briefly in my previous chapter when considering the impact of spatiality in terms of links to history and legacy and how spaces were representative of traditional patriarchal work systems, however, to consider gender opens up additional avenues for discussion around the overall composition of the workforce, which remains (in my experience) predominantly white and male. As such, there is also a potential route for further exploration of workforce diversity as a whole, and indeed the lack of it, within the case study organisation, to help understand the impact of industrial legacy on workforce demographics. This was not something I sought to specifically investigate through my research, nevertheless, I did not want to conclude the discussion on 'divisions' though without acknowledging these additional perspectives which could offer opportunities for further research and discussion.

7.4 The Role of the Trade Unions

Having explored the historical role of the trade unions within the Shipbuilding industry on the Clyde in my earlier history chapter, I was keen to understand more about the role the trade unions play within the case study organisation today. As a practitioner, I observed the power and influence they seemed to retain, both locally within the case study organisation and nationally at the parent company level. I saw them regularly challenge the company position on key employment issues, question policies and processes, engage in collective bargaining activities and provide direct support for members on specific individual concerns. I could see the ways in which workforce benefitted from their presence in the organisation, and I also saw first-hand the frustrations they could cause for management and HR. As such, I wanted to empirically investigate the role they were playing within the organisation and explore different perspectives to understand how they were being perceived.

The following view of trade unions was offered to me by a blue-collar employee:

> "Trade unions have always been really strong in here, in both yards. And I do think that the trade unions have made a hell of a difference over the years. . . they always have fought for workers' rights and conditions and pay and this, that and the next thing. And I think they've always been really effective at what they do. They're just a bit more management-savvy these days." (Interview 17, Blue-collar)

This view is similar to my experience of how the trade unions operated within the organisation. I know from my role within HR that the business and trade unions had a very collaborative working relationship, utilising practices which reflect some of the tactics identified by Bacon and Storey (1993) for trade unions engaging more positively with management and moving past collective bargaining. Primarily, I observed their approach to partnership working; I often saw them engaging with management and HR on key issues which were impacting the workforce, with a view to getting a resolution, such as the introduction or amendment to company policies. I know they were heavily involved in work looking at the redesign of grading and associated pay structures and worked alongside my HR colleagues on this. Their primary aim was to either ensure no detrimental impact or minimise any detriment to employees, and where possible to capitalise on the introduction of new initiatives to negotiate terms with management which helped enhance the employment offering. The blue-collar trade union representative I spoke with said the following about the role they play;

> "We try to do the best for the guys, and I think a lot of guys appreciate it, because I think this job, you're in the middle between the company and the workforce, and it can be a thankless job and a lot of guys appreciate that. . ." (Interview 29, Blue-collar Trade union)

This quote describes the almost mediating role that the trade unions played between the workforce and management; however, it also hints that this role is not always an easy one. Some of the workforce were not so supportive of the partnership working approach; I heard the view that some of the production workforce felt the trade unions were 'too much in the pockets of management'. This suggests that the partnership approach appeared too congenial for some individuals, which could be down to the lack of visible discord. Upchurch et al. (2012) similarly argued that unions should seek to be more radicalised and active, and unrestrained by institutional practice and more conservative views of members and union leadership. They felt that unions may need to enter a period of de-bureaucratisation, to enable more radical approaches, shifting attitudes and re-building the confidence of members. In my case study, the extent to which trade unions challenged the organisation was not visible to employees, and they perceived a lack of action on their behalf. Pay deals were visible, but much of the substance of the discussion took place behind closed doors. I know that the trade unions often supported management to help introduce certain initiatives, and they were willing to challenge their own members on certain issues,

particularly where they felt behaviours of individual employees were not acceptable. Ackers and Payne (1998) emphasised the potential gains for unions as a partnership stakeholder in organisations, proposing that this is a route for unions to regain their 'institutional centrality'. However, it could appear to the workforce that the trade unions, by being more collaborative, had almost become a tool in themselves that management and HR could use to help deal with employee dissatisfaction. Or that, as Offe and Weisenthal (1979) argued, the interests of the trade unions were now identical to those of the organisation, rather than reflecting the interests of their members. Based on my research and my own experiences, the relationship was pluralistic in nature, predominantly rooted in the idea of mutual compromise as per Heery; in Johnstone and Ackers (2015) and recognising the common interests in ensuring the survival and success of the organisation (Kochan and Osterman, 1994).

Applying a core LPT perspective (Thompson 1990), the key consideration is who benefits most from increased partnership working. Taking a more critical view, such partnership working essentially ignores the fundamental power imbalance between labour and capital, with the trade unions simply accepting the overriding power of capital and instead working to ensure the least number of employee concessions possible. However, it was in my case study organisation's best interests to avoid any type of industrial action, given the level of disruption it could cause and the potential financial impact to the business, as well as the reputational damage within the media and the level of UK political interest in the organisation. As such, the trade unions in my case study did have a greater degree of leverage than perhaps the critical perspective would suggest, as it was possible for the trade unions to make a significant and noticeable impact should they need to deploy some of the more damaging weapons in their arsenal, albeit the structural inequities of the labour and capital relationship could not be wholly dismissed. In terms of the benefits to the trade unions of adopting a partnership approach rather than being overtly adversarial, it was a delicate balance; the trade unions knew how and when to push back on the organisation, and indeed when to press their own agenda (which could be either a local or national level agenda) in order to maximise the positive impact for employees. They knew that they were more likely to succeed in gaining organisational concessions if they didn't approach all discussions with management with conflict in mind. This type of relationship is similar to Wright's (2000) depiction of class compromise in which both parties seek to improve their position through various forms of active, mutual collaboration.

Comparing such compromise today to the militancy seen during the events of the UCS work in, it might at first appear like a tamed version of Clyde unionism, particularly if we consider how those events have taken on wider political notoriety. The workforce at the time were seen as 'defeating' the Heath government and gaining the capacity for class struggle (Foster and Woolfson, 2019), refusing to back down despite repeated calls for trade union officials to work with management to ensure that the maximum number of jobs on the Clyde could be preserved (Foster, 2016). As such, it is seen by many as symbolic of the power the collective workforce (Foster and Woolfson, 2019). As Hyman (2007) noted; if workers accept that threats of workplace closure are the inevitable outcome of uncontrollable economic forces, collective resistance is futile. In the case of UCS, workers did not accept the threats of closure as inevitable outcomes and instead chose to resist, and this collective resistance did lead to a positive outcome for labour to the detriment of capital; namely those leading the call for full privatisation of shipbuilding on the Clyde (Foster, 2016).

However, I would argue that there are some similarities between the trade unions today and those who led the UCS action. The USC trade union shop stewards were very clear on pushing their 'right to work' narrative; for them this was about preservation of jobs and the continuation of all the yards, with no detriment to any of the workforce. Similarly, trade unions today are primarily concerned with survival of the yards, which is heightened by the sense that they are fighting for the survival of shipbuilding overall in the UK, albeit within a somewhat diminished context; with a far smaller workforce, fewer 'yards' and a reduced level of political power and influence. So whilst the edge may have been taken off them, which is likely as a result of the legislation introduced to curb trade union power in the intervening years, and in the face of an ever changing workforce, the trade unions still have a voice and a role to play in ensuring the continuation of the shipbuilding legacy in the UK.

The UCS action was deliberately positioned in response to the proposed implementation of the government's Industrial Relations Act and its attempt to secure the compliance of the Trade Union Council leadership (Foster, 2016), and was set against a backdrop of broader workplace occupations and industrial action across the UK between 1971 and 1975 (Foster and Woolfson, 2019). My research was conducted prior to the introduction of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 (UK Parliament, 2023). It would be interesting to observe the trade union discussions in my case study organisation in 2023, set against a

backdrop of economic pressure, civil unrest, wider industrial action, and a Conservative government introducing further legislation to curb collective worker power.

I formally interviewed two HR professionals in the organisation during my data collection, but I also had extensive experience of working with and alongside them during my period of employment. My interviewees were generally positive when discussing the role of the trade unions, they expressed positive views about the trade union representatives being more amenable to working in partnership with HR and management than they had been in the past, and being less reactionary than some of their trade union colleagues within other parts of the UK (within other businesses within the plc structure). The below was taken from one of these interviews:

> "I think as a business we are in a good place with our employee relations, when it comes to having meaningful conversations for a really good beneficial outcome for both parties. I just think we need to do a little bit more work lower down, for them [the workforce] to truly understand that's what it is and it's not the TU just bending over and accepting what the business say. They're actually fighting back, on their behalf, to get the best possible outcome for everybody." (Interview 32, HR)

This returns to the earlier discussion on trade unions and partnership working within my case study organisation, with this individual saying that the employee relations climate was generally good as a result of the engagement from the trade unions. This interviewee did also acknowledge that this sometimes is not seen as a positive thing by some of the workforce; as she says 'lower down' the organisation; with the perception that the trade unions are not challenging the business or management on their behalf. This illustrates the struggle that the trade unions have today; when they become too challenging, they are seen as obstructive by management and HR, and the relationship deteriorates, which can often result in more of a battlefield stalemate type of relationship and away from more cooperative and collaborative approaches as per Wright's (2000) work on class compromise. At the same time, when the unions are too collaborative, they can be seen by their members as not sufficiently representing the interests of their members and run the risk of the workforce becoming more divided and less organised, which in turn undermines the level of associational power the trade unions have worked to achieve and maintain. In my experience, the trade union representatives did have to act as a mitigating force between employees and management. Similarly, HR professionals took on a mitigating role on behalf

of the organisation and management; and as such often HR and trade union representatives found themselves in equally difficult situations, trying to find suitable compromises which were either mutually beneficial or the least destructive options.

One white collar employee offered the following view on the bargaining power of the trade unions:

> "I think the trade [blue collar] TUs are fantastic. They represent their trades well and I really do think that they have everyone- well, their people's- best interests at heart. . . I think the office [white collar group] isn't represented well enough. . . I've never had a briefing from them. I've never been told anything. I never been told how to join the office trade union. So I know it exists and I know when they have discussions they [the white collar TU reps] are there. But I never hear the output from it unless I hear it from [name removed], cause she's a girl on my team who was on the shop floor and is very close with the blue collar TUs. So I hear everything from her. . . which I don't think is right. I think you should always feed back to the body you're representing." (Interview 28, White-collar)

These quotes further highlight the blue and white collar divide and suggest that those in white collar roles felt a degree of distance from the trade unions. It also suggests that the blue collar trade union representatives were more positively viewed by employees, with the white collar population viewing them as 'better' or more active than their own representatives. Historically, the blue-collar unions were more militant; as evidenced by the events of UCS in which the production shop stewards led the workforce through the period of industrial action. This could then be more evidence that the ghosts of these events were still haunting employee relations; setting a precedent for militancy and action which the modern-day white-collar reps could not live up to.

7.4.1 Attitudes towards the Trade Unions

Building on the discussion within the generational division section above, one of the most striking features of my data were the perceptions of many younger employees I spoke with regarding the role of the trade unions. My data suggested that younger employees identified

more strongly with the notion of an 'individualised' relationship with the company, as illustrated in the quote below, regarding the role of the trade unions:

"I just don't see them, in today's day and age, being of any benefit. I think we've got enough laws and legislation that protect the workforce, which is my understanding of what trade unions were initially for. I think now they do silly things that slow up and elongate things that could be resolved in almost an afternoon with the right people in a room. . . my personal opinion is, I don't think there's any benefit of them, at least to the office staff." (Interview 13, white collar)

This quote is particularly striking in highlighting the relative indifference of some employees to the contribution of the trade unions; particularly those younger employees who worked in office-based roles. This view focuses on the negatives of trade union involvement in organisational decision making and collective bargaining and does not recognise the value the trade unions bring to those discussions in terms of employee voice. It also puts too much faith in legislation with no acknowledgement that legislation can change, and may change in favour of the employer rather than the employee. I found the following entry in my reflective diary regarding some of the views of younger employees;

"The view expressed by younger employees in the organisation (both those I interviewed, but also my friends and contacts) is that many of them would prefer to have a more individual relationship with the company, particularly when it comes to negotiating their salary. They would prefer to have a 'performance-based pay' approach applied to them, and not just the management population, as they believe this would be more beneficial. There is no real understanding of the role the trade unions play when it comes to discussions regarding terms and conditions."

This entry again suggests a naïve view of the value of collectivist approaches; specifically collectively bargained pay arrangements versus individualised pay. This view was on pay was also quite aggressively articulated to me by the same interviewee as previous:

"When I came here and found out that the trade union negotiates my yearly pay rise, I was both f***ing shocked and fuming. And I think that's, I think it's probably one of the drivers of why no one takes that seriously here, at least the professional grades, because you can be the worst person here, and provided you're not getting fired, you're still getting your trade-union-agreed two point whatever it is [percentage].

> Whereas I'd much rather get told I'm at 0% and have those difficult conversations and a plan to improve. I'd much rather work your arse off and get suitably rewarded for it." (Interview 13, White-collar)

This quote illustrates an actively negative attitude towards trade unions; the language used is particularly inflammatory, suggesting a strong dislike for the current collective pay approach and a preference for individualised, performance related pay arrangements instead. It is indicative of a highly individualised view, and potentially rooted in the individual's perception of themselves as high performing, and therefore likely to secure a greater pay increase than that awarded collectively. Whilst the quote above mentions that the individual would be fine with a pay award of zero, coupled with a performance management plan, it is hard to know whether in reality this would be the case. It is possible the individual cannot foresee a situation in which they would not 'perform' and therefore be awarded a pay increase of zero. It also suggests that they do not anticipate a situation in which they might need or want help, advice or representation from the trade unions on an individual level.

In terms of performance management practices and performance related pay (PRP), much of the HRM literature discusses the positive impact that it can have on individual performance in the workplace (Atkinson et al., 2009; Risher et al., 2007). And the associated improvement to the performance of the business as a whole through the monitoring and improving of individual contribution, in alignment with the overall organisational strategy (Armstrong and Baron, 2004; Gomez-Mejia, 1989; McAfee and Champagne, 1993; Prowse and Prowse, 2009).

Several of my interview conversations with younger 'white collar' employees; as illustrated by the previous quotes; suggest they believe PRP schemes will work and offer them a greater return than collectively bargained pay arrangements. This individualistic view of the employment relationship is perhaps naïve, suggesting that an individual can more effectively negotiate their renumeration directly than they can through collective bargaining, or that high performance and individual contribution will be appropriately rewarded through a PRP approach. This is obviously the antithesis of the LPT view of the relationship between labour and capital regarding distribution of resources. The view that PRP directly correlates with greater employee productivity is argued by some scholars to be simplistic, with studies pointing to a multitude of additional factors, such as the types of work employees are

engaged in, individual motivation, and even the prevalence of collective bargaining as having a greater impact on performance, incentivisation and earning outcomes for employees (Booth and Deci et al., 1999; Frank, 1999; Hajnal and Staronova, 2021). PRP also assumes that individuals are primarily motivated by extrinsic rewards; a view which has been challenged extensively (Perry and Wise, 1990; Deci et al., 1999; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Hajnal and Staronova, 2021). Perry et al. (2009) found that performance related pay (PRP) was more effective in producing positive outcomes when applied to lower levels positions within organisations, despite the majority of PRP schemes being applicable to managerial roles. PRP motivates people in a way which promotes short term goals and may encourage employees to behave in a calculated manner designed to make them appear most favourable in the eyes of the appraiser (Roch et al, 2007). When linking performance and reward, organisations often employ forced distribution systems, which allow only for a certain number of employees to be compensated for high performance, due to budgeting constraints (ibid.). Chattopadhayay and Ghosh (2012) found that such forced distribution leads to job dissatisfaction among high potential employees. Similarly, the perceived procedural fairness of appraisals and appraisal criteria impacts how employees feel about appraisals and PRP; there employees perceive the process to be unfair in its construct, they will be dissatisfied and disengaged (Gupta and Kumar, 2013). Such negative employee perceptions subsequently undermine the credibility of performance appraisal and pay systems (Jawahar, 2007).

Younger white-collar employees in my case study organisation expressed the view that collective pay increases were unfair, as their individual contribution was not being recognised and they had no ability to influence their pay awards. They did not recognise any of the potential issues associated with PRP as identified above. In my experience working within HR, negotiated pay increases for the collectively bargained population were consistently higher than the budget allocated for those on individual pay arrangements (management roles), and the extent to which individual performance factors really impacted the pay awards for the majority of employees covered under PRP was minimal, with pay awards primarily driven by pre-agreed financial budgets. The trade unions therefore consistently secured better annual increases for their members than the company awarded to those who were not collectively bargained. The view expressed to me by younger white-collar employees that somehow 'I'll be different, I'll get what I deserve' goes to the heart of an individualistic view of the employment relationship. This contradicts findings in the literature on generational attitudes towards trade unions; Oliver (2006) established no

consistent pattern to demonstrate more individualistic tendencies in younger workers. It also illustrates a lack of understanding of the benefits of a collective approach and a degree of ignorance regarding the value of trade unions. This corresponds with Smith and Duxbury (2019), who found that younger generations of employees acknowledged their lack of understanding and appreciation of the role of unions. They also suggested that the interest of younger employees in unions is primarily based on what the unions can do for them; my data showed that attitudes within the younger white collar population in my case study organisation were similar to this, with younger employees expressing views about the transactional elements of employment (such as pay) which the unions were involved in, with no recognition of the ideological elements associated with unionism such as economic democracy. This echoes the generational perspectives on unions explored by Allvin and Sverke (2000). In contrast to these attitudes, younger shop floor employees seemed to almost take the trade unions for granted; for them trade unions were an accepted norm with a role to play in the employment relationship. Informally, I had shop floor employees tell me that they joined the trade union because 'that's just what you do' and that it was what they were told to do by their parents. This supports the findings of Bryson and Davies (2019) in relation to intergenerational transmission of union membership; where parental attitudes towards trade union membership directly influenced those of their children, with a positive correlation between parental membership and the likelihood of their children also joining trade unions.

My research indicated that the blue-collar population and those in office based (white-collar) roles who had previously spent time on the shop floor had a better understanding of the role the trade unions played in representing employee interests in the organisation than those who had only ever undertaken white collar roles. This may have been partly due to proximity, with the shop floor convenors being based in offices near to the production areas and also having full time official roles. In contrast, the 'white collar' trade union representatives were not full time, they undertook their duties in addition to their day jobs in the organisation. This is a further facet of division, highlighting the enduring discrepancies between norms and practices for different 'groups' in the organisation and provides additional evidence of the blue collar and white-collar divide. As explored above in relation to inter-generational transmission of union membership (Bryson and Davies, 2019), it is possible that the attitudes of those in blue collar roles towards unions had been 'passed down', not only by parental influence, but also by those previous generations of the workforce. This could be an enduring element of organisational memory, in keeping with the definitions which

emphasise the social nature of memory (Booth et al., 2005; Corbett, 2000; Johnson and Paper, 1998; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Zakaria and Mamman, 2015). In this case, the blue-collar workforce have retained a shared understanding and appreciation of the unions for the role they have served them in the past, and continue to pass this on (directly and indirectly); thereby emphasising their value for different generations of worker.

Cates (2014) determined that very little generational based research had been done to understand why generational differences in union membership exist. The concept of generational attitudes and divisions emerged from my data as one of the components of division which was impacting on trust relations in the organisation, and generational attitudes towards trade unions emerged as an interesting component impacting employee relations. My data supports the assertion that further research is required to analyse the complexity of generational attitudes towards unions, as it is not as simple as just saying younger employees are more individualised. My research suggests other factors impact on perceptions of unions, including the type of job someone does, their proximity to the unions in the day to day, and inherited attitudes; both from parental influences and from those within the organisation (organisational memory).

7.4.2 Implications for Trade Unions

The implications for trade unions I have concluded from my analysis echo many of the existing perspectives in the literature on union renewal. Firstly, my data indicates some issues regarding the extent to which the unions appeal to a more diverse and increasingly individualised workforce. I saw potentially conflicting attitudes of different generations of employees towards unions. However, my data indicated that it is not as straightforward as saying younger employees don't engage with unions, as there are other elements such as identity, personal motivations, role, and a push on management practices which are centred around individualising the employment relationship, which are all impacting perspectives of younger employees. It would seem then that greater barriers to union membership and a focus on individualisation have reduced their scope of influence. However, my data also indicated that a high level of union influence and membership was retained within manufacturing (blue-collar) populations. The ability of unions to appeal to people beyond

such traditional union strongholds is a significant factor for retaining power and influence in the long term.

My research also indicated that younger white-collar employees were interested in the functional benefits of unions, which concurs with the findings of Allvin and Sverke (2000), but did not get visibility of what the unions were doing for them. The obvious implication then is what learning the unions they take from this in terms of appealing to these individuals; can they more vocal about their role, communicate in more direct ways and do not assume everyone understands their role or what they are doing on behalf of employees. Carneiro and Costa (2022) similarly found that digital technologies and social media present a significant opportunity for trade union renewal as platforms for communication, outreach and advocacy. Hunter and Connolly (2023) noted that unions (at national UK level) were able to achieve greater levels of engagement and participation through use of online communication mechanisms which they introduced during the Covid 19 pandemic. I therefore argue that unions need to take the learning from the changes in communication strategies at national level and apply these at organisational level to address the issues my research has highlighted in connecting with younger and more diverse employee groups.

Furthermore, my research indicated an implication for trade union succession planning, including the diversity of representatives both now and in the future. In my case study organisation there was one female trade union representative, and the rest were all white males in the fifty plus age group. Whilst this was reflective of the main bulk of the workforce at the time of my research, when considering the views of some of my interviewees, it would be wise for unions to consider how they can broaden their appeal for younger employees and for a more diverse workforce. Healy and Kirkton (2000), Healy et al., (2004b) and Kirton and Healy (1999) emphasise the significance of women and ethnic minorities for trade union renewal, and that workforce differentiation can lead to new forms of collectivism (Healy et al., 2004a). My research provides additional evidence in support of this argument, by highlighting that a lack of diversity in trade union representatives is impacting on their ability to appeal to individuals who do not sit within the traditional trade union stronghold populations.

My study also supports the assertion in the literature that further empirical research into generational attitudes towards trade unions is required (Cates, 2014; Oliver, 2006; Smith and Duxbury, 2019). It would be particularly interesting to explore in relation to the current economic climate in 2023 to help understand whether economic pressures and media coverage are impacting on membership and generational attitudes towards unions. For example, is there a resurgence in interest in unions amongst younger employees as the more transactional benefits of unions and collective bargaining come to the fore; particularly with very public discussions on pay and industrial action? Additionally, how can unions take advantage of this opportunity to market themselves to younger employees? There are many avenues for additional exploration to add to the literature on trade union renewal.

7.4.3 Employee Relations: A Story

The final element I wanted to cover in this section of this chapter comes full circle back to some of the themes covered in my previous chapter. The following excerpt is from one of my trade union interviews and is an example of storytelling in action. Adorisio (2014) suggested that a focus on narrative was significant for understanding organisational memory. The below story is extremely effective in conveying a sense of the employee relations climate within the organisation and shows how information was passed on (and therefore retained within organisational memory) by organisational members. I also wanted to integrate an example of storytelling within my analysis to help my reader to better appreciate the reality of my case study organisation; as narratives create cognitive and emotional empathy which help people to understand the experiences and world views of others (Lämsä and Sintonen, 2006).

> "There's certain toilets. . . I wouldn't, pardon my French here, I wouldn't bend my backside to them, because it's just, you're like, "No, no. It's just not for me." You usually find that it's reasonably well looked after, people don't write on the wall, because at the end of the day, it's kind of childish to be perfectly honest with you. . . But the thing is, when somebody writes something and you're like that, "I need to reply to that." And it just snowballs, because one reply leads to another reply, and another reply, and another reply and another reply. Some of it can be funny. I don't know if you recall a number of years ago. . . (there was a drawing) it's got the guy in overalls and banners up and all that carry on. And by the way, the detail, there was

creases in the overalls and all that carry on, this was done on a toilet door. Now, it must have took a while to do this. [Manager X] took a photo and he ended up getting it framed in his office. People laughed at it. . . and the guy was a welder, and we found out who it was and [TU rep X] says to him, he says, "Look, they know it's you but they can't prove it. Keep your nose clean." See a fortnight later, he came in with a drink on him and the company got him, and he got paid off within a fortnight. But as I say, the guy was wasted as a welder. What a drawer he was, he was superb. . . It was an absolute masterpiece. Things like that, you can look at the funny side, but like I say, when it gets to the nitty gritty and people start getting personal, that's when ... I mean, I've been called all the bad names under the sun on the toilet walls. What do they say? You've not made it unless you've made the toilet walls. That's true, by the way, that's a true saying, aye. You've not made it until you've made the toilet walls." (Interview 29, Trade Union rep)

This is a lengthy quote, but it encapsulates a number of significant components of employee relations. The first part of the quote describes the way in which power within spaces could be contested, even between peers; with dialogue exchanged 'publicly' through sharing on bathroom walls. It then goes on to detail a specific act of employee resistance in which one individual chose to draw a detailed portrait of a manager on a bathroom wall. This demonstrates the way in which an individual seeks to challenge managerial authority through spatiality, this draws on the work of Thompson and Smith (2009), who argued that spacial dynamics are a key consideration for furthering the modern LPT debate. The event description above challenges some of the academic perspectives on spaces, in which spaces can be considered a one-way managerial construct imposed on workers (Halford, 2004), and provides evidence for the view that despite the power imbalance, workers are still active spatial agents (Heiland, 2021). Consequently, the events described in this story provide evidence that, just as they just as workers are not without agency within the labour process, so too do can they resist the constructions of space and spatial practices of capital, as Heiland (2021) suggested.

The power struggle which then ensued with management is also outlined; with my interviewee stating that management were aware of who was responsible for the drawing but were not able to take formal company action against that individual as they did not have definitive proof. Instead, they waited for the first opportunity to take retribution, which occurred some weeks later when the individual was found to have committed a gross

misconduct (found under the influence of alcohol in the workplace), which then resulted in them losing their job. This is particularly interesting, as I know from experience that such a process could only be enacted if the individual was tested for the presence of alcohol, and that would only happen if there was a 'for cause' testing process initiated. It suggests that management were scrutinising this individual and waiting for an opportunity to 'catch him out' in terms of his conduct or behaviour. It also suggests that management wanted to make an example of this individual; ensuring some type of punishment was visibly enacted to reinforce managerial control, following what was arguably a deliberate, and very public, act of employee resistance. All of this is indicative of a core LPT view of managerial control in the labour process; in which management are focused on control, surveillance and discipline (Thompson, 1990), highlighting the somewhat unsophisticated nature of management action in this instance. In other words, when faced with a direct threat from an employee, management reverted to traditional disciplinary action in order to reassert their authority over the workforce.

The quote describes the role of the trade unions as a mediator and protectors of their members, with the trade unions aware that the individual in question was responsible but trying to protect him from management. It returns to the idea of spatiality as explored earlier; positioning particular areas within the yards (in this case the toilets) as 'owned' spaces and potential sites for subversive employee resistance. A number of the stories or contextual information I have included throughout this thesis seem to show toilets in this way; from the fish in the toilets within the management building, to the discarded soiled underwear, and this tale about graffiti on the walls. Such evidence suggests that toilets are politically significant or contested spaces in which underlying tensions between management and employees come to the surface. This was also illustrated in the earlier discussion on management 'owned' spaces (such as the car park). Consequently, it would appear that spaces are often the focus of employee resentment or dissatisfaction in the organisation. If we take the LPT view, this could be attributable to the inherent tension in the labour and capital relationship; a manifestation of employee rage and resistance and a demand for dignity and recognition (Lloyd, 2017). It provides evidence of the permeation of the labour process by acts of resistance, with spaces representing 'contested terrain' (Friedman, 1977; Burawoy, 1979; Edwards, 1979; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999); with spaces provide a tangible outlet through which employees can express themselves and demonstrate their agency. Heiland (2021) argued that within the LPT debate, micro- political and resistant practices in relation to space have been neglected. Instead, the focus has primarily been on

analysing the control regime, without considering the 'organisational misbehaviour' which occurs as a result of such practices (Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999). My study shows that the misbehaviour which occurs can be particularly ugly, but also extremely significant for understanding the dynamics in the labour process.

The above description shows how storytelling in different forms is used to pass on shipyard 'legends', as illustrated by the phrase; "You've not made it unless you've made the toilet wall". And how specific acts and events, such as the incident described, can make it into 'legend' to be passed on. My interviewee positioned this as something of a cautionary tale; an example of how stories can be used as teaching methods (Spagnoli, 1995); highlighting the consequences of coming into conflict with management. There was also some pride evident in the way the incident was described to me, and how such individuals and events help characterise the shipyard workforce, particularly those in the production environment. In my experience, there was definitely a sense of pride in those who engaged in such acts of resistance, as long as there was an underlying humorous element to any action, and that such humour was what made those acts acceptable. Humour was arguably used to 'excuse' such behaviour, as individuals could say they did something to amuse their colleagues 'for a laugh', rather than as mechanisms to challenge management control.

Outright sabotage of work was not tolerated by employees, as they felt this put their reputation at stake, which was unacceptable for them given the level of pride associated with work. Pride is another element which links back to history, and the idea that the workforce had a reputation to uphold as they felt responsible for continuing the 'Clydebuilt' legacy. It is worth considering the extent to which the preservation of this legacy, and the narratives around this, acted as mechanisms of labour control; ensuring employees were not engaging in acts of resistance which were damaging for the business. However, to see this in such terms dismisses the notion that organisational memory was also contested; whereby employees sought control over narratives in order to influence what was remembered (and forgotten) and retain their own agency in the process. Storytelling, organisational memory and labour relations all become intertwined; highlighting the significance of research into the ownership of stories and other organisational memory artifacts for exploring some of the more subtle mechanisms of control in the LPT debate.

7.5 Management Practices

Continuing the discussion on LPT, the final emergent theme was the key impacting events or the events of the 'recent organisational past', as I have framed them in my earlier chapter (Chapter 5). These events were mentioned many times by my interviewees as shaping their experiences and perceptions of the organisation, with specific events being spoken about to a greater or lesser extent depending on the individual and their role. These were examples of management interventions in practice and deemed critical to understanding employee relations given their prevalence within my data. HR professionals acted as either the 'face' of these initiatives; deploying them on behalf of management and the organisation or working closely and visibly alongside management in order to deliver them. In this section I will revisit and critically analyse these events as examples of sophisticated management practices. I also felt it was significant for me to consider my own role as an HR practitioner in the organisation at the end of this section, recognising the importance of reflexivity.

7.5.1 Schedule Based Working

One of the most noteworthy events at the time of my research was the schedule based working initiative (SBW), described in my earlier Organisational Context chapter. This initiative was mentioned by multiple interviewees as having had a significant impact on the case study organisation and on their experiences. The design of that initiative stemmed from LEAN process improvement and total quality management (TQM) approaches to management. Whilst I was working in the organisation, I met a consultant who had direct experience of working in the manufacturing industry in Japan where these approaches were pioneered (in Toyota), and who had seen them in practice first hand. He had been brought into the organisation to advise and share insight on what was seen as best practice approaches, and to help with the roll out of SBW. There is a close correlation between lean management techniques and strategic HRM practices, as the rise of lean influenced the development of more sophisticated management practices in the West (Boxall, 2012). The organisation made an attempt to adopt these Lean management practices; and as such we can see this as an attempt at introducing a new sophisticated management practice within the production environment. Unfortunately, as described previously, this initiative was ultimately unsuccessful.

Production employees felt that the scheme failed because it highlighted issues further back in the manufacturing process which they were not able to fix, such as design and supply chain problems; when previously it would have been their responsibility to find solutions to those issues and ensure the manufacturing process was kept on schedule. They believed that the business liked to be able to put the blame on the production workforce for schedule slippages, but that SBW was highlighting problems that were being passed on from the 'offices', which were then visible because they were not undertaking overtime to fix these problems. They believed that this was why management wanted to revert to old ways of doing things. My interviews indicated that employees were disappointed with these events. The initiative got a lot of attention, both inside and outside the organisation, and was held up as a gold standard in implementing a form of flexible working for manufacturing roles which were traditionally very rigid. It was therefore viewed negatively when management appeared to 'back pedal', removing the initiative as it did not work out as anticipated.

It is an interesting initiative to consider within the context of the LPT debate; it was an initiative that afforded employees some degree of discretion and autonomy, within traditionally tightly controlled work roles. Employees did not resist the scheme, in fact, they actively participated and tried to make it work; and in this way it could be seen as a successful the deployment of deliberate business policy which aimed to achieve greater labour flexibility (Burgess, 1997; Burgess and Campbell, 1997). It could be inferred that the initiative failed because it became too big for management to control and was a move away from those traditional management approaches which aim to monitor and control effort, with status symbols attached to positions in the managerial hierarchy (Walton, 1985). Perhaps then SBW gave employees too much agency which made management uncomfortable as it challenged traditional assumptions about managerial control. Taking a critical perspective to further analyse events; whilst dressed up as a form of employee participation and empowerment, they could be considered a form of job intensification (Allan, 1998; Allan et al., 1999), with the aim of getting employees to go beyond the scope of their manufacturing roles to problem solve and self-manage their time and output. It could also be argued that this initiative was particularly insidious as it was an exercise in developing trust and commitment from employees. It played on the idea of employee autonomy by allowing the production workforce to 'take control' of their own work week; only to ultimately

demonstrate the overriding power of the organisation through the eventual removal of the scheme and the reassertion of the managerial prerogative.

The trade unions were able to leverage the circumstances to negotiate better terms and conditions for their members, which helped demonstrate their value as a mitigating force. The production workforce was generally satisfied that the trade unions had been able to negotiate better terms for them and felt that this was a good enough concession from the organisation at the end of the scheme. White collar workers on the other hand felt resentful as they felt the production workforce was 'being rewarded for failure' and felt this was unfair, although some of my interviewees conceded that the trade unions had done a good job of using the situation to their advantage. Consequently, SBW was a further divisive element in the relationship between the blue- and white-collar populations; this could be interpreted as a way of keeping the workforce disorganised and segmented, and therefore reducing the potential collective power of the whole workforce, however this was an unintended consequence of events, rather than a deliberate attempt by management to antagonise the relationship between blue- and white-collar workers.

The events may be seen to demonstrate the enduring power inequity in the employment relationship, in that management decided to implement the scheme then later decided it was no longer viable. The impacted employees were in the control of the organisation and management decision makers in both incidences. A number of interviewees mentioned to me that they believed this had a negative impact on employee trust in management. After it was removed, SBW was no longer spoken about in the organisation; it became a bit of an embarrassment for management, and they did not want to keep discussing it; despite the potential learning which could be taken from events. It also exhibited from a leadership perspective the role that single individuals in leadership positions can play in determining outcomes which impact a large number of people. In this case, there was a façade of collaboration presented to the workforce, but when it came down to it and business performance was being impacted and scrutinised, the decision of a single person determined the destiny of the workforce.

7.5.2 Redundancy and Restructuring

Another one of the key impacting events mentioned in my interviews was the redundancy and restructuring programme launched by the organisation. I outlined the details of this in my earlier Organisational Context Chapter (Chapter 5). The below quote illustrates the perspectives expressed to me by employees in relation to that programme and how it was perceived:

> "Because, what happened was, at the end of [specific contract], they opened the doors for voluntary redundancy, and all the people with lots of experience said, 'That's very attractive. I'm off.' So, we had a vast amount of knowledge and experience left the company." (Interview 16, Blue-collar)

I worked on this programme, so I was party to many of the conversations between management and the trade unions at that time. One of the primary discussions, and concerns of the trade unions, was the 'make versus buy' resourcing strategy within the organisation. Senior management made a conscious decision to remove permanent roles within a number of skilled trade areas and outsource these to third party contractors. This meant redundancies within a number of trade groups. As touched on in my earlier discussions, this decision was seen as a negative by individuals across the organisation, with a number of my interviewees citing these events as a loss of skills and experience in the organisation, as illustrated by the above quote, which they claimed was having a negative impact on the ability to produce work to an acceptable standard. This event was a deliberate decision to restructure and redefine employment by the organisation. It could be seen as a deliberate move towards casualisation of labour, as described by Allan et al. (1999), Burgess (1997) and Burgess and Campbell (1997). Throughout this programme, the trade unions were very vocal regarding their dissatisfaction at the loss of jobs and pushed the organisation for some concessions (as described previously), but they had to acquiesce to the decision on outsourcing and the associated headcount reduction which had already been taken by the organisation. Comparing this to the events of UCS, the threat of closure of one yard and loss of jobs was sufficient to spark a politically significant and extremely effective incidence of collective action, led by the union shop stewards. The trade union concession within the contemporary organisation is arguably evidence of their waning power and highlights the presence of a far less militant workforce today. Although the trade union representatives did challenge management and voice their dissatisfaction at the decisions taken, they also proceeded to work in partnership with management to preserve the greatest number of jobs possible,

through various mitigation activities. In this way then, they were susceptible to management pressures in the way that the UCS stewards refused to be. This shows that the balance of power in the employment relationship today sits with management, with the trade unions acting as a mitigating force which aims to lessen any negative impact for the workforce, rather than actively opposing management and forcing a different course of action. Cumbers and Atterton (2000) referred to this as the underlying structural weakness of labour which reveals itself in the willingness of trade unions to concede to management demands to stave off the threat of closure or work relocation.

7.5.3 Facilities Investment

Revisiting the earlier description of the facilities investment programme, the key element of this for employee relations was that the organisation made promises about the level of investment that would be made in the sites to create a modern workplace, but that these promises were not kept. One example of this is shown below:

> "I think the transformation of the facilities were similar. Some of the earlier proposals that were shared with us. . . sounded quite exciting, a frigate factory, all this good stuff. Those are the big bold moves that can inspire people. Ultimately, what happened was we're not doing any of that. Again, from the outside looking in, we're just going to flatten a few buildings, do a few offices up. That's incredibly uninspiring and. . . it's kind of like, 'Here's what you could have won' to that. I can imagine a lot of people from the point of view of morale would maybe have taken a hit as a result of that. I don't think that helps culture, behaviours, attitudes. I think it puts a bit of a negative slant on things." (Interview 21, White-collar)

This interviewee aptly summed up the general tenor of the discussions I had regarding the facilities investment activities which were promised as part of the company transformation programme. It highlights the disappointment that was felt by the workforce when the original plans were not delivered on. Interviewees described this to me as 'promises made' which were not then kept; which further eroded the trust relationship between employees and management. This suggests that one key facet of trust was impacted by these events; the expectation of favourable treatment by another party (Colquitt at al., 2007; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Ferrin et al., 2008; Lewicki et al. 1998; Mayer et al., 1995; Mollering,

2006; Tan et al., 2009).   It is then perhaps unsurprising that trust in management was low in the organisation.

The transformation and facilities improvement activities were sold to the workforce using a clever narrative which used legacy and the requirement to transform to ensure the future survival of the business. Considering this through a critical lens, it is possible to see this action as a deliberate attempt to emotionally appeal to individuals to ensure their support for the company plans, particularly the decommissioning of certain parts of the site. Bilsland and Cumbers (2018) wrote about such management interventions aimed at broadening employee participation as commitment led HRM approaches which seek to secure the consent of the workforce. By understanding that the workforce could only respond to these organisational transformation narratives in the context of the inherent power imbalance between labour and capital (Burawoy, 1979), it could be argued that organisational efforts at garnering employee commitment to transformation in this way were really only one-sided illusory attempts at class compromise as per Wright (2000). This is not an entirely applicable analysis for my research context, as the politics and broader public interest in the shipbuilding industry added an additional element of pressure for the organisation to consider, and therefore genuine attempts at some level of mutually beneficial co-operation with the workforce was required, as per Wright's (2000) alternative model of class compromise. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that any transformation activity deemed essential to the business would have been held at bay by lack of employee support; and as such, organisational transformation agendas could be seen as another iteration or branding of sophisticated management practices, designed to illicit feelings of involvement, co-operation and support, thereby ensuring workforce compliance and reducing the risk of employee resistance.

7.5.4 Implications for Management and HRM

At the time of my research, the above key impacting events as examples of management interventions primarily had a negative impact on the employee relations climate. They were seen by employees as a series of failures and broken promises which had a negative impact on employee trust. Returning once again to the discussion on organisational ghosts; by their prevalence in my data, and their impact on employees' day to day experiences within the

organisation, it could also be argued that these 'key impacting events' had created 'shades' of the organisation's recent past. These 'shades' coloured the employee experience and impacted employee perceptions of management and the organisation more broadly. This presents an opportunity to consider; how do such events move from shades which colour the present to full on spectres which haunt the organisation over time?

In terms of the role of HR professionals in the organisation; they were absolutely coming from the perspective of strategic HRM; they saw their role as supporting senior management in deploying whatever techniques were determined to be necessary for driving employee and organisational performance. I know that at one point during my time in the organisation, no individuals in the HR function were union members. There was no technical reason for this, as many were included in the 'collectively bargained population' and could have joined if they wanted to; but this shows the extent to which the HR function were in general removed from the trade unions. These individuals were somewhat naïve about the mitigating influence the trade unions had within the employment relationship and often considered them a blocker to organisational progress, when they did not immediately engage in collaborative partnership type behaviours. Some were particularly disparaging when the trade union representatives challenged the organisation and became 'difficult' in discussions, almost forgetting that the role of the trade union is to challenge. However, this seems to be rooted in the common belief that the organisation was working in everyone's best interests. It could be argued then that they were blind to the extent to which they had been co-opted into organisational narratives themselves and were undertaking activities in support of the managerial agenda.

In my experience more broadly within the HR profession, HR practitioners primarily come from an HRM view; their work aims to extract the greatest amount of value from employees for the benefit of the organisation. Many of these practices are sophisticated practices which aim to individualise the employment relationship, playing on individual motivation factors in order to release discretionary effort. If I reflect on my role within the case study organisation, although I was working in a plc level role for the majority of my time there, one of the key components of one of my jobs was understanding the individual psychological contract that employees have with the organisation and helping to leverage that in order to attract, retain and engage people. This is a classic example of using sophisticated HRM practices, designed to find new and innovative ways in which to extract value from people.

I was ignorant in terms of how I viewed this work until I began undertaking my research study and reading more about the critical perspectives in the literature, and considering the structural imbalances in the employment relationship, which my work was serving to enhance. I have to admit that I found it difficult at times to reconcile my role in upholding the managerial prerogative with my personal ethics, in light of my more informed position as a result of undertaking this study. This formed part of my decision to leave employment with the case study organisation, prior to completion of this thesis.

I have also found myself as a researcher torn between taking an HRM approach to my study, and taking a more critical perspective, particularly when considering examples of specific HRM practices and their impact on people. I have tried to reconcile my own struggle by providing both perspectives in this thesis, but perhaps with a leaning towards the more critical view at times; which is likely because I felt complicit in upholding structural inequities (and ultimately benefitting from them) and felt the need to provide a counterpoint to this through my study. Considering the view of critical perspectives as destructive, as articulated by Spicer et al. (2009), I recognise the potential issues with taking a critical approach to examining the HRM practices in my case study organisation. However, given that the point of a more critical perspective is to challenge how organisations (and broader society) operate and provoke meaningful questions; I argue that the value of being open critical perspectives for an HRM researcher comes in recognising that HR roles have evolved to primarily support and uphold existing structures, and therefore we should seek to have a discussion about the validity and ethics of that which is (or has historically been) taken for granted, and the implications for the HR profession. This is where the work on sustainable HRM (Aust et al., 2020) becomes significant; as they suggest that HRM practices and the HR profession need to evolve to ensure they address issues around the sustainability of work. They include tangible suggestions for ways in which HRM can have a positive influence on the restructuring of work and design of organisations in the future. My research suggests that strategic HRM practices are not necessarily the panacea that the appear to be in modern organisations, that they often cause more harm than good, particularly when they are not implemented successfully. SHRM primarily supports the managerial prerogative and aims to improve organisational performance (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2009) and encourages behaviours within the HR profession which aim to maximise economic benefit on behalf of organisations (Guerci et al., 2019), despite the harmful aspects of work intensification that can result (Ramsay et al., 2000). Strategic HR practices and systems therefore have the potential to harm employees whilst improving organisational performance (Ehnert, 2009).

As such, there is value in considering how alternative, and more ethical and sustainable approaches to working practices can be developed by HRM researchers (and professionals) who seek to forge a new path for the profession.

7.6 Employee Relations - Summary

> "Differentiation, division, and disunity have been omnipresent features of trade union development. Solidarity is never a natural or fixed quality, always a goal which is at best illusive and ephemeral. A mythical belief in some golden age of proletarian unity and unproblematic trade union solidarity distorts our perception of current labour movement dynamics" (Hyman, 1991: 6).

The above quote from Hyman on trade union development helps illustrate the complexity of the collectivism versus individualism debate and the wider employee relations climate in general. My historical context chapter describes the divisive nature of trade unionism; with un-skilled and semi-skilled workers initially excluded from representation. Additionally, the events of Red Clydeside highlighted worker dissatisfaction at the introduction of women and ethnic minorities into the workforce. It is therefore clear that the workforce on the Clyde has always been multi-faceted, complex and divided, and whilst there are stand out moments from history of 'solidarity'; most notably events such as the UCS 'work in', these are not defining features, rather they were moments in time which reflected broader political climate and social unrest. The first order concepts and second order themes emergent from my data suggest an interplay of trust relations, divisions and ongoing prevalence of collectivism and the role of the trade unions as all continuing to have a significant impact on the employee relations climate in my case study organisation. Sophisticated management practices utilised by the organisation evidenced some of the core LPT concepts, in particular the struggle between labour and capital, which were having a negative impact on employees at the time of my study.

Chapter 8: Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to revisit the research question and research objectives articulated at the beginning of this thesis and discuss my findings in light of the existing theoretical frameworks and current research.

8.1 Impact of Organisational Memory

My first research objective was to investigate the impact of organisational memory on the current employee relations climate. Firstly, I found evidence which strongly pointed to organisational memory as being a social construct within my case study organisation, rather than as stored knowledge contained within a collection of retention vessels, which can be recalled when required by the organisation, as suggested by Walsh and Ungson (1991). In this study I found memory to be continually constructed and reconstructed by people both inside and outside the organisation, through their interactions with each other and the institutional environment (Booth et al., 2005; Corbett, 2000; Johnson and Paper, 1998; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Zakaria and Mamman, 2015). As such, I argue, echoing Casey (1997), that collective memory is not the same as a physical asset which can be retrieved at any time in the same form, given the role of individuals in shaping the way past events are recalled and understood in the present (Morgeson and Hofmann, 1999).

I found that a number of components of organisational legacy in my case study organisation impacted on how memory was constructed and reconstructed. Firstly, there was a connection between individual identity and organisational identity. For Albert and Whetten (1985), organisational identity is comprised of the central, enduring and distinctive features of an organisation; which distinguish it from other organisations (Whetten, 2006). My case study organisation's identity was inextricably linked to the industrial history of the city of Glasgow and West of Scotland; this industrial heritage and the connection with shipbuilding played a significant role in the identity of the city for a long period of time and also how it redefined that identity in a post-industrial context during the 1980s and 1990s. Shipbuilding and all its associations with the industrial legacy of the city, were fundamental to my case study organisation; this was a central, enduring and distinctive element of its identity. Hatch and Schultz (2002) found that the value of organisational identity is in the creation of a

shared identification amongst organisational members; and that identity can be leveraged to provide direction, maintain solidarity, and instil a sense of belonging in people (Ravasi and Schultz, 2006). For Balmer (2008), individual identity was one key components for understanding identity in organisations; I found a strong link between individual identity, organisational identity and organisational legacy. Those employees who had strong personal connections with the industrial heritage in the West of Scotland; had a stronger sense of connection to the organisation. These people had more positive reactions to questions about history and legacy, and expressed the view that history had special meaning for the present. Strangleman (2012) considered the relationship with the past as one of the ways in which people carve out meaning and identity from work. Balmer et al. (2015) found significance in the interpretations by organisational members for comprehending the key identity components of an organisation and highlighting the significance of those elements with which individuals most strongly identify (Balmer et al., 2015). Consequently, I found legacy to be a key identity component of my case study organisation, as it was the element with which individuals most strongly identified. In terms of collective identity, my findings also concur with the work of Lamertz et al. (2016); who argued that many of the characteristics of shared identities in contemporary organisations are located in the vestiges of legacy populations. Therefore, they argued, current identity is not a wholly new creation and instead borrows significantly from institutional remnants. Similarly, my research suggested that the collective identity in my case study was highly influenced by the remnants of the past which were significant for understanding how organisational members understood the cultural meanings of the environment they were operating in. These remnants of the past endured through components of organisational memory; these were not considered to be knowledge assets, per se (Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Boje, 2008; Sun and Anderson, 2010; Zahra and George, 2002); recognising the importance of social memory and the way that people shape and interpret how events of the past are recalled (Casey, 1997; Morgeson and Hofmann, 1999).

The above analysis suggests that organisational memory allows history to retain a presence and influence in the organisational present, and that this influence can be highly emotive. My interviewees spoke about the decline of industry on the Clyde and the shipbuilding industry more broadly, and there seemed to be an acute sense of loss related to this, as well as a feeling of responsibility, as they considered themselves the current custodians of the organisation's history and legacy. This resonates with Strangleman's (1999) work on nostalgia in organisations; in the recollection of the organisational past created emotive

responses from railway workers. My study suggests that the organisational past can create emotional baggage for those in the present, and that employees can feel emotionally burdened. This may be considered evidence of the sense of loss and grief experienced by inheritors as posited by Derrida (1994), but within an organisational context; illustrating the potentially emotive nature of organisational memory and the feelings it can stir for organisational members.

From a management perspective, I experienced first-hand the ways in which the organisation attempted to utilise organisational memory as a tool to tap into employee motivation, using historical narratives (storytelling) to gain greater employee commitment to organisational initiatives. The literature suggests that the use of narratives in this way is a legitimate practice for enhancing employee engagement and loyalty, and as a way of maximising the value of human capital (Gill, 2011; McLellan, 2006). My study showed that the use of such historical narratives played a role in the employee experience and impacting the emotional connection for employees; with individuals feeling a sense of personal responsibility for the continuation of legacy (as explored above). Boje (1995) argued that most stories used by management are told without acknowledging the plurality and diversity of the workforce. I found that stories had a life of their own beyond the control of the organisation and management. Storytelling was used by employees to ensure the continuation of narratives about their experiences of past events (both the historic and recent past), thereby directly shaping organisational memory, in a way which was outside the control of management. As such, the use of stories was something that both management and employees were actively engaged in. My study showed that the use of narratives to acknowledge and build on connections with the past undoubtedly helped organisational members to navigate and collectively make sense of the organisation and where it had come from, as per Boje (2003), and to pass on knowledge from generation to generation (Gill, 2011).

Walsh and Ungson (1991) argued that abuse of memory and information is tempting for individuals struggling for control in organisations. Building on this idea of storytelling as a mechanism of organisational control (Boyce, 1996), I found that stories were being used by employees to share information about notable acts of employee resistance and provide warnings about management behaviour and consequences of employee misbehaviour in the organisation. Stories were also used to pass on information about shipyard 'legends'; with narratives created which memorialised individuals and events which were considered

significant to the workforce and by the workforce. These stories did not reflect corporate narratives, and as such I found that 'ownership' of stories and control of narratives was used as a source of organisational power by the workforce. They used stories to control what was remembered and forgotten; thereby shaping the collective memory in the organisation and helping to redress the inherent power imbalance in the employment relationship; as per Thompson (1990).

In terms of understanding the relationship between organisational memory and employee relations, I did not find any evidence to suggest that a history of industrial conflict has a direct impact on employee relations in the present day. My study revealed that trade union representatives did not want to dwell on the events of the past or utilise references to previous industrial conflict to influence the employee relations climate. Instead, I found their emphasis was on partnership working, and securing the future of the organisation to ensure the continued provision of jobs for their members. In this way, their actions echoed the events of the past; namely the events of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in as described by Foster (2016); showing that the overall aims of the trade unions have not fundamentally changed over time. I did find that the enduring power that the trade unions retained in the organisation was at least partially a result of organisational memory in relation to their historic power on the Clyde, which had been retained through the ongoing practices of collective bargaining and other consultation mechanisms; thereby retaining their agency and influence over management and the workforce. Whilst the trade unions did not speak about past industrial action, I found that they did use storytelling to pass on details about instances of employee resistance and conflict with management; thereby ensuring such acts were remembered shaping and the organisational memory as a result.

I found multiple additional factors which were playing a significant role in influencing the employee relations climate, some of which were intertwined with organisational memory. The theme of division was highly prominent; the workforce could be segmented into many different groups, depending on job, position in the hierarchical structure, age or generational cohort, personal background, individual identity, diversity characteristics and multiple other factors. This is all representative of the increased differentiation within the workforce today (Madsen, 1997); highlighting the complexity of employee relations today and the challenges for collectivism and trade unions (Healy et al., 2004a).

One very traditional divide which was evident from my data was the blue-collar and white-collar divide; with the workforce split into two distinct groups; those in production roles who worked directly in the manufacturing process (blue-collar), and those in supporting functions, who generally worked in office roles (white-collar). There were elements of organisational memory tied into this, as many aspects of my research evidenced the similarities between the experience of the workforce today and the depiction I shared of The Silent Men at Upper Clyde (1971) in my previous chapter; recalling an allegedly 'bygone era' of work. Spatiality played a significant role in perpetuating the blue- and white-collar divide, with the obvious difference in types of work requiring fundamentally different workspaces. The blue-collar workspaces remained dark, dirty, masculine spaces, open to the elements and filled with heavy machinery and other symbols of the industrial past. My findings agreed with Siebert (2023) who found that spaces played a role in helping historical practices to endure through their look, design and the rituals they support. There remained a further divide in terms of the work undertaken by each group; the blue-collar work was still dangerous and difficult in comparison to their office-based counterparts. My research showed that employees used gallows humour or black humour as a coping mechanism to help them deal with the reality of working in such conditions; this is a commonly acknowledged phenomenon within the literature (Christopher, 2015; Maxwell, 2003; Obrsli, 1942); but it is an interesting facet of employment within contemporary manufacturing roles and particularly telling about the everyday experience of this type of worker.

Similarly, my research also found evidence of a traditional divide between management and the workforce, which was felt and spoken about by employees in both white- and blue-collar roles. Siebert (2023) found that spatial restrictions and boundaries in organisations are often physical manifestations of enduring elitism, divisions and power struggles. I also found that spaces were a divisive element as senior management owned certain spaces, due to long standing practices and were reluctant to give these spaces up. Younger employees felt the visibility of such practices made management seem out of touch and prevented the organisation from evolving as they were evidence of 'outdated' practices, and they reinforced hierarchical structures. As such, spaces seemed to act as mnemonic devices, allowing the divisions of the past to live on in the present; Connerton (1989) and Zerubavel (1996) found that collective memories are anchored to mnemonic devices, which convey meanings and trigger physical responses which frame what is remembered and what is forgotten, both individually and collectively. In terms of employee ownership of spaces, I

found examples of behaviour that blue collar workers had used to claim ownership and challenge managerial control over some spaces; thereby actively using space to assert their agency, as per Heiland (2021). The workforce and trade unions then used storytelling to pass on information about these events, embedding them in organisational memory for future generations of employees.

A further facet of division I found was the divide across two sites on each side of the river; with individuals identifying with one site or the other, this links back to organisational identity; with the sites acting as identity referents (Whetten, 2006), and creating distinct identities for the two sites. There was also an element of individual identity linked to this, as individuals tended to identify with one specific site or the other and associated a shared sense of belonging with this site (Hatch and Schultz, 2002).

Returning to the concept of workforce differentiation (Madsen, 1997), my research highlighted an issue with generational division primarily in terms attitudes towards work and tensions which arose as a result of these differences in attitudes. The academic debate in relation to generational theory remains contentious, with many researchers suggesting that not enough empirical evidence has been gathered to test it sufficiently (Garner and McCaffrey, 2013), whilst other researchers have explored the concept of generational diversity and found evidence of tensions manifest in the workplace between individuals of different generational cohorts (Tay, 2011). I found the biggest gulf was between employees at the end of their career and younger employees at the beginning of their career. Younger employees were frustrated that the organisation seemed tethered to its past; which was 'kept alive' through multiple components, including spaces, working practices and hierarchical structures. This perspective could be seen to exhibit a degree of nostophobia, in which the past is seen as something to escape from (Gabriel, 1993; Strangleman, 1999). Meanwhile, employees at the end of their career were critical of management practices which they felt undermined the organisational legacy; in this way they exhibited nostalgic attitudes towards the past and lamented the erosion of past cultural norms and working practices, as per the work of Strangleman (1999; 2012). Similarly, Casey (1995) found that older generations of employees viewed the past more favourably than the present or future. Some scholars seeking to probe the generation debate further have found more common ground between the generations than differences (Deal, 2007; Garner and McCaffrey, 2013; Tay, 2011). I found some aspects of this; the commonality between these populations was a shared desire

to do things well and ensure the continued success of the organisation; but there were just differences in opinion on how this should happen, which is perhaps unsurprising given the different external factors which have influenced each generations' experiences and expectations around work (Lyons and Kuron, 2014). I therefore found evidence of different generational attitudes in how the organisational past was viewed, and on how work should be undertaken now and in the future, especially when considering organisational change; but I also found that different generations do not have fundamentally conflicting values in relation to work.

I did find some evidence of divisive attitudes towards trade unions from younger generations of employees; I found that younger office-based employees did not feel as connected to the trade unions as older employees; they were dismissive of their contribution to the organisation, and some expressed frustration about their continued significance for the employment relationship. This disdain was linked to individual identity and the extent to which these individuals saw themselves as being in control of their own progression with the organisation, as well as their level of ambition. This is evidence that the process of individualisation creates a false delineation between collectivism and individualism (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002); with younger white-collar employees more susceptible to management practices (such as PRP) designed to illicit individualised employment relationships. This finding contradicted the work of Waddington and Kerr (2002) who found no evidence that the generation of more individualistic, anti-union attitudes amongst younger workers. However, my research concurs with Oliver (2006) who concluded that there is no consistent pattern to demonstrate that young workers in the UK have become more individualistic and less interested in unions, rather, they have been inhibited from union membership by a combination of employer hostility and union absence. My study demonstrated that where exposure to trade unions remained high in the organisation; namely in the blue-collar space; younger workers retained a level of understanding and respect for their role. This suggests that trade unions need to evolve more quickly to appeal to new generations of knowledge workers; this is consistent with the work of Healy et al. (2004a) who argued that workforce differentiation can present opportunities for unions and lead new forms of collectivism (Healy et al., 2004a).

My study showed the importance of the trade unions in being a mitigating influence on management and HRM in the organisation, particularly where job security and terms and

conditions were concerned, and ensuring management were held to account when they wanted to implement cost cutting measures. Ultimately, I found that the trade unions were in most instances unable to prevent the organisation from putting plans into action, however they were able to exert influence to negotiate better outcomes for their members, and by default employees more broadly. Such efforts could be seen as one-sided submissions rather than reciprocal bargains representing true mutual concessions, and as such illusory attempts at class compromise (Wright, 2000). Alternatively, it could be seen as a form of mutual co-operation in which both the organisation and the unions were able to improve their position through various forms of active collaboration; thereby evidencing Wright's (2000) alternative model of class compromise. Either way, the significance of the trade unions to such discussions within my case study organisation showed the enduring significance of their influence, and their central role within the contemporary employee relations environment.

To summarise, I found that organisational memory was impacting on employee relations, in terms of organisational identity and individual identity; it influenced how connected they felt to the organisation. Storytelling was used as a mechanism by which organisational memory was kept alive, and as a mechanism of asserting control by both management and employees. Organisational memory also played a role in perpetuating divisions across the workforce; spatiality played a key role in this, serving to further enhance historical divides and working practices. I also found generational differences were impacting on employee relations, perpetuating further division. There was evidence that younger employees have been influenced by more individualised management practices, although this was not the case across all younger employee groups, as those who retained a proximity to the trade unions, remained supportive of collective approaches.

8.2 Impact of Historical Legacy

My next research objective was to examine the impact of historical legacy on employee relations and trust in the organisation. I utilised the framework as posited by Orr (2014) in his work on organisational ghosts to structure my analysis and as a framework to understand the ways in which legacy can impact an organisation. Whilst I found no evidence of explicit ghostly occurrences (outright hauntings) from my data, there was a definite recurrent pattern

in the data that events of the past, and the social significance of the shipbuilding industry, retained a heavy presence within the organisation and within the minds of organisational actors, beyond that which can be rationally explained. The growing body of literature on ghosts discusses the different forms that ghost can take; from embodied spectral beings through to disconcerting and somewhat inexplicable feelings, and the sense that something exists just out of sight (Hunter and Baxter, 2021), as well as the idea of the uncanny (Orr, 2023). The literature also encourages academics to consider the symbolic nature of ghosts and look beyond rational explanations to better appreciate the emotive, affective, and sensory experiences of the uncanny (Beyes and Steyaert, 2013).

I found evidence of the organisation's legacy haunting the present due to the emotive nature of individuals' relationships with the past, and the way history was spoken about seemed to have a life beyond the organisation itself. Even individuals who did not have positive feelings towards the past or did not have individual identity connections with the history of the yards recognised the presence they felt, and the way in which it was still resonating within the organisation today. Individuals had emotional reactions to discussing the organisational legacy and described a sense of mourning for the past. This could be explained through perspectives in the nostalgia literature; with individuals making reference to the 'golden era' of shipbuilding; as per the work of Gabriel (1993) and expressing sadness about the passage of time and organisational change; as per Strangleman (2012). However, the work of Derrida (1994) in which he discusses the sense of loss and grief felt by inheritors is perhaps more apt for encompassing the heaviness and troublesome nature of the feelings expressed by my research participants when discussing the sense of responsibility they felt as custodians of the organisation's legacy. Orr's (2014) work uses ghosts as lens to help explain the burdensome nature of certain events and aspects of organisational life, and the impact that these have on current organisational members. As such, it could be argued that the uneasiness felt by my research participants is evidence that the ghosts of the organisation's industrial past were haunting employees in the organisational present. This connects the concept of temporality and ghosts as per Simmons (2011) and Pors (2016); with ghosts acting as the mechanism by which the past continues to influence feelings and behaviours of people in the organisational present. Hauntings of the past were further evident in the spaces within the shipyards, and in the empty, disused spaces. These 'abandoned' spaces further added to the sense of sadness and loss felt by employees, as they emphasised the disparity between the bustling shipyards of the past and the emptiness of the spaces today. The uncanniness felt in these spaces (Orr, 2023) made the organisational death

and decay that they represented difficult to ignore. Further, those spaces which were still in use, particularly those in the manufacturing environment and those dedicated to senior management, continued to bear the hallmarks of the past. They therefore reconfigured time, transporting you back to a 'bygone' industrial era, as described by Pors (2016). As such, my research concurred with Orr (2014) that spatiality is key for understanding how ghosts 'haunt' an organisation; with ghosts congregating in those spaces particularly synonymous with the industrial past. These spaces anchor an organisation to its past, potentially negatively impacting on its ability to move forwards or transform. Organisations therefore need to carefully consider the role of spaces in perpetuating hauntings and how this might hold them back from moving forwards in a very tangible way.

My case study organisation is an entity which is inexorably connected with the institution of shipbuilding on the Clyde, and it is at times very difficult to separate the two in terms of conceptualising the experience that people have of the organisation. Therefore, legacy was owned by both internal and external stakeholders, and the significance of the inheritances of the past resonated within the organisation all the more profoundly as a result. In other words, not only were the current workforce responsible for the continuation of legacy and all the significance that had for those within the organisation, they were also responsible for the continuation of the broader legacy of shipbuilding within the context of the West of Scotland as a whole.

Legacy was therefore having both a positive and negative impact on employee relations. It created an emotional connection for some employees, strengthening existing links with individual identity elements, and creating positive associations in terms of their relationship with the organisation. For other employees, who did not have the same individual identity connection, it had less of an impact, and in some cases negatively impacted their view of the organisation, as it felt irrelevant to their experience. Storytelling allowed employees to take control of narratives, both of the historical and recent past, giving them agency over what information was shared, and what was allowed to 'live on' versus 'be forgotten' for future generations of employees. Legacy did however create a sense of sadness and loss, even melancholy, which permeated the employee relations climate; there seemed an inevitability of decline, which employees felt powerless to prevent, despite also feeling responsible as custodians of the organisational legacy.

I did not find that the organisation's historical legacy was having an impact on trust in the present. What was more important for trust were events in the recent past or 'key impacting events'. Lack of trust cascaded from management downwards, with my research suggesting the root cause was a lack of trust between the organisation and its primary UK customer. This had resulted in a culture of blame between teams, which was negatively impacting relationships and driving self-protection behaviours. This was, in turn, creating a vicious cycle which was perpetuating the lack of trust between different groups in the organisation; this was similar to the work of Vince and Saleem (2004) who contended that blame culture creates an environment in which emotion can transform rationality into contested relations and disputed understanding, with such negative emotions becoming part of broader organisational power relations and politics. Interestingly, there did not appear to be horizontal trust issues at individual level within teams evident from my research, in fact I found an environment of mutual 'horizontal' trust did exist between team members, as per the definition of horizontal trust by Tan and Lim (2009). This suggests that a shared sense of belonging within a group is linked with mutually of trust between group members, but that also perpetuates lack of trust of other groups.

I did not find evidence of outright distrust in management by employees, something I had initially expected; instead, there were low levels of trust in management motives and decision making. Similarly, there was a lack of management trust in employees' ability to undertake work to satisfactory standards; the two-way lack of trust was creating a climate of fear in the organisation. Vince and Saleem (2004) summarised the interplay between blame, fear and trust, arguing that when mistakes are made, caution turns into outright blame and individuals look to place responsibility with others as a protection mechanism, which then undermines trust in the collective. The lack of trust in my case study organisation could not be traced back to one single breach of trust event (or mistake), rather it seemed it had always been present between different groups within the organisation and tended to ebb or flow depending on current organisational events and politics. As such, my study found a lack of hierarchical trust up and down the organisation. My research indicated that specific recent management interventions had further undermined employee confidence in management and organisational trust between hierarchical layers had been eroded as a result. Bijlsma-Frankema and Koopman (2003) discussed past behaviour as an indication of future behaviour as a facet of trust relations; my research suggested that a lack of faith in management decision making which had occurred as a result of recent 'key impacting

events', was also creating a lack of trust in the potential future actions of management. Overall, I found a mutually destructive relationship when trust was lacking between organisational groups and between hierarchical layers, which was impacting negatively on trust relations across the organisation.

Whilst intra-organisational trust was complex, variable and transient, trust in the institution which the organisation represents; namely shipbuilding; was enduring. This linked back to my earlier finding that the organisation was at the same time both a functioning organisation and a symbolic representation of the industrial heritage on the Clyde. Consequently, I found that in an organisation with low levels of intra-organisational trust and low levels of hierarchical trust, employees can still have institutional trust, but that this trust was based on the organisational legacy, rather than managerial or operational action in the present day.

8.3 Implications

The discussion above highlights some key challenges for managing contemporary employee relations. As described in earlier chapters, I experienced examples of classic management practices being utilised in my case study organisation, including the schedule based working initiative, headcount rationalisation activity, outsourcing of work to third party contractors and TUPE, and facilities investment initiatives. The aim of these initiatives was to help transform the business, making it 'fit for future'. It could be argued that the organisation was attempting to use the emotional connection its employees had with its legacy to manipulate them into accepting managerial action, particularly transformation activities, branding such action as a way of ensuring the continuity of legacy, even if the action was to their detriment. This touches on elements of emotional labour (Hochchild, 1983); with the commodification of human feeling in this case used to minimise employee resistance to change. As explored earlier, this also potentially evidences 'abuse' of organisational memory by those struggling to assert their authority and control within the organisation (Walsh and Ungson, 1991); namely, management. If considered from a critical perspective, all of these management interventions could be considered as different forms of work intensification, management control or the assertion of managerial prerogative (Allan, 1998; Allan et al., 1999 Burgess, 1997; Burgess and Campbell, 1997). Transformation could be seen as a subtle form of coercion (Burawoy, 1979); through reframing sophisticated management practices aimed at maximising value from human resources and co-opting them into a narrative that sounds

exciting. At the time of my research, I found most of these practices were having a negative impact on employee relations and trust. As such, organisations should carefully consider the potential employee relations impact of any proposed initiatives, in particular those initiatives which seek to improve 'productivity' and 'engagement'. It would be advisable for management to discuss such interventions with trade union representatives at an early stage, to help gauge employee sentiment and any potential risk. Management should not assume employees will be easily influenced by grand organisational narratives, and instead try to instigate open and honest discussions with their workforce on why organisational change is required.

This study prompted me, as an HR practitioner, to reflect on the future for the profession; HR professionals in my case study organisation were operating within the strategic HRM space, and my own experiences within the profession would indicate that most practitioners remain focused on the development and introduction of practices which support the managerial agenda. There is an emergent debate in the literature regarding sustainable HRM; 'Common Good HR' (Aust et al., 2020). It is argued that we need to more properly integrate the ideas explored in the work of Aust et al. (2020) into contemporary HR and management practices and test the feasibility and true appetite for change, based on their proposals. There is also arguably a need to revisit the labour process debate with a sustainability agenda in mind, questioning the longevity of some management practices, the role of HR practitioners as mediators and facilitators in this space, and ultimately reframe the ethical role and boundaries of the HR profession. Some would argue the need to find a more sustainable path; one which acknowledges the need to revisit the morality and sustainability of our current work structures, but not in a way which seeks to completely break as this seems unrealistic and unattainable. Instead, forging a path in which HR practitioners understand the inequity in the employment relationship and seek to champion more participative and fair practices through their relationship with management. Just as we cannot keep taking from our environmental resources, we cannot, in good conscience, keep taking from our human resources.

Considering the implications for the academic debate, if LPT scholars wish to accomplish true change they should concede to participate in conversations about what change could and should look like. Similarly, management researchers need to question the ethics and sustainability of many of the commonly accepted managerial practices they are engaged in

articulating, developing and measuring. This will require concessions on both sides; perhaps not dissimilar to a form of 'class compromise' (Wright, 2000) within the academic debate. Management scholars should acknowledge the unsustainable nature of those work practices which may be seen as exploitative, especially those which directly contribute to employee burnout. Similarly, LPT researchers should concede to participate in discussions which will likely serve to uphold many of our current work structures. Nonetheless, it is argued there is space for a debate somewhere in the middle, which is neither purely critical nor purely management focus, and reflects the call for greater sustainability in the literature.

8.4 History and Contemporary Employee Relations

Returning then to my overarching research question; *"What is the significance of history in shaping contemporary employee relations within shipbuilding on the river Clyde?"*

This study found that history was significant in shaping contemporary employee relations, but not in the way one might initially anticipate; namely, that a history of industrial conflict creates an overtly combative employee relations climate in the present. Instead, history resonated in more subtle, interesting ways. The legacy of shipbuilding and the industrial heritage of the city impacted on relationships individuals had with the organisation; with individuals feeling a stronger emotional connection to the organisation if they had personal connections to the industry.

My research revealed evidence of organisational ghosts; with a definite sense of the 'uncanny' (Orr, 2023) and blurring of temporal boundaries between the past, present and future (Orr, 2014; Pors, 2016). Ghosts of the past congregated in spaces, especially those empty or 'dead' spaces within the yards; this idea of death and decay was situated alongside feelings of guilt and responsibility for ensuring the continuation of the organisational legacy for the future. These spaces acted as mnemonic devices; with specific features of the production workspaces particularly significant for tethering the organisation to its industrial past, again recalling the past in the present. All of the above elements were creating a troubling and emotive relationship with the past for employees.

As mentioned above, history was not explicitly repeating itself in the employee relations climate; the relationship between employees and management was nowhere near as combative as it had been in the past and there was a genuine attempt at a partnership working between trade unions and management. When compared with the strength of the trade unions in the past, the level of union concession today was likely a reflection of the broader 'decline' in trade union power, resultant from legislative changes and the rise in policies and practices aimed at individualising the employment relationship. There was evidence of history 'in action', in terms of the divisions across the organisation; for example, the blue- and white-collar divide and the management and workforce divide. Spaces were playing a significant role in enforcing these divisions, which were reminiscent of the depictions of the shipyards from the 'Silent Men of Upper Clyde' (1971) article referenced in Chapter 1 of my study, recalling a sense of historical industrial relations in the present. In this way, spectres of the past were returning to haunt the present, creating echoes of past exclusion and disparity, as per Baloy (2016).

Employee resistance was still present in the contemporary organisation, albeit acts of resistance were small and subversive when compared with historical incidences of collective action on the Clyde. This was most evident in the struggle for power and control within specific spaces in the yards. Historical practices and norms around access to specific spaces for senior management endured, reinforcing managerial authority through the persistence of archaic managerial privileges. Conversely, I found some spaces were sites through which employees actively challenged managerial authority, highlighting the agency of employees within these spaces and the significance of understanding spatial dynamics for LPT (Thompson and Smith, 2009). Spaces still represented 'contested terrain' (Friedman, 1977; Burawoy, 1979; Edwards, 1979; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999) through which employees demanded dignity and recognition (Lloyd, 2017).

Storytelling was also significant for employee relations, with employees using control of narratives in order to influence what was remembered and forgotten. They used stories to pass on information about acts of employee resistance and conflict with management; these were passed off as amusing anecdotes but were another mechanism by which employees maintained a degree of agency within the organisation. As such, I found that storytelling,

organisational memory and labour relations were all intertwined, highlighting the significance of the ownership of stories and other organisational memory artifacts for understanding some of the more subtle mechanisms of control in the LPT debate.

Events of the recent past were more relevant for employee relations than those events of the historic past. Failed management initiatives had negatively impacted the employee experience and resulted in a lack of trust between employees and management. Management practices seemed to act as mechanisms which reinforced the managerial prerogative, rather than empowering employees. As such, it could be argued there was a mismatch between the narratives sold by the organisation around transformation designed to impact employee engagement, and the reality of how these events played out in practice.

8.5 Additional Insights

My study delivered some additional insights regarding the role of a practitioner researcher. The subject of insider academic research has received relatively little consideration (Brannick and Coghlan, 2007), so I felt it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge this as a specific feature of my study.

Robson (1993) acknowledged that there are both advantages and disadvantages of being a practitioner researcher. In terms of the more challenging aspects of this type of research, I found the main issue with straddling the line between researcher and practitioner was the ethical ambiguity associated with being unable to separate the two aspects of your role; it is not possible to switch between being a researcher in one minute and then being a practitioner the next, you are always absorbing contextual information and seeing how people interact, which is helping you to make sense of issues relevant to your research. Smyth and Holian (2008) described this as role duality and emphasised the need for researchers to understand the inherent tensions and potential power and authority issues associated with this duality. Furthermore, it is also not practical to continually disclose your role as a researcher to colleagues; I disclosed that I was undertaking research to all my HR colleagues at the start of the process, but I found they quickly forgot this, or considered it irrelevant to my interactions with them in my day job. Costley and Gibbs (2007) suggested that one way to

overcome this particular concern for practitioner researchers is to extend the ethical considerations beyond the research participants, to those colleagues potentially impacted by the research, particularly those colleagues whose practices may be being criticised as a result of research findings. This is an extremely significant consideration for practitioner-researchers, to ensure that their duty of care extends to those impacted by their research, including colleagues. This is not only important for the protection of their colleagues, but also for self-protection from potential negative consequences within the organisation. As I detached myself from my case study organisation prior to the completion of this thesis, it is less of a concern for me; but I have been careful in dealing with my discussion around management practices, to minimise any potential negative impacts for my former colleagues.

Coghlan and Brannick (2005) argued that insider researchers may have difficulty in accessing some areas in the organisation due to their existing membership within the organisation. Thankfully, I found the opposite to be true; given my pre-existing networks across the organisation, I was able to access a wide range of research participants. I did encounter some employees who were initially suspicious of my motives in conducting my research but managed to persuade them to participate in discussions. It is of course impossible to know whether they held back information through fear of organisational exposure (Smyth and Holian, 2008), but this is not a challenge uniquely applicable for practitioner-researchers. For example, I had one conversation with a research participant who was initially very difficult to interview and was deliberately cold and uncommunicative, as he thought I was an external 'student'. When he realised that I was a fellow member of the organisation, his demeanour completely changed, and he was willing to have a much more open conversation with me. As such, I found the challenges of participant engagement can work both ways for practitioner-researchers.

The primary benefit of being a researcher-practitioner for me was the level of understanding and appreciation of the research context I had versus an external observer. I drew heavily on my knowledge of the events in the organisation, the internal politics and my experiences as a participant to give me a deeper understanding of the organisation. Brannick and Coghlan (2007) similarly argued that insider research is valid, useful and provides important knowledge about what organisations are really like, which traditional research approaches may not be able to uncover.

Boucher and Smyth (2004) claimed that researchers must be able to alternate between immersing themselves in the research context and then withdrawing to analyse and reflect. As I moved into the analysis phase of my project, I felt could only objectively analyse my experiences from a distance and chose to remove myself from the organisation to allow me to do this. This is likely not applicable to all research contexts, but due consideration should be given to how practitioner-researchers can achieve this distance whilst still actively participating within the organisation.

Researcher reflexivity remains a critical component for practitioner researchers to explore and deal with the relationship between themselves and the object of their research (Brannick and Coghlan, 2006). Brannick and Coghlan (2006) suggested that journalling is an effective method for practitioner-researchers, as it enables both the capture of experiences, and the development of reflective skills. I found journalling to be an extremely valuable tool, as I was able to revisit my notes during my analysis phase and reflect on my own reflections; enabling me to almost observe myself as a research subject. This was aided by the fact that I had left my case study organisation by this point, and so was able to later examine my reflections and responses at the time of my research. As such, my study supports assertions in the literature that journalling and self-reflection are crucial components of conducting successful research for those in practitioner researcher positions.

Despite the acknowledged challenges practitioner-researchers face, my study provides further evidence of the benefits that can come from practitioner research, particularly in relation to the depth of understanding and contextual detail that practitioners can provide versus independent researchers. My study also offers evidence that it is possible to make methodologically robust research choices which help mitigate some issues faced by embedded researchers. The debate on how to mitigate such concerns and deliver credible and valuable research outputs for practitioner researchers will no doubt continue to gain momentum, given the rise in business degree programmes within the higher education sector and increasing interest in management research.

8.6 Key Contributions

Considering the above discussion, this thesis makes contributions to the academic debates in three primary areas. Firstly, the organisational legacy and memory literature; this study concludes that there are several key components which serve to keep the past 'alive' in organisations. The first component is a connection between organisational history and individual identity, which was found to create an emotional link between individuals and the organisation. This resulted in a degree of either organisational nostalgia, for those who had positive associations with the past, or nostophobia for those who considered the past as something to escape from; this emotive relationship ensured that the past remained a tangible aspect of the employee experience in the present. The second component was storytelling, with information about the past communicated to new generations of employees, by both management and the workforce, through use of stories. These stories were more valuable for recalling a sense of the industrial past of the organisation as a lived experience, than more formal organisational memory 'vessels'. In this way, organisational memory was found to be a highly social construct; with people being key in determining what information was retained about the organisational past, and how this information was recounted.

Building on this idea of the past being kept alive in the organisational present, the second contribution of this study is to the growing body of literature on organisational ghosts. It concurs with existing research which argues that ghosts help us understand and explain the blurring of temporal boundaries and the ways in which the past, present and future interact in organisations. This study also provides further evidence for arguments that spatiality is a critical factor in keeping ghosts alive in organisations; 'haunted' spaces and the uncanny feelings they stir act as mnemonic devices, recalling the past over and over again in the present. This is particularly the case for organisations who could be described to be in 'decline' and find their past successes and times of strength difficult to move beyond. These hauntings affect employees emotionally, to such an extent that they create an emotional burden, akin to grief, for those modern-day inheritors of the organisational past.

Finally, this research contributes to the discussion on contemporary employee relations. This study finds that 'ownership' of organisational memory is contested; with employees retaining a degree of agency in the employment relationship through their shared ownership

(with management) of some organisational memory components. Narratives in particular were found to be contested terrain, with management and different groups of employees controlling and utilising narratives which supported their particular agenda; be that the corporate agenda, resistance to management, or stories which created a shared sense of meaning and purpose in the workplace. Humour (including black humour) was a significant feature of those employee 'owned' narratives, especially for those in more physically challenging roles; again highlighting the significance of narrative ownership. Spatiality was also found to be contested and divisive; with management 'owning' some spaces and using these to reinforce managerial privilege, whilst employees 'owned' other spaces and retained agency in these spaces through small subversive acts of resistance. These spatial divisions provided further evidence of the past haunting the present, with segregated spaces perpetuating the divisions of the industrial past and allowing them to retain an active role in the contemporary employee relations environment. Division was found to be an enduring facet of employment relations; with 'traditional' divisions of the past (blue and white collar, and management and workforce) colliding with contemporary workforce differentiation. The ongoing significance of the trade unions was rooted in their historical power within the industry, however the contemporary relationship between management and trade unions had been significantly influenced by changes in legislation and the increasing individualisation agenda. Trade union engagement was impacted by division, with some evidence to show a disconnect between some employee groups and the trade union; namely those younger 'white-collar' employees. This study therefore concurs with much of the existing literature on trade union renewal; that the unions must continue to evolve in order to not be constrained by the ghosts of their industrial past.

Chapter 9: Reflections and Conclusion

Reflection is one of the crucial stages of the experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984). Schön (1983) proposed that the ability to reflect on actions and involve oneself in a process of continuous learning is a defining characteristic of professional practice. Reflection allows individuals to critically examine their own experiences of situations, analyse their responses, and use the resultant information to better inform how future situations are handled (Moon, 1999; Thompson et al., 1996). Consequently, I will use this final chapter of my thesis to reflect on my study, acknowledging its limitations and identifying opportunities for further research.

9.1 Reflections and Limitations

I knew from the outset that taking an interpretivist approach using qualitative data was right for my study, allowing me to best explore the complexity of my case study organisation. The flexibility of this approach allowed the data to lead and facilitated an iterative process of moving between data and literature through the analysis phase to help refine the areas of focus and contribution. However, after conducting my interviews, I found myself with a large amount of data which felt quite overwhelming. It took a long time to transcribe and then work through the coding and analysis to identify my key emergent first and second order concepts. It also then took a long time for me to work between my data and the literature to situate my contributions, and to write up phase and finalise this piece of work. This is a recognised limitation of single case studies, undertaken at a single point in time; as results can become out of date very quickly and may therefore not be valid for a long period (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Wilson, 2010). The delay was partly due to work commitments and other life events. As a result of the time taken, external factors across the UK have changed some of the current debates in the literature on employee relations. I have identified additional areas for further exploration as a result of my study, factoring in these changes, and have provided these in the next section below.

The breadth of my study made it difficult to deep dive into any concept. As I worked through my analysis some interesting ideas emerged which I would have liked to explore further but would have required additional research. In some ways I probably made the process more difficult for myself by undertaking such a broad study, instead of being very specific and

prescriptive at the outset. However, I feel I would not have done the research justice, or fully taken advantage of the unique opportunity I had in terms of access to my case study organisation, if I had not considered the breadth of factors at play and gone with a set idea of one concept to explore. As a consequence, despite the acknowledged limitations of my study, I nonetheless consider it to be valuable in terms of its contribution across the literature on organisational memory, organisational ghosts, employee relations, and HRM.

9.2 Opportunities for Further Research

Through my data analysis, I identified a number of areas which could present opportunities for additional research. I have discussed these to a degree in my empirical chapters but will now include a summary. Firstly, I identified an opportunity to further the discussion on organisational ghosts through more in-depth explorations of the role of spaces in perpetuating hauntings, and specifically, the role of dead or disused spaces. Related to this, it would be valuable to explore whether spaces act mnemonic devices, and the potential impact that this may have on organisational development activities such as transformation agendas. In terms of storytelling, there is an opportunity to contribute to the LPT debate by further investigating 'ownership' and control of stories in organisations. It is also clear that the debate on generational diversity in the workplace requires additional empirical research, particularly with the recent addition of 'Gen Z' to the workforce. Additional exploration of different generational attitudes towards trade unions in the UK would be valuable at this time, and with a particular focus on whether attitudes have changed or are changing as a result of the economic and political climate in 2023, and the increased visibility of collectivism in the mainstream media. There is also arguably a case for examining the attitudes of management towards organisational sustainability agendas and prompt consideration about the role of HR in sustainability.

9.3 Conclusion

In conducting my study within an organisation which was synonymous with the wider shipbuilding industry in the West of Scotland, I was given an opportunity to explore this unique context. I sought to use this opportunity to better understand the ways in which a

distinctive and socially significant organisational legacy impacts on the experience of employees. By adopting an inductive approach to my research, I allowed the organisation to do the talking, and my data painted a picture of an organisation caught between its past, present and future, and grappling with how to ensure the continuity of its legacy for future generations.

This thesis contributes to academic debates in three key areas. Firstly, it explores the role of organisational legacy and memory, identifying key components to be; the emotional connection between individuals and the organisational history, storytelling and the social construction of organisational memory. Secondly, it delves into the concept of organisational ghosts, highlighting how spatiality and haunted spaces contribute to the blurring of temporal boundaries and create an emotional burden for employees. Lastly, it adds to discussions on contemporary employee relations, revealing the contested ownership of organisational memory components such as narratives and spaces, and how this perpetuates divisions from the organisational past. It also supports existing literature on trade union renewal, emphasising the need for unions to adapt and evolve beyond their industrial legacy to remain relevant for future generations of an increasingly diverse workforce.

The final word in this study goes to the most famous former employee of the Clyde shipyards; Billy Connolly. In his blog, Connolly (2009) stated; *"It's a world that doesn't actually exist anymore, the shipyards."* And whilst I would agree that the version of shipyards he served his apprenticeship in no longer exist, there is no doubt that echoes of the past continue in the present day. They live on in the in the collective memory of the current workforce, those spaces that represent the industrial legacy of the Clyde, and in the stories passed on from generation to generation. In this way, Billy's unique brand of storytelling, complete with a sense of self-deprecating dark humour, has contributed to ensuring the legacy of shipbuilding on the Clyde will endure on a global stage for generations to come.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

Organisational Trust, Distrust and Legacy within a Contemporary Employee Relations Environment (draft title)

Researcher: Nicola Fleming
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Adam Smith Business School
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Supervisor: Professor Sabina Siebert
Tel. 01413303034
Sabina.siebert@glasgow.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please feel free to ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The objectives of the proposed project is to:

1. Investigate the organisational culture within [organisation name redacted].
2. Explore the impact of organisational legacy within the contemporary working environment.
3. Investigate the additional factors; including organisational trust/ distrust and politics which impact on organisational culture.

You have been invited to take part in an interview because you work within [organisation name redacted].

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and even if you agree to take part, you can withdraw your participation or data at any time without giving any reason.

If you agree to take part in the project, I will contact you to arrange an interview – either face-to-face in a location convenient for you (such as your office or a meeting room near your place of work), or by telephone if face to face is not possible. The interview will take from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

The interview will be audio recorded (but only if you agree to that), transcribed and both the recording and the transcription will be kept confidential at all times. The information you provide may be used in the publications resulting from this project but it will never be attributed to you – it will be kept anonymous.

The results from this study will likely be included in subsequent publications – academic articles, books, and conference presentations.

Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines.

The project is partially funded by [company name removed].

Contact for Further Information

This study has been reviewed and approved by the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research project please contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer:

Dr Muir Houston
College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer
Email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: Organisational Trust, Distrust and Legacy within a Contemporary Employee Relations Environment (draft title)

Name of Researcher: Nicola Fleming

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet provided for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-recorded.

Data usage and storage:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.

I agree to take part in this research study

I do not agree to take part in this research study

Name of Participant …………………………………………

Signature   ……………………………………………………..

Date …………………………………………

Name of Researcher: Nicola Fleming

Signature   ……………………………………………………..

Date …………………………………………

End of consent form