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Migrant workers, precarity and resistance in Scotland: A study of the barriers to labour mobilisation experienced by migrant workers in precarious occupations

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Abstract

In an economy designed to attract and exploit migrant labour, migrants in the UK are at the forefront of the precarious condition. Despite this, examples of migrant unionisation or other forms of collective labour action to improve conditions are comparatively rare. This study aims to research the structural and subjective barriers to the mobilisation of migrant workers in precarious occupations in Scotland. A qualitative approach using interviews with migrants and a period of covert participant observation in various precarious workplaces in Glasgow was employed. It is argued that, alongside the plethora of intersecting factors that structure migrant workers' experience and impede their capacities for mobilisation, the most significant barrier is to be found in the almost absolute absence of unions and other oppositional movements from migrants' lives. The study concludes by positing community embeddedness as a crucial component of any process that aims to organise with, and empower, migrant workers. Embeddedness emerges as an inescapable prerequisite for unions and social movements to counter the multiple structural and subjective effects of precarity.

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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.

Panagiotis Theodoropoulos

Introduction

The topics of migration and migrant labour are at the forefront of public and academic discourse in the UK and Scotland, a focal point that has been exacerbated by debates concerning Brexit and the future rights of migrant workers (Rzepnikowska 2019; Virdee and McGeever 2017). However, this emphasis is not an exclusively new development: Britain's imperialist past and the resulting transnational mobility networks have meant that the figure of the migrant worker has attracted attention at various stages of its history (Virdee 2014; Anderson 2013). In an economy intentionally designed to attract and utilise migrant labour, migrant workers are disproportionately located in the most exploitative, insecure, and symbolically stigmatised occupations (Anderson 2013; Miles 1982; Piore 1979). While they fulfil important economic functions, their presence is also instrumentalised on the cultural and symbolic planes in order to draw, confirm and contest social boundaries and conceptions of identity and belonging (Anderson 2013).

Migrant workers thus occupy a range of crucial socio-political and economic intersections. These positionalities result in their foregrounding in almost every significant sphere of the public imagination, from national-level debates on Brexit, multiculturalism and the function and aims of the European Union to local issues around the exploitation of migrant labour, perceived job competition and scarcity, and community relations. Various writers have expressed the view that migrant workers are at the forefront of the precarious experience, which also makes them important actors in socio-political attempts to challenge it (Jørgensen 2016; Turner 2014; Casas-Cortés 2014). As the structures that create and sustain precarity are further entrenched in society, and as xenophobic and far-right politics are emboldened, the oppression of migrant workers both deepens and is simultaneously contested by the migrants themselves. When migrant workers mobilise, they do far more than simply claim recognition: they directly contest the wider web of oppressive social relations by displacing widely held stereotypes, challenging hegemonic binaries and structures such as those concerning inclusion/exclusion and the authority of the State, and contributing to social struggles through their resistance to exploitation (King 2016; Anderson 2013).

Even though migrants occupy crucial positions in the structure of the UK's economy and are overwhelmingly exposed to the dangers of precarity and State violence, examples of migrant unionisation or other forms of labour-related mobilisation are rare. Many academics have conducted research focused on existing migrant labour campaigns (for example, Alberti and Però 2018; Lopez and Hall 2015; Lagnado 2015); yet

comparatively few projects exist that examine why these campaigns have not proven generalizable. Moreover, as I argue in Chapter 3, the majority of the studies focusing on migrant workers' mobilisations fail to adequately include the voices of migrant workers in their analyses and conclusions, perpetuating the marginalisation that these communities experience both in academic analyses and in social movements. As a result of their lack of engagement with migrant workers, many of these studies fail to coherently examine the subjective reasons for migrant workers' relative lack of engagement in labour mobilisation. On the other side of the spectrum, academics that *have* engaged directly with migrant workers have tended to focus on instances where they were at least partly successful in mobilising. This lopsided focus on migrant campaigns, while useful in explaining what tactics have been fruitful for migrant worker organising, nevertheless doesn't examine why these examples are rare and have not proven generalisable. What are the barriers to migrant workers' autonomous mobilisations, and what can trade unions and other social movements do to address them?

This research project investigates these questions by bringing together the various threads that cumulatively structure migrant workers' experience. This necessarily involves developing bridges between the realms of structure (such as state migration policies, national economic plans and labour legislation) and subjectivity (such as migrants' sense of their own migration, their aspirations, and how they see themselves as workers and political actors). The fields of social, political and economic relations are shaped by the contestation between different forces struggling for hegemony (Gramsci 1971); inside a Britain that is increasingly characterised by Fisher's (2009) "capitalist realism" which pushes alternative socioeconomic arrangements beyond the realm of the imaginable, the contestational resources and institutions available to migrant workers also greatly impact their potentials for mobilisation. A third aspect is thus added to the equation: the role of unions or other radical social movements as a counterweight to the crushing, alienating effects of living in precarity needs to be examined. In short, my central concern in pursuing this project has been to understand how the combination of the experiences of precarity and migration impact the formation of political subjectivities in migrant workers in the UK, and to use these understandings to develop suggestions for trade unions and other social movements that want to organise with, and empower, migrant workers.

I chose to research these questions by holding interviews with a range of migrant workers in Scotland that have experienced the brunt of the precarious condition. As a migrant worker myself who has worked in various warehouse and hospitality settings from

2013 to 2017 (prior to the commencement of this PhD), I immediately noticed significant lacunae in the relevant literature (these will be extensively analysed in Chapter 3). I am convinced that some of these limitations stem from academics' deep detachment from the realities they are researching, while others stem from their lack of engagement with the individuals they are investigating (examples of studies *on* migrant workers' mobilisations that don't speak *to* migrant workers include Kranendonk and de Beer 2016, Gorodzeisky and Richards 2013, and Piper 2010). As an active union organiser and a researcher, I aimed to contribute to both academic and social movement efforts to understand the realities experienced by migrant workers with a view towards developing theoretical tools that are of practical use to those attempting to organise with migrant and other marginalised groups. To do so, and following other similar initiatives such as those by the Angry Workers collective (2020), I conducted these interviews alongside a parallel process of covert participant observation in various precarious labour contexts in Glasgow. I entered kitchens, factories and logistics warehouses in order to experience, once again, the realities of precarious labour and collect detailed observations examining the effects of structural precarity on migrant workers' labour experience and subjectivities. This immersive methodology also enabled a nuanced analysis of the labour conditions of such occupations, unsettling popularised conceptions of 'skilled' and 'unskilled' jobs and highlighting how these definitions, which directly impact migrant workers' lives, correspond to hegemonic processes of distinction and exclusion (Anderson 2013; Bauder 2006).

My work is positioned within, and heavily relies on, an expansive academic tradition of labour sociology that focuses on migrant workers' position in socioeconomic hierarchies and class struggles ranging from Castell's (1975) analyses of migrant workers and social movements and Piore's (1979) examination of migrant subjectivities to current research such as Schierup and Jørgensen (2016), Lagnado (2015) and Alberti (2014). Sayad's (2004) assertion that immigrants are also *emigrants*, existing as subjects before their migration and carrying an entire worldview with them across the borders they transverse, underlies the entire course of my research and conclusions. Another central contribution that structures the lines of inquiry and perspectives I develop is to be found in the autonomy of migration approach (for example, De Genova 2017; Mitropoulos 2007). While current scholarship on the autonomy of migration is mostly focused on the movements and agentic decisions of undocumented people- and will therefore not be cited extensively in the subsequent text- the focus on a perspective that sees "people who move as active participants in the construction of reality, not simply as people reacting to

economic or social factors" (King 2016: 29) significantly informs my research and discussion.

In attempting to develop an analysis of the barriers to migrant worker mobilisation that can be practically useful and operationalizable by social movements, I have deliberately rejected a dogmatic approach to theorisation and thereby draw on a range of conceptual sources. The realities that migrant workers experience in precarious occupations stem from a range of factors that are connected to *both* their status as migrants *and* their class position as workers in insecure and highly exploitative jobs (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013); in order to accurately capture the structural and subjective effects of these intersections, an intersectional framework of analysis underlies the entire thesis. This reflects Alberti and Però's (2018) acknowledgment that intersectionality is an important tool in analysing migrant worker mobilisations. Emerging from Black Feminist struggles and writers, intersectionality moves beyond traditional Marxist conceptions of the primacy of class in determining social reality, instead focusing on how multiple categories of oppression and difference impact the lives of oppressed groups (Hill-Collins and Bilge 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006; McCall 2005; Hill- Collins 2000). As Young (1990) argues, class permeates all other social positionalities, but a plethora of other positionalities such as gender and migration directly impact how class position is experienced. Naturally, since my focus is directly related to working conditions, clss analysis figures very prominently throughout this text. However, rather than seeing ethnicity and migration status as structures that are epiphenomenal in relation to class, I use intersectionality to understand how their juridical, symbolic, social and subjective effects contribute to the production and reproduction of class positions specifically and to systems of oppression more generally (Lazar 2016). In this sense, I believe that an intersectional approach allows a nuanced investigation of class and migration and, furthermore, is conducive to searching for collective ways to overcome the multiple barriers to organisation that they are related to.

My analysis also draws extensively on previous scholarship that has examined the intersection of precarity, migration and labour such as that developed by Anderson (2013), Mezzadra and Nielson (2013) and Bauder (2006). Following these approaches, I view national migration regimes as productive- rather than purely repressive- structures that *create* vulnerable and exploitable workers; these interact with juridical and cultural systems of classification to position migrant workers in specific, usually insecure, highly exploitative, and symbolically stigmatised occupations. The experience of working in such

conditions may impact workers' socialisation; in this respect, I draw on scholarship that analyses the subjective impacts of living in a constant state of labour and social insecurity such as Hardt and Negri (2017), Berrardi (2017), Fisher (2009) and Bauman (2000). As I discuss in Chapter 2, the concept of 'precarity' is one that has triggered important theoretical debates, particularly in relation to whether precarity is a relatively novel socioeconomic condition that gives rise to an entirely new class formation (Standing 2011) or whether it is a fundamental component of most workers' existence under capitalism (Munck 2016; Breman 2013). I employ a critical position towards Standing's conceptualisation of precarity and will use this concept strictly to encapsulate the range of specific socioeconomic circumstances within which insecure, low-waged, and highly exploitative migrant labour takes place in Scotland.

My conclusions have also been influenced by studies in concrete labour contexts that specifically focus on how workers perceive various aspects of their labour experience such as the studies by Alberti (2014), and Holmes (2013). Expanding arguments such as those by Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti (2015) that posit labour conditions as socialising workers into specific labour regimes, I argue that their effects reach deep into the recesses of subjectivity and influence much more than simply workers' expectations of work. They rupture the potential for the emergence of solidarities, obfuscate the power that workers inherently possess, foster the emergence of individualist, survival-oriented attitudes, and can cumulate in a passive acceptance of the status quo. In sum, I see the potential contribution of this project as lying in that fact that it develops a novel analysis of the intersecting factors that collectively participate in structuring migrant workers' political subjectivities, grounded in a detailed, qualitative investigation that is directly informed by the lived realities and accounts of migrant workers in precarious occupations.

The project is structured as follows: Chapter 1 gives a brief historical overview of autonomous migrant workers' movements in the UK and teases out key points that will guide the rest of the work. Of these, the most important is the fact that migrant workers' movements that succeeded in mobilising workers and challenging the status quo are those that were firmly embedded in the communities they addressed and operated a proto-intersectional analysis combining the fields of class and ethnicity. Chapters 2 and 3 conduct a critical theoretical overview of existing literature around precarity, migrant labour, and migrant labour mobilisations. Chapter 4 discusses the project's methodology and research design. Chapter 5 begins analysing the findings by analysing migrant workers' choices and mobilities within an international economic framework of uneven

development. Chapters 6 and 7 examine the various contractual manifestations of precarity, the conditions within which migrant workers labour in precarious occupations, and the subjective impacts of these experiences. Chapter 8 then takes some of the key conclusions from the previous chapters and operationalises them in an analysis of migrant workers' subjectivities such as how they understand, naturalise or criticise their own labour experience as migrants. Collective action is reliant on strong interrelationships between workers: Chapter 9 therefore looks at how the various threads analysed in previous chapters impact migrants' relations with their colleagues and what forms workplace solidarity assumes under conditions of precarity. Finally, Chapter 10 focuses on migrants' experiences and ideas of trade unions and wider labour resistance, including on some examples of collective bargaining that suggest that migrant workers hold considerable power. The final chapter brings all of the previously-developed theoretical and empirical conclusions together, arguing that, while the structural and subjective realms interact in complex ways to perpetuate the disempowerment and exploitability of migrant workers, the most significant determinant is the almost total absence of unions and social movements from migrant workers' lives. Based on the practical and theoretical conclusions emerging from the research, the thesis ends with a postscript foregrounding community embeddedness and the active operationalisation of intersectional politics and analyses as fundamental requirements for social movements wishing to organise with, and empower, migrant workers.

Chapter 1: A brief history of migrant workers' movements in the UK

1. Introduction

When Rudolf Rocker, one of the central theorists of anarcho-syndicalism, began exploring working-class London at the turn of the 20th century he witnessed "an abyss of human suffering, an inferno of misery" (Rocker 2005: 25). Eager to get acquainted with the workers and the movements in his new city, he started going to the East End to attend meetings and socialise with fellow migrant socialists and anarchists. Many recent Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe had congregated in the area, which was "a slum district". He remembers "a church at the corner of Commercial Street, at the Spitalfields end, where at any time of the day you would see a crowd of dirty, lousy men and women, looking like scarecrows, in filthy rags, with dull hopeless faces, scratching themselves. That was why it was called Itchy Park". The Jewish working-class Londoners who attended these meetings, primitive cells of what would soon become a powerful migrant trade union movement, "looked sad and worn; they were sweatshop workers, badly paid, and half starved" (Rocker 2005: 26-27). The destitution Rocker saw in London led him to conclude that, contrary to widespread theories that revolution is triggered by a worsening of living conditions, "there is a pitch of material and spiritual degradation from which a man can no longer rise. Those who have been born into misery and never knew a better state are rarely able to resist and revolt" (2005: 25). A social movement targeting these circumstances had to be based on more than abstract theory. It had to fight for the immediate improvement of living conditions, while at the same time providing resources for the masses of Jewish (and English) workers to expand their horizons, emerge from the alienation of daily life, and imagine alternatives. This is a conclusion that, as will be shown, has frequently been reached by migrant movements and which remains relevant today.

This chapter will survey some historical examples of migrant worker organisation in the UK. There is a relative lack of information on instances of class or workplace-focused organisation by migrant and racialised groups in the UK prior to the 1900s (Adi 2010). For this reason, focus will be given to migrant worker organisations in the 20th century, although where necessary there will be some references to preceding years. The period after the 1980s will be more closely explored in the following chapters, which is why this one ends with a brief examination of Black Power movements in the late 70s. This chapter's main aim is to use historical examples of migrant worker organisation to highlight three key ideas which will be fundamental in developing and informing the

arguments of the following chapters: 1) that the exclusion of migrant workers from the dominant structures of British society, including from trade unions, necessitates their autonomous organisation, which is not detrimental to but actually benefits both migrant-specific struggles and also wider social struggles; 2) that embeddedness within migrant communities and an operation on a variety of class and cultural domains are crucial preconditions for the substantial organisation of exploited and marginalised migrant populations; and that 3) a broad, non-economistic conception of capitalism that recognises its multi-faceted intersectional character is fundamental for the practical and theoretical organisation of migrant workers, and that this conception could also benefit the operations of all social movements striving for working class emancipation. To illustrate these points, I will draw on the examples of the Colonial Seamen's and Jewish movements of the early 20th century, and then move on to consider Indian and Black workers' movements between the 1950s and 1980s. The chapter will then conclude with a discussion that connects the historical examples to the three main arguments.

A comprehensive history of autonomous migrant worker movements in the UK has not been written yet, and this chapter does not profess to cover it; it is only concerned with briefly examining certain instances of migrant worker organisation and relating them to the aforementioned arguments. The wider absence of scholarship on instances of autonomous migrant-led collective struggles could be explained by migrant workers' relative subaltern status compared to the British working class. Some specific cases can be found in volumes that cover aspects of Black history in the UK (such as Virdee 2014; Ramdin 2017; Fryer 1984), but they are not detailed enough to provide us with meticulous information on their structure and composition. Even fewer sources exist surveying the autonomous organisation of groups of white immigrants. From Virdee (2014) it seems that the Irish assimilated in UK society relatively quickly, despite the intense hostility with which they were initially received. We have examples of Jewish organisations (Fishman 2004; Buckman 1980) but they are, once again, not enough to draw a comprehensive idea of the totality of their existence and structures.

Additionally, there is a glaring lack in most sources of any mention of women's participation in such structures. This could be attributable to the fact that some women were confined to the domestic sphere in the early part of the 20th century, but this explanation still is not enough to justify their overwhelming absence from the literature; surely more women than Eleanor Marx (cited in Virdee 2014) were active in organising and supporting these migrant movements. Examples of women's participation predictably

rise alongside the increase in women's participation in the labour force during the mid-20th century, with the famous, and already heavily documented, Grunwick strike of 1976-78 featuring prominently in the relevant literature (see Ramdin 2017; Sivanandan 1983). Other examples can be found in the literature examining Black feminism (Siddiqui 2019). Despite these cases, the issue remains that there is a comparative lack of detailed literature scrutinising the various facets, demographics, and organisational structures in autonomous migrant worker movements, which is why the following chapter at times relies on a limited range of sources.

2: Historical Context

While migrant worker groups in the UK during the 1900s varied in terms of their countries of origin, occupations, and specific experiences, they shared some characteristics in terms of the social exclusion and exploitation they faced upon arrival. In the early 1900s, minorities in the UK consisted mainly of West Indian, Caribbean, Asian and Irish populations, all of which arrived through the networks fostered by Britain's expansive imperial activities (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Fryer 1984). Migration in Britain is historically deeply structured by imperialism, and the role of Empire cannot be ignored when analysing the lives and trajectories of most migrant groups in the UK (Virdee 2014). As such, the experiences of migrant groups have been determined by an interplay of both the demands of British capitalism and an imperial ideology of racial difference and superiority that enabled and justified their exploitation and socio-political exclusion (Virdee 2014; Miles and Brown 2003; Bonnett 1998). Migrants were swiftly inserted in those occupations that demanded workers or were otherwise kept as a reserve army of labour until demand rose again (Tabili 1994); Mezzadra and Neilson's (2013) concept of 'differential inclusion' is important here, as they argue that, in contrast to theories claiming that migrants are being excluded from social participation, what in fact occurs is the meticulous management, through legislation and employment practices, of the precise form and function their inclusion assumes. That is, cultural, political and economic factors combine to render migrants exploitable and collectively produce regimes whereby their inclusion is regulated and directed, instrumentally, towards servicing the labour requirements of the host society (McDowell 2008). As will be shown below, this line of analysis will be useful for examining the conditions of today's migrant workers as well.

For example, a sizeable wave of Irish migrants arrived at the peak of the industrial revolution to fill the ever-expanding demands of a developing capitalism (Virdee 2014). Black seafarers from the Caribbean and the West Indies, travelling across the empire,

gradually began to settle in the 19th century around ports and docks in the UK and became part of a growing Black community which included students and other professionals (Adi 2010; Ramdin 2017; Tabili 1994). They added to the small Black population that had started to congregate in the UK (Fryer 1984). A wave of pogroms against Jews across Europe led to a significant influx of hungry, poor, and readily-exploitable Jewish immigrants in late 19th-early 20th centuries, most of whom immediately contributed to the burgeoning British textile industry in cities such as London, Manchester, and Leeds (Virdee 2014; Rocker 2005; Buckman 1980). Similarly, as British workers moved away from heavy manufacturing into more service-oriented occupations in the mid-20th century, the Atlee administration actively encouraged migration from Europe and the former colonies, including 125,000 West Indians and 55,000 Indians and Pakistanis who were brought to Britain in order to fill the vacated posts (Virdee 2014: 100). The 1950s also saw an increase in West Indian migration to the UK as individuals and families utilised their right of free entry as British subjects (Ramdin 2017). Finally, in the early 20th century the UK offered the right of asylum to a wide variety of political refugees from the European mainland, thereby attracting many passionate socialists, anarchists and other organisers who later inserted themselves in local social movements (Rocker 2005: 117). While this last group did not conform to the needs of Britain's capitalist economy, and indeed actively struggled against that system, their rights to enter and live in the UK nevertheless were dependent on the specific liberal image the Empire wanted to project across the world.

In the early part of the 20th century, immigrant populations generally lived in conditions of intense poverty and worked in highly precarious and insecure occupations (Høgsbjerg 2011; Fryer 1984). A variety of interrelated factors made it hard for them to initially create or join trade unions and fight for an improvement in their working conditions. Perhaps the biggest contributing factors here were the attitudes of the British trade union movement, which was active in anti-immigration campaigns under the claim that migrant workers represented 'unfair competition' to British labour (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Høgsbjerg 2011; Rocker 2005). Lack of familiarity with the English language and culture, spatial segregation, de-skilling and the unwillingness of many bosses to employ migrants pushed them to the lowest paid and most exploitative occupations; importantly, these occupations did not benefit from the improved conditions secured by many British workers in the course of their historic struggle (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Rocker 2005). These same characteristics, alongside the need to constantly fight for one's survival stemming from their precarious circumstances, were also contributing factors in migrant workers being used as strike-breakers. For example, when the skilled tailors from

the West End of London went on strike in 1912, the owners turned to unskilled Jewish labour from small East End workshops (Rocker 2005: 127).

These factors combined in making it easy for unions, bosses, British workers, the local media and politicians to draw a fictitious connection between migrant labour and the threat to established labour rights which was used to establish and expand a climate of hostility and exclusion that further cemented migrant disempowerment, and therefore, exploitability (Fishman 2004). This tendency was reproduced in the period following the Second World War, with migrant workers experiencing de-skilling and confinement in the "dirty, ill-paid jobs that white workers did not want" (Sivanandan 1983: 3). Migrant workers mostly found themselves outside the organising priorities of the major unions and were habitually blamed for the wider economic difficulties of the British working class. Their exclusion from mainstream unions combined with the aforementioned cultural and subjective factors to create a highly vulnerable and exploitable population.

Hostility from the unions fed into, and was in turn exacerbated by, wider racist discourses prevalent in a British society within which the process of crafting an identity of Britishness premised on theories of racial difference was well established (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Bonnett 1998). After a long period where identification with Whiteness was the sole privilege of the ruling elites, the changing nature of capitalism and Empire in the 20th century necessitated the inclusion of the British working class in its umbrella (Bonnett 1998). The colonial and migrant worker within Britain was used to exemplify the 'Other' against which the value of the local, white, British worker was established (Virdee 2014). This involved a long and variegated process of continuous contestation, destruction and reconstitution of racial and national boundaries that was intimately tied to the international workings of imperialism and to the domestic labour situation (Virdee 2014; Tabili 1994; Bonnett 1998).

Virdee (2014) locates a renewed emphasis on theories of scientific racism in the years following the Chartists' defeat in 1848, a defeat that resulted in a catatonic and demoralised working class. Concurrently, the British elites, including trade unions and the Social Democratic Federation, enhanced their attempts to bring the British working class under the wider umbrella of the 'British nation', held together by the privileges that imperialism afforded to the dominant social groups that emerged from it (Virdee 2014). Fundamental British institutions associated with the essence of the national identity, such as the NHS, were in part made possible through the super-profits gained from the imperial exploitation of the colonies (Rodney 2018). Bonnett writes that state welfare "helped

produce a population ideologically committed to, and capable of participating in 'state managed capitalism'' (1998: 329). At the same time, rigorous attempts were made to justify this exploitation on the terrain of culture, with the 'Otherness', 'exoticism' and 'backwardness' of the East and South being presented as the primitive opposite to the colonial West's 'modernity' and 'rationality' (Said 2003). Since migrant workers from the colonies lived and worked in Britain, these binaries also extended to them and their activities, with trade unions having a fundamental role in disseminating and promoting prejudiced views among the organised British working class.

Trade unions excluded and scapegoated migrant workers in various ways. Some, like the National Sailors and Firemen's Union (NSFU) encouraged black sailors to join its ranks while at the same time pressuring the government to take measures to restrict the supply of migrant labour, such as by using language requirements to exclude certain workers (Jenkinson 2008). Others, such as a book-printers' union based in London, simply prohibited foreigners from joining (Rocker 2005). However, perhaps the most extreme manifestation of unions' anti-migrant sentiment at the time was expressed during the 1919 riots in cities such as Cardiff, Glasgow, London and Liverpool, where Black, Arab, Chinese and South Asian workers were attacked, stabbed, and had their homes pillaged by mobs of white workers who regarded them as unfair competition (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Rowe 2000; Tabili 1994). Shinwell, leader of the Glasgow branch of the Seafarer's union, would later draw a direct connection between the presence of overseas sailors in Glasgow and the racist riots, justifying the violence with the argument that foreigners were employed while local seafarers were not (Jenkinson 2008). This line of argumentation was part of a wider popular discourse that was ultimately underpinned by the most traditional racist tropes and included a heavy emphasis on the undesirability of mixed marriages and the moral outrage of 'half-caste' children (Rowe 2000; Tabili 1994). Significantly, these Glasgow attacks occurred during the course of the historic movement for the 40-hour week widely popularised as 'Red Clydeside', with tens of thousands of workers on strike and more than 60,000 demonstrators assembling in George Square (Jenkinson 2009; Virdee 2014).

This account does not mean to ignore the many instances where solidarity took place between British and migrant workers (cited, for example, in Virdee 2014; Fishman 2004; Williams 1980); indeed, some will be included below. However, a wider established social order emerged where unions' radical demands for worker empowerment did not tend to extend to solidarity with the non-British members of the workforce; on the contrary,

many unions consciously instrumentalised popular stereotypes against migrant labour to agitate for their demands. In doing so, they further cemented the same class divisions they claimed were detrimental to the workers' movement.

3: Early Migrant Organisations- Colonial Seamen's Movements

This environment of aggression meant that racialised and migrant workers were alone. Consequently, self-organisation emerged as their only avenue for achieving substantial empowerment. Prior to the late 1920s, Black and migrant organisations mostly took the form of advocacy groups, focusing predominantly on the socio-political, international and cultural realm rather than the workplace (Adi 2010; Sivanandan 1983). Ramdin (2017) writes that during this period it was predominantly the black intelligentsia that intervened on behalf of the wider Black population. He cites the development of five Black organisations between 1900 and 1930: "the Afro-West Literary Society, the Ethiopian Progressive Association, the Union of Students of African Descent, WASU [the West African Students' Association] and the League of Coloured Peoples" (2017: 144).

The League of Coloured Peoples, led by Harold Moody, espoused a Christian-based humanitarianism that pushed for a more substantial inclusion of Blacks within the British empire (Ramdin 2017; Whitall 2011). The LCP supported Black workers in a variety of issues relating to their daily lives but was never a workplace-oriented group as such (Ramdin 2017). It had a deeply divided Executive Committee which included individuals from both the left and right of the political spectrum (Ramdin 2017). Moreover, they did not admit Asians in their ranks (Virdee 2014); seemingly contradictorily, however, whites were freely admitted, albeit without the possibility of serving on the Executive Committee (Ramdin 2017). Other groups such as the West African Students Union predominantly consisted of wealthy, privileged students who, while fully opposed to imperialism and racism, nevertheless failed to attract racialised workers in Britain (Adi 1998). Another notable example of the period is the Pan African Association, formed after the first Pan African Conference in London in 1900. The Association aimed to raise public awareness about racial inequalities and to advocate for an improvement in the conditions of colonised peoples around the world. However, it appears that the organisation's scope was limited to advocacy campaigns (Ramdin 2017). Despite their shortcomings, organisations such as these provided vital foundations for the subsequent organisation of racialized and migrant groups. Significantly, they established social centres which hosted debates, introduced and propagated new ideas, and provided meeting spaces for organisations (Whitall 2011). They also vocally opposed imperialism, supported racialised

groups (Virdee 2014) and claimed space in public discourse (Ramdin 2017). These formations set the stage for colonial seamen, whose livelihoods by the 1920s were being threatened by the same unions they relied upon for the protection of their interests, to establish one of first autonomous migrant workers' organisations.

During the First World War, British mercantile fleets had relied on seamen from the colonies to fill the vacancies left by the white British workers who were fighting. The end of the war resulted in a contraction of available jobs as these seamen gradually returned and claimed their old occupations back (Ramdin 2017; Jenkinson 2008). In 1922, the National Maritime Board introduced the PC5 identification card which was issued by the National Sailors' and Firemens' Union (NSFU) and whose possession was a requirement for admission into work (Featherstone 2019). This provision allowed the NSFU to selectively allow access to employment, enabling them to exclude specific workers (Tabili 1994). At the same time, the PC5 requirement meant that Black workers had to establish contact and join the NSFU; however, their inclusion was never premised on equality between them and their white counterparts. Those colonial seamen who could access work were generally placed in the worst available occupations (Featherstone 2016). Anxieties around job competition combined with the aforementioned racially-motivated moral panics to further entrench the hostile environment that confronted racialised and migrant communities.

This was further exacerbated by State measures aiming at the legislative restriction, and subsequent deportation, of migrant labour (Ramdin 2017; Tabili 1994). Black and Asian colonial subjects had not previously required passports to travel around the Empire; however, in 1925 the government introduced the Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order that obliged all Black seamen to prove their British nationality or be registered as 'aliens' and become liable to deportation (Høgsbjerg 2011). Colonial seafarers therefore found themselves simultaneously targeted by the government, exploited by their employers, shunned by wider society, and excluded from meaningful union participation and representation.

In response to this state of affairs, seamen of different backgrounds began establishing autonomous trade union organisations in the 1930s, with significant help from the Comintern and the National Minority Movement (Featherstone 2016; Høgsbjerg 2011; Adi 2010). Prior attempts at autonomous organisation included the Colonial Defence Association (CDA) founded in 1927 in Cardiff for the collective defence of colonial communities against racist attacks (Featherstone 2016). Harry O'Connell, one of the main

organisers of the CDA, subsequently became a Communist and was active in organising Black and Asian seamen (Featherstone 2016). Additionally, the National Minority Movement, a trade union organisation tied to the Communist Party of Great Britain in opposition to mainstream, class-collaborationist unions, attempted to organise a Seamen's Minority Movement in 1929 headed by the Barbadian Chris Jones (Adi 2010; Sherwood 1994). While there are various archival reports of the presence of Black workers' organisations amongst the seamen, little concrete information exists about their activities during these years (Adi 2010).

The organising efforts of the late 1920s in Britain's ports eventually bore fruit, with O'Connell involved in setting up the Cardiff Coloured Seamen's Committee in 1933 (which included Malayan, Arab, Somali, West Indian and African workers) and Jones forming the Colonial Seamen's Association (CSA) alongside Indian secretary Surat Ali in 1935 (Featherstone 2016; Virdee 2014; Høgsbjerg 2011; Tabili 1994). By that time Jones, alongside George Padmore, had left the Communist party and therefore was able to function with substantial autonomy and form a range of alliances. The Colonial Seamen's Association welcomed Asian workers, and in its first annual conference in 1936 received delegates from a wide variety of organisations, including the League of Coloured Peoples, the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist Negro Welfare Association, and the League Against Imperialism (Høgsbjerg 2011). Notably, Surat Ali stated that the initial spark triggering the formation of the CSA was a collective opposition to the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, thereby highlighting the internationalist outlook shared by these workers and their focus on connecting their local experiences to the wider operations of global imperialism (Høgsbjerg 2011). In 1939, the CSA joined the All-India Seamen's Federation (Featherstone 2019).

The wide range of workers' backgrounds represented by the Colonial Seamen's Association and the Coloured Seamen's Committee undermined the racialised division of labour existing on British ships and provided a concrete example of cross-cultural solidarity and organisation (Tabili 1994). Moreover, the crisis in the ports brought together a wide variety of Black organisations, including the League of Coloured People (Ramdin 2017). The black seafarer's movements also developed close working relationships with other British organisations such as the Communist Party's National Minority Movement and various socialist formations of the time (Ramdin 2017; Høgsbjerg 2011). They are referenced as important initiatives that confronted dominant unions' exclusionary practices

and set the stage for subsequent attempts by migrant workers to self-organise and established coalitions with other supportive movements.

4: Jewish Workers' Organisations

Williams (1980) locates the beginning of significant numbers of Jewish migration to the UK in the 1840s. However, in response to an increase in pogroms and wider anti-Semitic activity in Europe, Jewish migration to the UK peaked between the 1880s and 1914 with the Jewish population increasing from 60,000 to approximately 300,000 (Virdee 2014). Between 1881 and 1882 more than 225,000 Jewish families fled Russia, with many settling in the East End of London (Fishman 2004). Jewish workers congregated in large urban centres, with sizeable communities developing in Leeds (Buckman 1980) and Manchester (Williams 1980). They mainly found jobs in the tailoring industry. New arrivals found themselves in a complex network of independent workshops, many of which were sweatshops (Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004; Buckman 1980). These processes led to Jewish workers becoming socially and culturally associated with these workshops, which further limited their chances of securing other types of employment (Fishman 2004). Caught between being heavily exploited by wealthier members of their own communities, known as Masters (the owners of the workshops), and being excluded from most significant trade unions while facing intense racism within wider society, Jewish workers were forced to organise themselves and struggle for both labour and social rights (Virdee 2014; Fishman 2004; Buckman 1980). In so doing, they engaged with and directly aided the wider working-class movement, with individuals such Eleanor Marx, who was herself Jewish (Virdee 2004) playing key organising roles in the social struggles of the time.

The competition inherent in capitalism combined with the wider poverty of migrant Jewish communities to create a constant race to the bottom in terms of working conditions in the workshops. Rocker (2005: 89) writes that "the clothing industry in the East End was run by hundreds of small master-tailors who were sub-contractors for the big firms in the City and the West End. In order to get the contract they under-bid each other mercilessly, thus creating their own hell. They passed that hell on of course to their workers. The new immigrants, the greeners, as they were called, who had just arrived from Poland or Russia or Romania and had to earn their bread, went to these small sweatshops to learn to be pressers of machinists. They started as under-pressers or plain-machinists, working for about six months for a skilled presser or machinist, doing the first preparatory work for him, till they learned to work for themselves". To further complicate matters, the skilled presser or machinist was usually responsible for paying and organising the labour of the

workers under him, while being paid directly by the Master. This is illustrative of the wider chain of relationships that created the adverse labour conditions experienced by Jewish workers: large firms and industries, themselves engaged in competition with each other, constantly demanded lower prices from Masters; therefore Masters demanded more work for less remuneration by the skilled workers, who in turn demanded the same from the unskilled workers under them.

Jewish workers, especially the newer arrivals, were poor and willing to accept whatever conditions saved them from starvation. According to Rocker, "the evil of the sweating system was that it was so contrived that each drove everybody else" (2005: 89). The cut-throat competition, combined with the wider poverty of the Jewish community, was such that many "workshops were ordinary living rooms, completely unfitted for the purpose, heavy with the sweat of many working people, to which was added the damp of the pressing irons on the cloth, there were no regular hours of work. Employment was completely seasonal. In the busy season the people worked all the hours of the day and night, to save something for the slack season, where they earned next to nothing. It was slave-driving. In the busy season the pace was killing. In the slack season it was hunger and hopeless despair" (Rocker 2005: 90). There were frequent attempts by individual workers to amass the money required to open a private workshop and join the ranks of the Masters; however, this proved very difficult and only a few managed to sustain their businesses. Most workers remained workers (Fishman 2004).

The unionisation of Jewish workers was rendered difficult due to a variety of factors, including the fact that in this case organisers had to contend with exploitation stemming from within the community as well as hostility from without. Class divisions quickly solidified as Jews were excluded from the wider labour market and therefore pushed to find work within their own communities (Fishman 2004; Buckman 1980). Jewish Masters were adept at forming coalitions amongst themselves when threatened by strike or other activity and were supported by other industrialists (Fishman 2004; Williams 1980). To further problematise matters, the first Jewish arrivals to the UK were unacquainted with the traditions of English unionism, exasperating local organisers attempting to engage with them (Buckman 1980). Furthermore, the structure of the industry meant that there was a high degree of mobility; workers moved between sweatshops as well as gradually gaining skills and rising up the hierarchy. The oscillations of the trade meant that during one season there could be a large pool of workers ready for union activity, while in the next season the majority of those workers could be unemployed

(Rocker 2005; Buckman 1980). Finally, while there were notable attempts by unions to organise Jewish workers such as in Manchester in the 1880s, the majority of established unions were unwilling to work with Jews and actively campaigned in favour of stricter migration controls (Virdee 2014; Rocker 2005; Williams 1980).

Despite the difficulties, the exclusion and exploitation experienced at all levels of social existence led Jewish workers to approach some local unions (Williams 1980) and to eventually begin organising themselves autonomously as migrant workers (Virdee 2014; Buckman 1980). The efforts of the Socialist League were instrumental in providing an initial impetus for organisation as well as material support. The Socialist League was one of the few British socialist formations of the late 19th century that explicitly refused to subscribe to a myopic, white and British-centred conception of the working class and instead promoted internationalism, anti-imperialism and migrant solidarity (Virdee 2017; 2014). The Jewish working class, which included a sizeable group of highly politicized members, resonated with the League's positions and began organising. At a time when most British unions were openly hostile to migration, the League managed to forge crucial alliances. In 1889, for example, it pressured for an alliance between the Leeds Jewish tailors and the anti-immigration Gasworkers union. The tailors joined the struggle for the eight-hour movement, which culminated in a successful strike that won the demands within days (Buckman 1980). This, alongside subsequent victories by the Leeds Jewish Tailor's Union, made a significant contribution in the battle against anti-immigrant sentiment while at the same time advancing the interests of the wider working class in the UK (Buckman 2008).

The years between 1900 and 1914 also witnessed a period of intense organising and victories by Jewish workers in the East End of London (Virdee 2014; Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004). The first seeds for radical activity in the region had been sown in the 1870s through the establishment of the Hebrew Socialist Union led by Aron Lieberman (Fishman 2004). The HSU was involved in a plethora of campaigns, its main purpose being to promote socialism amongst the Jewish working class and assist in their organisation in trade unions. While the group was short lived, it set the stage for subsequent actions. A variety of Jewish unions began emerging in the late 19th century, including "the Hebrew Cabinet Makers' Society, Stick and Cane Dressers' Union, International Furriers' Society, Tailor Machinist union, Tailors and Pressers Union, Amalgamated Lasters' Society, United Cap Makers' Society and International Journeymen Boot Finishers' Society" (Fishman 2004).

In the early 1900s, a group of Jewish radicals and anarchists centred around the radical Yiddish newspaper *Arbeter Fraint* continued these attempts (Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004). The newspaper was fundamental in unionisation processes because, since most British trade unions were unwilling to organise Jews, it was imperative that they organise themselves. For that, political education was of paramount importance (Rocker 2005). The paper's readership increased significantly through the years, gaining thousands of readers and becoming firmly embedded in both local and international movement circles. Most importantly, it was read and supported by the working-class, with Rocker (2005: 96) remembering that "young girls who slaved in the sweatshops of a weekly pittance of ten or twelve shillings, literally took the bread from their mouths to give the movement a few pennies".

In 1906, the *Arbeter Fraint* group opened a social club in Jubilee Street which was to play a major role in the East End Jewish workers' movement (Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004). It quickly became one of the centres of community life, organising events that connected Jewish workers to their culture as well as maintaining a commitment to political education and providing meeting spaces for workers to organise. The club consisted of an 800-capacity gallery, some halls and rooms and a library. It offered classes in English, history and sociology as well as hosting a range of cultural events, including debates, live music and poetry readings. Most of these provisions were open for everyone regardless of club membership or background (Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004). An example of the club's activities indicative of the organisers' priorities is the annual trip to Epping Forest, which was regarded by many workers as "the highlight of their lives, in contrast with the everyday gloom and drudgery of the sweatshop" (Fishman 2004: 262). People would bring their families, and, following a long walk, would then congregate to listen to Rocker lecture on topics ranging from literature, to history and politics (Fishman 2004). Rather than reductively viewing workers as faceless units in need of strict labour organisation, emphasis was placed on substantial empowerment, experience of beauty, and the overcoming of alienation.

The constant agitation and work inside the community eventually led to a wave of militant union activity extending beyond the narrow spaces of East London (Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004). At its peak, Rocker (2005: 6) claimed that the East End had "the most powerful migrant movement that had developed in Britain". Years of political education had resulted in the mass meetings of the Federation of Jewish Anarchists being attended by "five, six, seven thousand people" (2005: 6). Crucially, and in contrast with many other

immigrant communities, Jewish immigrants had no intention of returning to their countries of origin, which resulted in them becoming fully invested in the improvement of their daily lives in the UK (Rocker 2005). When the skilled tailors of the West End commenced strike activity in 1912, the *Arbeter Fraint* group used the opportunity to agitate for a general strike amongst East End Jewish tailors, many of whom were being used as strike breakers. Thousands attended the general meeting that was called, and more than 13,000 workers participated in the strike in the first 2 days. They attempted to permanently do away with the sweatshop system, demanding a normal working day, the abolition of overtime, higher wages, and the closure of small workshops with unhygienic conditions. As this community was not wealthy, many participated in the strike without strike pay. They forged alliances with the contemporaneous London dockers' strike and held joint meetings and demonstrations. The strike was ultimately successful after 3 weeks: the Masters conceded shorter hours, no piecework, better conditions, and committed to only employ unionised workers. Emerging victorious, the Jewish workers didn't stop there; seeing the dockers' strike drag on, they decided to ask Jewish families to care for the dockers' children, and over 300 were taken in Jewish homes. This strike represented the culmination of decades of organising, its results ranging far beyond narrow material gains: it succeeded in abolishing sweatshops in the East End, while at the same time challenging the dominant British perceptions about Jewish workers and establishing strong bonds of solidarity with the local workers' movement (Rocker 2005; Fishman 2004).

5: The Indian Workers' Association

The Indian Workers Association (IWA) represents one of the largest instances of migrant workers' organisation in the UK, combining class struggle with migrant empowerment, cultural work, an anti-imperialist outlook and an active presence in migrant communities. During the 1960s the various IWA branches around the UK had memberships "running into the thousands" (Ramamurthy 2006:40). The first IWA was set up in 1938 in the context of the Indian independence campaign (Gill 2013; Ramamurthy 2006). When Indian independence was achieved in 1947, the priorities of Indian workers in the UK became centred around securing labour and social rights within the UK (Gill 2013; Ramamurthy 2006). This shift was grounded on an upturn in migration from the Indian subcontinent in the 1950s and 60s (Virdee 2014), a wave that "altered the political and ethnic balance of the IWA in favour of a largely communist and Sikh membership" (Gill 2013: 555).

Migrant workers in the UK were still experiencing a range of structural disadvantages and were confined to the most insecure, stigmatised, and dangerous jobs, predominantly in the manufacturing industries (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Sivanandan 1983). As with other migrant communities, most trade unions did not engage with and represent Indian workers, viewing them either as unfair competition to local jobs and conditions or as 'unorganisable' (Virdee 2014). Moreover, the physical and verbal threat of racist abuse was a constant reality and preoccupation. When IWA branches began forming around the UK the umbrella Indian Workers' Association Great Britain was formed in 1958 (Gill 2013). The IWA thus formed a radical, anti-imperialist, locally embedded and migrant-led network whose activities ranged from providing community and cultural services for migrant workers, to being directly involved in organising strike activity and anti-imperialist action.

During the early stages of setting up the IWA in the 1950s, most of the leading organisers were people that had come to the UK with a fully-formed political ideology and a previous history of organising (Virdee 2014; Gill 2014). Many had ties to communist and other radical organisations in India, and some were already seen as community leaders prior to arrival (Gill 2013; Sivanandan 1983). This is important for three reasons: first of all, the political formation and radicalisation of most key organisers, in this instance, did not take place in the UK; having been excluded from most social movements, it was fundamental for migrant communities to be able to rely on their own "organic intellectuals" (Gramsci 1971) and develop praxis from within their networks. Secondly, the existing connections between leaders and international tendencies such as the communist and anti-imperialist movements provided a stable ideological framework on which to base their activities in the UK and made it possible to draw connections between their activities in the UK and the already-formed habitus of newly arrived Indian workers. Rather than feeling disorientated and succumbing to the individualistic, short-term mindset described by Piore (1979), Indians arriving in the UK had a direct connection to their national community in the host country and could therefore almost immediately participate in local life and struggles.

However, the importation of social structures from India meant that caste-related hierarchies were reproduced within the host society and were further entrenched through IWA processes (Ramdin 2017). Finally, strong leader-centred organisation involved a range of advantages (for example, the educational level of the leadership meant that it was easy for them to write articles and formulate agendas) but also contributed to its demise, as

those key organisers gradually started gravitating towards parliamentary and NGO-based politics without a structure to replace them or which would allow for the development of a new generation of leading individuals (Virdee 2014; Gill 2013). Nevertheless, these issues did not prevent the IWA from becoming a significant force in UK labour struggles.

Interpreting class and race as two factors of oppression that are intimately connected in the reproduction of dominant social structures, the IWA was also consciously engaged in class struggle, fighting for the rights of Indian workers while also developing alliances with progressive British organisations (Gill 2013; Virdee 2013; Ramdin 2017). Gill (2013: 558-9) writes that "IWA activists had a tangible impact in three areas of industrial relations: the increasing levels of Indian membership of unions, the break-up of the broker system and the campaign against the corrupt practices of local sweat shops". The IWA was involved in disputes that aimed at overcoming oppressive conditions experienced by black workers, such as "segregated washrooms, a block on the promotion to better jobs, and low wages" (Gill 2013: 559). Importantly, and in contrast with the other examples of migrant worker unionisation already discussed, the IWA was against the formation of separate, semi-autonomous groups of Black workers within trade unions, believing that such initiatives were detrimental to the ultimate victory of a united working class (Ramdin 2017; Gill 2013). Nevertheless, they focused their efforts on supporting strikes and initiatives in factories that employed large numbers of Indian workers, such as during the disputes in Sterling Metals, Dunlop, and Courtauld's during the 1960s (Gill 2013; Ramdin 2017).

The IWA was fully immersed in anti-racist organising in society as well as in the workplace (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Gill 2013). They made alliances with groups such as the Communist Party of Great Britain, the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), and the Anti-Nazi League. They attended and organised rallies, marches, and engaged in direct action against the colour bar in public spaces (Gill 2013). They supplemented their oppositional activities by developing autonomous self-help mechanisms to improve their collective community conditions. This involved organising a range of cultural events and easing the process of acclimatisation for Indians in the UK while at the same time promoting a radical anti-racist politics (Ramdin 2017). Gill (2013: 256) writes that the IWA was "vital to the social lives of Indian migrants. The social and cultural events organized by the IWA consolidated a sense of community and they were an important way of bringing people together and celebrating aspects of their identity and culture". Furthermore, the IWA supported migrant workers in navigating the bureaucratic

complexities of the UK, helping non-English speakers fill in forms and aiding with migration procedures. The social and cultural aspect was further supplemented by a range of artistic activities which included the use of songs and performances as mobilizing tools, tactics which would subsequently influence the Asian Youth Movements of the 1980s and 90s (Gill 2013).

The IWAs also played a role in the formation of the budding Black Power movement in the UK (Gill 2013; Virdee 2014); Narayan 2019), which would play a major role in the organisation, self-defence, and empowerment of racialised and migrant communities between the late 1960s-1980s (Sivanandan 1983). However, Ramdin writes that by the 1970s the IWA was "unable to accommodate the demands of Asian youth in Britain" due to an increasingly conservative leadership (2017: 408), a reality which contributed to young people organising themselves in separate structures.

6: Black Power

The Black Power movement represented the culmination, combination and maturation of a variety of different struggles, ideas, and organising methods that had been developed by racialised and migrant communities in their years of fighting for social justice in the UK (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Sivanandan 1983). British Black Power drew inspiration from the movement in the United States and connected the struggles of African, Caribbean and Asian immigrants to formulate responses against racial inequality in the UK (Narayan 2019). Stokely Carmichael's speech in the Dialectics of Liberation conference in London in 1967 is seen by many as a pivotal moment for the British Black Power movement in the UK (Bunce and Field 2011). Equally important were the interventions of Martin Luther King in 1964, which inspired the formation of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD), and of Malcolm X in 1965, which inspired the Radical Action Adjustment Society, or RAAS (Ashe, Virdee and Brown 2016).

The ideas of the US movements were increasingly relevant as police brutality against racialized communities combined with state discrimination, immigration controls, and domestic fascist terror to create highly dangerous conditions for minorities in the UK in the late 1960s. (Sivanandan 1983). This was at times supplemented by overt hostility from sections of the white British working class; for example, in 1968 supporters of Enoch Powell all over the UK initiated strikes to protest against immigration (Sivanandan 1983). Central to British Black Power was a conception of the mutually-dependent nature of racism, imperialism and capitalism which enabled these groups to organise on all the

domains that structured the oppression of racialised workers while at the same time forging international anti-imperialist alliances and maintaining strong links to communities on the ground (Narayan 2019; Virdee 2014). Following James (1967), these groups understood that, since the totality of the current oppressive social system inherently relies on racist social divisions to maintain itself, the anti-racist struggle is not only essential for securing daily survival but is an indispensable component of the wider struggle against capitalism.

Black Power and anti-racist groups were initially engaged in an ideological and methodological dilemma concerning the degree to which meaningful empowerment could come through negotiations and collaboration with official state structures (Ashe, Virdee and Brown 2016). CARD experienced a protracted internal struggle between those who wanted to collaborate with the state and the Labour Party and those, such as Selma James, who wanted to strengthen grass-roots alliances and focus on movement-building (Ramdin 2017). Concurrently, black people were increasingly distancing themselves from the Labour party which was engaged in enforcing racist immigration controls (Joshi and Carter 1984); it became increasingly clear that community self-organisation was the only real way to claim the socio-political and economic rights they deserved (Sivanandan 1983). The many debates of the period gradually coalesced in the creation of broad-based alliances such as the Black People's Alliance (BPA), bringing together over 50 anti-racist, anti-imperialist, minority-led groups to challenge racist violence and exploitation, including the IWA and RAAS (Narayan 2019; Ashe, Virdee and Brown 2016). Testament to the political maturity of the BPA, developed after years of combined experiences in struggle, was its refusal to work with organisations and groups that had previously collaborated or received handouts from the government (Sivanandan 1983). Autonomy was becoming a fundamental pillar of organising and movement identity. Crucially, this heightened willingness to engage in collective organisation was, once again, dependent on the fact that Blacks had by now firmly settled in the UK (Sivanandan 1983); temporariness had been overcome, and people were ready to commit to struggle.

British Black Power groups were active participants at all levels of society: they organised self-defence structures (Ashe, Virdee and Brown 2016; Ramamurthy 2006), feminist groups with firm roots in communities (Brixton Black Women's Group 1984), participated in and organised strikes (Ramdin 2017; Sivanandan 1983) and instigated anti-racist campaigns and demonstrations (Narayan 2019). Struggles in the community and in the workplace interacted and cross-pollinated; for example, when in 1973 Indian and Pakistani workers were sacked for striking in a yarn factory in Southall and the Transport

and General Workers' Union (TGWU) did not provide them with strike pay, the Asian and Pakistani communities immediately provided the strikers with essentials through the combined efforts of worker's associations, *gurdwaras* and local shops. In another instance, the unofficial "standing conference of black strike committees in the Midlands and a network of community associations and groups plus a number of black political organisations" came to the support of Asian strikers in the Imperial Typewriters factory in Leicester, after the TGWU refused to support the strike (Sivanandan 1983: 37).

Ramdin (2017: 449) notes an impressive range of autonomous social initiatives aiming to enhance the reproductive capacity of the Black community in the 1970s, indicative of the wider energy that existed in the movement: "Roy Sawh supervised the free University for Black Studies; for the unemployed and homeless black youth, there were hostels, such as Brother Herman's Harambee and Vince Hines' (formerly active in RANS) Dashiki and youth centres and clubs. Furthermore there were bookshop-cum-advice centres, namely the black people's information centre; BLF's Grassroots Storefront and BWM's (Black Workers' Movement was the Black Panther's new name in the 1970s) Unity Bookshop". The Black Trade Unionists Solidarity Movement was founded in 1981 aiming to combat racism within the wider trade union movements and British society and strengthen the participation of Black workers in trade union structures (Ramdin 2017). These years also saw the emergence of black feminist groups who critically inserted themselves in social movements and developed analyses that foreshadowed today's conceptions of intersectionality (Siddiqui 2019).

When the closure of many manufacturing jobs in the late 1970s unleashed a period of intense unemployment and discrimination for young Asians, the existing political cultures fostered by previous migrant organisations empowered them to establish Asian Youth Movement groups which were engaged in community support work, political education, and community defence against rising racist aggression (Ramamurthy 2006; Sivanandan 1983). Concurrently, the late 70s saw the emergence of a strong black feminist current "which would encompass all the struggles and its own particular perspective" (Sivanandan 1983: 46).

Eventually many of these organisations eventually folded or disbanded as leading individuals joined charities or chose to align themselves with the Labour party, interrupting the autonomous and anti-systemic current that dominated the Black Power movements (Ramamurthy 2006; Virdee 2014; Ramdin 2017). Ramamurthy (2006) cites the rise of community-based charities as an important factor in the demise of Asian Youth Movement

groups; the understanding of the necessity to struggle against, instead of within, official structures weakened, and old comrades were reduced to competing with each other over a limited supply of funding. This analysis echoes Sivanandan's criticism of NGOs in migrant communities; he argued that such initiatives represent the interests of a rising Black bourgeoisie which appropriates the struggles of racialised communities for its own benefit, in the process diluting everything that has been built (Virdee 2014). As King (2016) has argued, these processes are intrinsically premised on extracting decision-making power from the hands of oppressed groups and replacing it with a delegatory, top-down system that ultimately enforces the conditions of their disempowerment. While this explanation on its own would not be enough to fully explain the demise of the Asian Youth Movements and British Black Power movements, the shift from a class and community-centred approach to a more abstract, externally-funded, and non-community-controlled approach that worked with the State could be considered a significant contributor to that demise.

7: Discussion

The fundamental factor necessitating the autonomous organisation of migrant workers in the UK has been their systematic exclusion from participation in the dominant trade unions. Virdee (2014) argues that trade unions and other formations purportedly representing the working class like the Labour party have been fully complicit in crafting a British identity that simultaneously accepts British imperialism as a necessity and a national project externally, while partaking and reinforcing the scapegoating, exploitation, and marginalisation of migrant workers internally. This was clearly evidenced in the discussion of the Colonial Seamen's movements in the early 20th century: these organisations stemmed from a requirement to organise themselves in the face of an intense social hostility that was fully accepted and propagated by trade union leaders. Far from being confined to the realm of history, these tropes were most recently repeated by Len McCluskey, the general secretary of the union Unite in 2019, who said that, while he had nothing against migrant workers as individuals, it was important to close the borders and prevent further migration to protect wages (*The Guardian* 2019). This concept is not only economically and politically erroneous, but, most importantly, is one of the main arguments used to justify stricter migration controls, which in turn produce more exploitable and vulnerable immigrants (Mezzadra and Nielson 2013; Anderson 2010). Indeed, contrary to the dominant belief, it could be said that *British workers and British unions are responsible for worsening the wages and working conditions of migrant workers*!

Despite these attacks which repeat themselves throughout the 20th century until today, migrant workers have consistently organised autonomously to improve their lives. In the process they have also developed bonds of solidarity with, and have supported the struggles of, the local working class. This autonomy has been a source of strength, helping communities establish themselves and develop strong institutions and political identities. Paradoxically, despite their constant exclusion from dominant union structures, migrant and racialised workers have been at the forefront of the wider struggles for working class emancipation in the UK (Virdee 2014). This is also evidenced by numerous examples in the above account, such as the Jewish tailors' 1912 strike (Rocker 2005).

The necessity to organise from within led to these movements' embeddedness in their communities, which in turn fostered further organisation and community cohesion. This is most clearly evidenced by the Jewish and Indian workers' movements. Despite being separated by more than half a century, these two movements developed significant strength using similar tactics, all of which were dependent on their rootedness in the social landscape of migrant workers. They developed social centres and other structures that were visible points of reference, spaces where migrant workers could simultaneously connect with their culture, keep in touch with international events, learn new skills, languages and ideas, and organise to improve the labour and social conditions they found themselves in (Rocker 2005). They therefore targeted a range of difficulties and needs that arose in the daily lives of migrant workers rather than myopically viewing them as units in need of organisation. They attempted to overcome the daily alienation experienced in repetitive, exploitative, and stigmatised occupations through cultural activities, plays, community meals and a variety of other events. While these might seem insignificant to the strict labour organiser, they were of inestimable importance in developing the bonds, confidence, and politicized identities (Bradley 2016) that later informed mobilisation. Crucially, the embeddedness and direct contact of organisers with communities on the ground also provided opportunities for the development of connections between the British sections of social movements that were in solidarity with migrant workers.

The conditions described above produced, necessitated, and further developed a broad conception of the class struggle that extended far beyond the sphere of the British workplace (Narayan 2019; Virdee 2014). Colonised groups consistently drew the connections between their exploitation in Britain and Britain's imperial role internationally, and their political activity was consciously focused on both fronts (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; James 1967). Furthermore, common experiences of racism and state

discrimination provided impetuses for unity across different groups of black workers, leading to "black unity and black struggle" (Sivandanan 1983: 23). Instead of following dominant British narratives that viewed the local, British working class as having an objective interest in the propagation of imperialism, Black and other colonised groups recognised that their oppression as racialised communities was intimately connected with the wider class oppression under capitalism in a mutually-reinforcing relationship (Narayan 2019). This realisation enabled migrant groups to establish alliances with other segments of the working class while simultaneously nurturing their own independence. The rise of political Blackness, combined with the wider New Left movements of the 1960s, shattered the sanctity of previous economistic Marxist conceptions of the revolutionary subject whilst concurrently contributing to the empowerment of racialised and migrant workers. This political identification worked together with their community embeddedness and fostered various local organisations and spaces, many of which by the 1980s operated autonomously from dominant white British organisations.

This confidence, change of perspective, and strength to organise autonomously and focus on the needs of specific communities also contributed to the gradual change of culture in mass structures like the Trade Union Congress, which in 1974 was forced to accept the existence of racism within its ranks and commit to take steps to overcome it (Ramdin 2017). This development therefore opened the door for the further participation of Black and migrant workers. Furthermore, the expansion of class analyses to include the operations of race and colonial status as direct contributors to the creation of social reality fostered connections with other struggles, such as the feminist and anti-war struggles, and enabled a multi-faceted and complex conception of capitalism that wasn't reducible to the workplace and strict material relations. The activity of migrant workers, initially borne out of necessity, was therefore instrumental in contributing to the emergence of some of today's most influential emancipatory ideas.

8: Conclusion

Since the 1900s migrant workers in the UK, located in the most precarious and exploitative occupations in the UK labour market while also experiencing wider society's racism and vilification, have needed to organise themselves. Owing to Britain's imperial history, many migrant communities have participated in these struggles, each contributing diverse characteristics. Nevertheless, the consistency with which British society treats working-class migrants has meant that migrants' responses share some features.

Primarily, the requirement to organise autonomously from British trade unions and other organisations emerges as a consequence of trade unions' hostility and complicity in propagating a wider discourse which frames the migrant worker as a force detrimental to wages and conditions. Geographical marginalisation combined with the aforementioned requirement for autonomous organisation to produce structures firmly embedded in migrant communities. This embeddedness was crucial for the establishment of lasting connections between organisers and their community and is instrumental in the development of politicised identities which then lead to mobilisation. Underpinning all this activity was usually a broad conception of the class struggle which, on the theoretical level, appreciated the multi-faceted nature of capitalism and recognised how oppressive structures work together to structure social reality. On a practical level it functioned on both labour and cultural domains to empower migrant workers in a variety of ways. In an increasingly polarised Britain which still relies on excluded and exploited migrant labour to maintain profitability, while at the same time continuing to demonise and attack migrant workers, these historical lessons are of paramount importance for social movements and academics wanting to contribute towards the empowerment of migrant and racialised communities.

Chapter 2: Literature review and discussion of precarity

Introduction

Moving from the past to the present, this chapter will provide a literature review of the main ways precarity in the UK has been conceptualised in academia. It will also connect these academic analyses to the concrete economic and social manifestations of precarity, focusing on factors that influence the lives and labour trajectories of migrant workers. Wider global trends such as the large-scale adoption of neoliberal policies will be connected to the reduction of union power in the UK and the concurrent retreat of class-based narratives and identifications, thereby setting the stage for an analysis of the subjective impacts of precarity on workers. In this chapter I explain that while I am critical of 'precarity' as a concept, I nevertheless choose to employ it because it describes and encapsulates very specific socioeconomic trends and characteristics, which, I will argue, adversely impact both British and immigrant populations' abilities to collectively mobilise against labour exploitation.

1: An Outline of "Precarity"

Migrant labour in the UK takes place within a wider environment structured by the neoliberal economic policies pursued in the West. Inside a capitalist system that is based on the unequal access to resources between labour and capital (Marx 1976 [1867]), neoliberal policies introduced since the late 1970s have accentuated class inequality and disrupted the post-Second World War Western class-collaborationist infrastructure (Dorling 2014; Robinson and Barrera 2012; Standing 2011; Bauman 2004, 2000). Alongside these developments, class-based identifications have weakened and the membership and power of class-based institutions such as trade unions has subsided (Bradley 2016; Ness 2014; Moore 2011; Wacquant 2008). Austerity policies, particularly intensified across Europe following the 2008 economic crisis, disproportionately affect minorities and those in the working class (Bradley 2016; Tyler 2015). While capitalism has always legislatively and institutionally depended on the state, social theorists from diverse disciplines converge in identifying increasingly close connections between governments and private interests (Lazzarato 2015; Foucault 2010; Harvey 2005). In the sphere of work, these changes are most directly experienced as a rise in insecure and exploitative labour conditions (Neilson 2015).

The concept of "precarity" is used by theorists and social movements to describe these various converging processes (Jørgensen 2016; Neilson 2015; Casas-Cortés 2014;

Standing 2011; Gill and Pratt 2008). There is broad agreement on the fundamental trends of deepening social precarity (Neilson 2015) and this is the sense with which it is employed in this project. The violent disruption of previous, Fordist labour regimes in the West, especially in the lower rungs of the job hierarchy, forms a central facet of the turn towards precarity. This is characterised by part-time, flexible jobs, "the return of piecework and homework, the development of telework and two-tier wage scales, the outsourcing of employees and the individualization of remuneration" (Wacquant 2008: 234-5). Alongside the decline in security has been the development and enhanced incorporation of performance monitoring technologies; the introduction of machines and enhanced use of statistics further accentuates an already insecure contractual relation, as the worker is compelled at all times to perform at the highest level for fear of adverse consequences (Bloodworth 2019; Moore and Robinson 2016).

In his extensive study of the conditions of precarity, Standing (2011: 17) identifies seven forms of labour-related security which precarious labour lacks. These are: 1) "labour market security" (the security of knowing that there are jobs available); 2) "employment security" (the contractual security of holding on to a job once hired); 3) "job security" (the security of attaining a niche in the market, knowing that in the case of unemployment there are other comparable positions available); 4) "work security" (the security of being safe in work); 5) "skill reproduction security" (the security of being afforded opportunities for training and development); 6) "income security" (stable and adequate contractually-agreed income); and 7) "representation security" (the security of having access to supportive trade unions).

The rapid growth of employment agencies providing insecure, temporary labour is an exemplary feature of this process (Casas-Cortés 2014; Standing 2011; McKay and Markova 2010). The flexibility offered by agencies is more important to employers than the cost of hiring an individual worker from an agency, as the business is completely absolved of most contractual obligations towards them (McKay and Markova 2010). In 2005, employment agencies were employing 86 percent of all workers on temporary contracts in the UK (McKay and Markova 2010: 447). After the economic crisis of 2008, the use of agencies further increased (Heyes and Hastings 2017). The number of agencies operative in the UK saw a 46% increase in 2018 alone, with 39,329 separate companies registered since 1990 (Sonovate 2019). Agencies further fracture the already insecure capital-worker relation by supplying contingent, flexible labour that is largely deprived of the rights of a contracted worker and thus is disposable and completely subordinate to the

short term "needs of the business" (McKay and Markova 2010; Anderson and Ruhs 2010). Indeed, agencies appeal to precisely those jobs that are characterised by hyper-flexibility and therefore need specific workers for specific tasks at specific times (Sporton 2013; Caviedes 2010; McKay and Markova 2010; Geddes and Scott 2010). The transitory nature of agency work means that trade unions often cannot access workers through a set workplace, rendering representation largely inaccessible (Meardi, Martin and Riera 2012). This lack of representation is further accentuated by the pure fear stemming from the intensely insecure employment relation: workers are frequently worried that, even if they do take steps to support themselves, they will immediately be fired or penalised (Moore 2011). Agency labour is therefore one of the most tangible manifestations of labour precarity, lacking every one of the aforementioned forms of labour related security (Standing 2011). As a result of their labour conditions, agency workers have been reported as being subject to high levels of stress stemming from an inability to manage their lives and from the need to respond to intense performance demands from employers (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015; Sporton 2013).

Using the seven criteria summarised above, Standing identifies the formations of a new class which he terms "the precariat", and which he argues necessitates new vocabularies, mentalities, and institutions in order to achieve empowerment (Standing 2016; 2011). This bold claim of the emergence of an entirely new class has been disputed by many commentators. Seymour (2012) repudiates the argument that modern precarity represents a novel form of class relations, writing that "as old as capitalism, such insecurity has always characterised substantial margins of the economy, with women and the racially oppressed carrying out the bulk of precarious work". Munck (2016) and Breman (2013) echo these arguments, writing that contractual and existential insecurity is a fundamental characteristic of capitalist class relations both in history and in most of the modern world, and that therefore the brief decades of Western, Keynesian capitalism are the true exceptions to capitalist normality. Breman (2013) argues that what Standing describes as a new conjuncture is simply a switch in the capitalist labour regimes of Western states which, however, leaves the underlying class formation unchanged. Moreover, various theorists have charged Standing with an inability to incorporate the realities of the Global South in his analyses, with Lazar and Sanchez (2019: 10) arguing that "vast swathes of global labour do not regard precarity as new". Finally, Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou and Tsianos (2016) contend that, precisely because of the structural forces connected to the destruction of the Fordist-associated stability and corresponding identities, the precarious experience cannot be connected with a unified subjectivity captured through the concept of

the 'precariat'; the multiplicity of identities, locations and backgrounds that share the precarious condition are so heterogeneous that such an encapsulation becomes impossible. While Standing has answered such criticisms (2016), the designation of the "precariat" as an entirely new and distinct class remains highly disputed.

Nevertheless, trends towards growing precarity, especially impacting the more economically and socially vulnerable populations, are clearly visible (Neilson 2015). The objective experience of both contractual and psychological precarity has become a rallying point for various social movements (Casas-Cortés 2014; Jørgensen 2016). Neilson and Rossiter (2008: 58) write that, "precisely because precarious labour is the norm of capitalist production and reproduction (or, better, the norm that blurs the boundaries between capitalist production and reproduction), it might contribute to the invention of new forms of political organization that stretch across the divisions and apartheids established by the speeded-up and flexible conditions of contemporary capitalist accumulation." They contend that shared experiences of precarity can be used to connect, rather than divide, people across cultural backgrounds and classes. This perspective finds agreement with a wide range of theorists and movement actors (Jørgensen 2016; Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, Tsianos 2016; Casas-Cortés 2014; Gill and Pratt 2008). Paret and Gleeson (2016: 280) therefore argue that "the central significance of the precarity concept lies in the way in which it connects the micro and the macro, situating experiences of insecurity and vulnerability within historically and geographically specific contexts"; the concept makes possible specific lines of analysis, and, consequently, illuminates new avenues for action. Therefore, despite it being conceptually stretched and overused, Alberti, Bessa, Hardy, Trappman and Umney (2018) still consider it a valuable frame of reference. In this sense, and for the purposes of this project, it will be disentangled from its strict association with Standing's wider framework and will be used as a conceptual tool informing the research that I describe below.

The realities of a precarious existence extend beyond the limited sphere of the workplace, impacting every aspect of social life (Hardt and Negri 2017; Federici 2012; Gill and Pratt 2008). The erosion of previously secure class positions brought forth by the neoliberal restructuring of the economy has fractured the sense of solidarity and mutuality associated with stable class-based identities. The individual becomes increasingly isolated in the face of social forces beyond their control (Bradley 2016; Neilson 2015; Bauman 2004). As economic polarisation deepens, the amalgamation of economic operations results in the spatial segregation of the subordinate classes (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013;

Wacquant 2008), a displacement further accentuated by cultural and symbolic narratives that demonise and further exclude those outside the dominant conceptions of social value (Tyler 2008). These mentalities of 'responsibilization' (Melossi 2008; Garland 2001) blame the poor for their poverty; more importantly, they participate in crafting and reproducing wider hegemonic narratives that compel those in disadvantaged positions to blame themselves. Lazzarato writes that these processes result in the individual having to compete "not only with others but also with himself" (2015: 18), creating an ever-present, all-encompassing compulsion to self-manage and perform. A social landscape is thus established where workers are compelled, both by structural and cultural pressures, to accept the first available jobs they can secure, while the weakening of class-based institutions and narratives ensure that the conditions of these jobs are seldom challenged and that the individual worker accepts them as a given (Standing 2011). The discipline and anxiety associated with work have thus been transposed to the entire fabric of social life, prompting various theorists to use the term 'social factory' (Federici 2012; Gill and Pratt 2008) to describe the situation in which all aspects of one's existence are to a significant extent conditioned by the demands of capital.

2: Decline of Trade Unions and Erosion of Solidarities

In this hostile landscape, trade unions have generally struggled to maintain the influence and power that characterised their prior historical development (Marino, Penninx and Roosblad 2015; Ness 2014; Gorodzeisky and Richards 2013; Standing 2011). Fundamentally premised on the Fordist model of a geographically proximate, tight-knit community that is securely employed in a single industry, trade unionist solidarity emanated from the already existing commons between neighbours and co-workers. With the current conjuncture displaying the exact opposite features, workers have been "disconnected from the traditional instruments of mobilization and representation" that had previously formed the foundations of their collective struggles (Wacquant 2008: 245). While these class identities were exclusive in the sense that they privileged a particular conception of the "worker" as a white, straight male employed in manual labour (Roediger 2007; Young 1990; James 1975), they nevertheless represented a rallying point for organised resistance. One of the central arguments of Standing's (2016; 2011) theses is that these traditional union structures are no longer able to inspire a working class whose conditions of existence are vastly different from the past. In response to these developments, scholars such as Roca and Martín-Díaz (2017) and Ness (2014) have

expanded their investigations into labour mobilisations to include actions and initiatives that go beyond traditionally conceived trade unionism.

Alongside the erosion of class-based politicized identifications (Bradley 2016), another product of the hegemonic neoliberal culture is the linguistic erasure of the vocabularies of resistance and an almost all-encompassing absence of the negative (Baudrillard 2010). Beaud's (1999: 285) interview with some young temporary workers in France left her with the impression that they "have no other political perspective than that of a timid reformism, with no inkling of subversion, and they seem preoccupied above all with making their situation livable". Marcuse's (1991 [1964]) "one dimensional man" becomes a generalised social reality: detached from their collective identities, excluded from representational organisations and denied the linguistic, cultural and institutional tools to imagine a different social order, the alienated individual succumbs, and by doing so participates in the reproduction of the ensemble of social structures that further atomise and alienate them. Mark Fisher's analysis of capitalist realism (2009) adds a modern dimension to these ideas by examining how the impoverishment alongside the fervent commercialisation of popular culture has almost entirely exhausted people's capacities for imagining alternatives to the dominant social reality. When the resignation of the imagination is combined with objective insecurity, sustained labour mobilisations are rendered increasingly difficult, sporadic, and unfocused.

The reduction of union power is most accurately illustrated by the decline in union membership. According to the UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2017), "around 6.2 million employees in the UK were trade union members in 2016. The level of overall union members decreased by 275,000 over the year from 2015 (a 4.2% decrease), the largest annual fall recorded since the series began in 1995. Current membership levels are well below the peak of over 13 million in 1979". In 2018, these numbers slightly rose, but nevertheless remained significantly lower than previous decades (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2019). In Scotland, there has been a 10.8% fall in the proportion of unionised employees relative to 1995 (2019: 19). Significantly, 77% of those in unions in the UK are 35 years old or older, compared to only 4.4% of union membership for those between the ages of 16 and 24. Simply put, more people are joining work than are joining unions (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2019). Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between job security, remuneration, and union membership (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2019): people in more secure and higher-paid occupations are more likely to be

members of unions, while those in occupations that need representation the most are disproportionately absent.

Temporary postings make it difficult to build up the relationships and strategy required to organise (Woodcock 2014; Bauman 2004); contractual insecurity impedes resistance through fear of dismissal or punitive penalties (Moore 2011); and the anxiety and constant fatigue resulting from anti-social hours and adverse conditions (Anderson 2010) leave little energy for action or space for such thoughts. These barriers are amplified when it comes to organising agency workers (Anderson and Ruhs 2010): in 2016, 24% of permanent employees were members of trade unions as compared with only 14.8% of "temps" (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2019). These factors have meant that union activity is concentrated mainly in the relatively secure public sector, which in 2014 had a 56.7% union density as compared to the private sector's 14.2% (Tapia 2014: 55). In terms of mobilisations, the decline of union power has resulted in a rapid reduction in strike actions, with the 273,000 "working days lost" in 2018 representing the "sixth-lowest total since records began in 1891" (Office for National Statistics 2019). David Harvey (2005) writes that neoliberalism intrinsically relies on weak unions. This is further illustrated by the rise of employment tribunals; as union power has declined, the rectification of grievances increasingly shifts from collective to individual action, reflecting and reinforcing the wider socioeconomic landscape (Anitha, Pearson and McDowell 2018). Alongside these developments, critical observers cite the ongoing reformist, class-collaborationist and antidemocratic practices of mainstream unions as further contributing factors to their decline (Angry Workers 2020; Ness 2014).

The space for action and solidarity that has been vacated by trade unions and other class and community-based organisations has been largely turned over to non-governmental organisations and charities, whose aims and methods largely complement the modern capitalist structure (King 2016; Anderson 2013; Foucault 2010; Harvey 2005; Bauman 2000). Their existence and operation complement the rise of mentalities of responsibilisation (Melossi 2008; Garland 2001), since they both functionally rely on the disempowerment of the oppressed groups they profess to help: at the same time that responsiblisation places the individual in a series of conditional relationships relative to the state (Anderson 2013) and fails to highlight the social, rather than individual, origins of poverty (Melossi 2008), these organisations come in to provide a form of relief that 1) does not challenge the foundations of the economic or social system, in contrast with historic trade unions and radical organisations/parties and 2) hinders the possibilities of

autonomous community empowerment as they do not come from the people and do not empower them to fight for themselves (Harvey 2005). This description, rather than being confined to official NGOs and charities, also applies to trade unions that have moved away from mutual organising and collective bargaining to a service-based approach geared towards individual representation (Connolly and Sellers 2017). To this end, King (2016) draws the important distinction between solidarity and charity: charity presumes a hierarchy where one party 'gives aid' to the other, whereas solidarity foregrounds a non-hierarchical shared interest and involvement to resolve the issue at hand. The latter is thus the basis for shared, intersectional struggle (King 2016; Collins 2000), while the former is a by-product and extension of the consumer-oriented and depoliticized modern public sphere (Bauman 2000). Always ready to jump in and recuperate the struggles of the oppressed, leading them to conformist and non-oppositional paths, NGOs and charities feature prominently in discourses on migrant workers with writers like Harvey (2005), King (2016) and Agustín (2007) criticizing various aspects of their paternalistic and service-oriented activities.

Another characteristic impeding sustained mass mobilisations is to be found in the "culturalization" of politics which has emerged from the combination of institutionalised insecurity and the retreat from class identifications, fuelling xenophobia and racism (Davidson and Virdee 2019; Rzepnikowska 2019; Yılmaz 2012; Però and Solomos 2010). Virdee and McGeever (2017) thereby identify the Brexit vote as combining an imperial, racist, nationalist sentiment with a desire to protect the English nation from the assaults of globalisation, thus drawing a clear connection between culture and economic anxiety. Joon-Han (2016) finds that voting for far-right, nationalist, anti-immigration parties increases as economic inequality deepens. The arrival of new immigrants (themselves victims of imperialist processes of uneven development in their own countries: Lapavitsas 2012; Miles 1982) is manipulated by politicians and the media to displace popular frustrations towards the 'other' (Braouezek 2016; Robinson and Barrera 2012; Kinvall 2005). This xenophobia obstructs any potential for the creation of a united class-based resistance between local and immigrant precarious workers (Castles 2000). This trend is defined by Agustín and Jørgensen (2016) as exemplary of "misplaced alliances" since it leads indigenous workers to identify more closely with fascist parties than with migrant workers. Illustrative of these misplaced alliances is the fact that anti-immigrant sentiment seems to be concentrated against those immigrants staffing 'low-skilled', working class occupations: an estimated 49% of those surveyed in Scotland wanted the immigration of restaurant and construction workers to be reduced, while only 29% was hostile to the

movement of "highly skilled workers" (Migration Observatory 2014). With the 'culturalization' of politics becoming increasingly hegemonic, even important union figureheads such as Len McCluskey, secretary of Unite, has resorted to blaming immigrants for falling labour standards (*The Guardian* 2019) despite representing a large number of migrant workers and having access to evidence that immigration, on its own, has no direct impact on working conditions (Wadsworth, Dhingra, Ottaviano and Van Reenen 2017). This is not the first time that unions have been hostile to migrant workers, with the 2009 strikes in Lindsey Oil Refinery representing a seminal point where union mobilisation was explicitly xenophobic (Connolly and Sellers 2017). As Young (1990), Collins (2000) and Butler (1998) point out, cultural perceptions of non-economic categories such as ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality have very real economic effects, actively structuring society and conditioning actors' interactions so deeply that they are essentially inseparable from coherent economic analyses.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to present some of the main ways in which precarity is conceptualised in the relevant literature and connect them to its concrete manifestations in the UK. Since precarity is a concept that has received triggered significant arguments, I specified how it will be used in the context of this research. To summarise, migrant workers inhabit a Britain that: (1) is characterised by deepening class inequality; (2) is experiencing the increasing penetration of precarity in all aspects of social existence; (3) is experiencing an erosion of class-centred identities and unions; and (4) is experiencing the rise and consolidation of immigrant-blaming xenophobic narratives. These are important contextual points that must underpin of serious analysis of migrant labour and collective resistance to precarity. Contrary to simplistic underdeveloped Marxist understandings (such as Castles 2000 or those exhibited by McCluskey above) of migrant labour being used by elites to destroy labour rights and weaken unionisation drives, the reality is that migrants enter a situation that is already completely saturated by poor conditions and weak unions (Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012; Moore 2011). Furthermore, migrants are not automatically inserted into the worst jobs of the "secondary labour market" to meet the demands of economic competition, as Piore (1979) wrote in his famous study of migrant labour. Indeed, migrants make up 12% of financial and business sector workers (Office for National Statistics 2017b). What differentiates migrants from the British white working class are the conditions of their labour and the extent to which their precarious experience

is further structured by additional barriers such as social exclusion, de-skilling, language difficulties, access to support, and migration status in an increasingly hostile environment.

Chapter 3: Literature Review and Discussion on Migrant Labour and Resistance

Introduction

An analysis of migrant workers' mobilisations and the barriers they experience in achieving self-organisation should necessarily depart from a consideration of the wider structural setting they operate in. This chapter will briefly examine the conditions of migrant workers in the UK and engage with the relevant academic literature that examines migrant labour. The ways in which the proliferation of precarious employment conditions impact migrant workers specifically will be presented. Moving from the structural to the subjective domains, this chapter will also illustrate some key characteristics, dispositions and behaviours that are attributed to migrant workers in precarious occupations (such as an initial temporary, accumulation-focused outlook). Moreover, since migrant labour is structured by a variety of intersecting economic, social and symbolic forces that coalesce in situating migrant workers in specific occupations and sectors, the literature analysing how signifiers of difference are interpreted and manifested in the context of social production and reproduction will be discussed. The State's role in producing and structuring migrant disempowerment and exploitability will also be examined.

These explorations are part of a critical literature review of studies examining migrant worker mobilisations. I argue that the majority of the studies focusing on the issue of migrant worker mobilisation fail to adequately include the voices of migrant workers in their analyses and conclusions, and therefore perpetuate the marginalisation that these communities experience both in academia and in social movements. Apart from this tendency's reproduction of socio-political problems, I argue that it is also academically problematic because it perpetuates dominant, hegemonic understandings of migrant workers as *essentially* disempowered, indifferent or passive. As a result of their lack of direct engagement with migrant workers, many of these studies fail to adequately examine the subjective reasons for migrant workers' relative lack of labour mobilisation. Concurrently, from the other side of the spectrum, academics that *have* engaged directly with migrant workers have tended to focus on instances where they were at least partly successful in holding some mobilisations and organising clearly defined groups. This lopsided focus on migrant campaigns, while useful in explaining what tactics have been fruitful for migrant worker organising, nevertheless doesn't examine why these examples have not proven generalisable. What are the barriers to migrant workers' autonomous mobilisations, and what can trade unions and other social movements do to address them?

An examination of this question that includes the voices of migrant workers seems to be missing from the relevant literature.

Despite these criticisms, the above observation does not intend to downplay the contributions of studies analysing migrant workers' mobilisations. To conclude this chapter, I examine some notable recent instances of collective mobilisations by migrant workers and attempt to draw some conclusions pertaining to how unions and social movements can address the multi-layered barriers to organisation imposed by precarity. It emerges that, owing to the complex web of intersecting factors that structure migrant workers' exploitation in the UK, successful campaigns have been those that, at the very minimum, operationalise intersectional analyses that address subjects' concerns *both* as migrants and as workers. In addition, these campaigns tend to work towards the empowerment and inclusion of their participants rather than seeing them as passive recipients of assistance. Finally, taking inspiration from successful campaigns in the United States, I argue that community embeddedness in the form of social spaces and the presence of activists can be an important tool for organisations to counter the physical and psychological dispersal and disconnection of workers that is produced by precarious socioeconomic relations.

1: Outline of the Conditions of Migrant Labour in the UK

As of 2016, migrant workers made up 11% of Britain's total labour force, with 7% of those being from EU countries (Office for National Statistics 2017b). 29% of these EU immigrants are from Poland (Wadsworth, Dhingra, Ottaviano and Van Reenen 2017). Together with significant numbers of recent arrivals from Eastern Europe (Office for National Statistics 2017a), the economic crisis of the European South has triggered additional migration from Greece, Spain, and Portugal to the UK (Bradley 2016). According to the Office for National Statistics (2017b) "non-UK nationals are more likely to be in jobs they are over-qualified for than UK nationals; approximately 15% of UK nationals were employed in jobs they were deemed to be over-educated for (in comparison to other workers), compared with almost 2 in 5 non-UK nationals (37% of EU14, EU2 and non-EU nationals and 40% of EU8 nationals)". De-skilling, or the non-recognition of qualifications gained abroad that results in workers accepting 'lower skilled' positions, is a significant contributor to the exploitation migrants experience in the labour market, and to their acceptance of such conditions (Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010; Anderson and Ruhs 2010; Bauder 2006).

According to Rienzo (2016), migrants in the UK in 2015 made up "42% of workers in elementary process plant occupations", 36% of process operative workers and 35% of workers associated with the housekeeping/domestic sectors. EU8 (Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) and EU2 (Romanian and Bulgarian) nationals work more hours than average, with 50% and 61% respectively exceeding 40 per week (Office for National Statistics 2017b). Migrant workers are significantly less likely to join unions: only 16.2% are members of unions, as opposed to 25% of those born in Britain (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2017).

As of 2018, Scotland exhibited similar profiles, with non-UK workers accounting for 7.5% of the total labour force (Scottish Government 2018). Significantly, more than 81% of EU migrants aged between 16-64 were employed, a statistic that attests to the fact that a significant part of migration to the UK is labour-related. Non-EU migrants were employed at a rate of 50%. Migrant workers are mostly concentrated in the Food and Drink sector (which includes hospitality and food manufacturing), where they comprise 14.2% of the workforce. 25.4% of migrant workers were employed in what are considered "elementary occupations", which include all the precarious occupations that will be examined in the course of this research. Non-UK workers made up 16.5% of the total employment in the tourism sector and 14% of the Food and Drink sector. Importantly, migrant workers made up more than 29% of the total workforce employed in food manufacturing: this is generally repetitive, production-line oriented work that is highly precarious and alienating. In another illustration of the de-skilling that migrant workers are confronted with upon arrival to the UK, only 65% of EU workers with degrees were employed in a "high or medium-skill level occupations", in comparison to 81.2% of UK nationals (Scottish Government 2018). At the time of writing, the full impacts of Brexit relative to migrant workers in the Scottish and British workforce are unclear.

Migrants thus figure disproportionately in the most exploitative and symbolically stigmatized jobs in the labour market (Lopez and Hall 2015; Anderson 2013; Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010; Anderson and Ruhs 2010; Miles 1982; Piore 1979). These occupations are frequently characterised by intense pressure, instability, and the constant, overhanging threat of dismissal (Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012; McKay and Markova 2012). For many migrants, the possibility of late or no payment forms a regular part of life (Lopez and Hall 2015). The disadvantage experienced by migrants in the labour market is exacerbated by their frequent interactions with employment agencies. Many

agencies operate salary deductions such as unpaid breaks or transport, resulting in all the participants in Sporton's (2013) study of migrant agency workers claiming that they earn significantly less than the locals. In 2010, only 56% of employees in the immigrant-dense and predominantly minimum-wage paying hospitality sector were in full employment, and only 5.6% were members of unions (Lucas and Mansfield 2010: 160-1). Here, migrants are habitually located in 'unskilled', back-of-the-house jobs such as cooks and kitchen assistants and routinely work longer hours than other workers (Alberti 2014; Lucas and Mansfield 2010). The combination of factors pushing migrants into such employment (examined below) and the actual realities of this labour market have prompted writers to identify migrants as the social group most representative of the precarious condition (Jørgensen 2016; Standing 2011).

Due to an amalgamation of factors stemming from the immigrant experience such as de-skilling, legal status, lack of familiarity with the new labour market they find themselves in, the language barrier, and an often-cited preference for accessible jobs that have less strict selection criteria, migrants provide a supply of easily-exploitable labour (Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012; Bauder 2006; Holgate 2005). This reality is also impacted by the conscious decisions of migrants themselves: Recchi and Triandafyllidou (2010: 133) write that migrants have chosen to exchange a higher social status in their country of origin in favour of a higher salary in their country of destination. This "exchange" is often conceived of as a temporary and merely instrumental one: many migrants enter the host society with an economistic outlook, aiming to collect as much money as they can and return home (Sayad 2004; Piore 1979). Not expecting to stay for long, they tolerate substandard labour conditions and employ a "dual frame of reference" whereby they compare their current occupation favourably to the opportunities available in their country. Piore (1979: 53) argues that "from the perspective of the migrant, the work is essentially asocial: It is purely a means to an end. In this sense, the migrant is initially a true economic man, probably the closest thing in real life to the *Homo economicus* of economic theory [author's italics]". For example, MacKenzie and Forde (2009) found that migrant workers in a precarious job in a glass factory in England wanted to work as much as possible, welcoming long hours and the possibility of overtime. This did not mean that they enjoyed working for the sake of work: in a context of minimum wage, precarious employment engaged in purely for instrumental, short-term needs, workers welcomed the chance to make as much money as fast as possible. This opportunity, in this context, made the exploitative aspects of the job bearable.

Writing on the labour market trajectories of Eastern European migrants with secured residency statuses, Parutis (2014) argues that new arrivals' labour practices are characterised by "excessive working hours and saving, often more than one job, low wages, agency work, and problematic employment relations" (2014: 41). The migrants that want to stay in the UK for the long-term may take advantage of this stage to develop key skills that will facilitate their future progression: for example, they may value the opportunity to practice English. McCollum and Findlay (2015) and Anderson (2010) find that as migrants' 'dual frame of reference' begins to subside, as migrant workers become acclimated in their new jobs and society, their labour expectations slowly rise. While employers may lament this shift as it reduces migrants' propensity to tolerate substandard employment practices (Maldonado 2009), they also make use of it in order to filter, select, and then promote or further train the workers they desire (Lever and Milbourne 2017; Sporton 2013). A select few migrant workers may move higher in the occupational hierarchy than their peers: this progression both ruptures the potential of solidarity between migrant workers and at the same time provides incentives to be a "good worker" in the hopes of also accessing a promotion (Vasey 2017; Sporton 2013). These limited opportunities, however, are not sufficient to challenge the wider reality experienced by most migrant workers: for example, Lever and Milbourne (2017) find that while Polish workers in Wales might progress to become production line managers, they are very rarely promoted to positions of actual power, i.e., in management. Furthermore, the primacy of ethnic identities over a wider class or migrant consciousness means that, rather than migrant workers in positions of relative power showing solidarity to other migrants, they privilege co-ethnic colleagues and rupture the potential for inter-ethnic solidarities (Paret and Gleeson 2016). Various sources thereby converge in highlighting different ways in which the oppressed can also oppress (King 2016; Collins 2000).

Operating in a tight and competitive market, UK employers deeply rely on this stable supply of precarious, flexible, and obedient labour: this becomes even more urgent in sectors that experience high turnover rates (Greene 2019; Menz and Caviedes 2010; Bauder 2006). The most important consideration for employers hiring migrant workers is flexibility, allowing them to direct their labour supply through uncomplicated hire-and-fire practices in tune with changes in production, unconstrained by unions (Caviedes 2010; Bauder 2006). According to and Ruhs and Anderson (2010b) the practices of employers and the State exist in a dialectical relationship, both combining to determine the numbers, employment status, and exploitability of migrant workers. Employers are conscious of the specificities of migrant workers' conditions and therefore often consciously choose to employ immigrants (Holmes 2013; Anderson and Ruhs 2010; Bauder 2006).

In their study of "Who Needs Migrant Workers" Ruhs and Anderson (2010b: 4) argue that, contrary to the popular narrative, it is not migrant workers who fill vacancies undesired by the locals; rather, the real reason "typically underlying employers' calls for migrants to help fill vacancies is that the demand for labour exceeds supply *at the prevailing wages and employment conditions*" [authors' italics]. Indeed, a sizeable proportion of the business community vocally supported, and still supports, the free movement of labour enabled by the European Union's internal border policies precisely because of the flexibility offered by newly arrived precarious immigrants (Greene 2019; Boswell and Geddes 2011; Menz 2010). It remains to be seen how the ongoing Brexit negotiations will influence, and be influenced by, the interests of big capital, and how migrant workers will be impacted as a result.

As outlined previously, recruitment agencies supply this labour and frequently are the organisations through which migrants become introduced to the UK labour market, thereby also directing their distribution (Samaluk 2016; McCollum and Findlay 2015; Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012; Sporton 2013; Geddes and Scott 2010; McKay and Markova 2010, Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010). Upon interviewing agency recruiters, McCollum and Findlay (2015: 439) found that employers have a conscious understanding of how intimately their business depends on employing migrants; they conclude that labour markets and migrant labour are connected by a mutually reinforcing relationship where 'flexible labour markets create a structural demand for migrant labour and a ready supply of migrant labour allows flexible labour markets to flourish'. Castells (1975: 52) therefore writes that 'the utility of immigrant labour to capital derives primarily from the fact that it can act towards it *as though the labour movement did not exist*' [emphasis mine].

The distribution of migrants within an already precarious labour market is heavily gendered and further structured by the interplay of essentialist stereotypes that attach certain characteristics to specific migrant groups (McCollum and Findlay 2015; Anderson 2013; Anderson and Ruhs 2010; McDowell 2008; Wrench and Solomos 1993; Miles 1982). This construction of difference manifests itself predominantly in presumptions about desired skills and behaviours that certain groups of migrants are perceived to exhibit (Anderson 2013; McDowell 2008; Bauder 2006). Maldonado (2009) and MacKenzie and Forde (2009) have conducted interviews with employers of migrant labour. In both studies, essentialist beliefs about migrant groups' suitability for certain jobs figure prominently in informing employers' choice to hire them- for example, Mexicans were perceived as being "culturally" (Maldonado 2009: 1027) durable, obedient and passionate workers, and this essentialisation

was subsequently used to explain their positions in the labour hierarchy. While ethnicity plays an important role in determining migrants' distribution in the labour market, other factors such as gender and race also influence the process (Anderson 2013; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010).

Signifiers of difference could therefore be considered as the raw materials for the ideological justification of oppression. These signifiers, ranging from skin colour to accents and language errors to differential access to and valuation of economic, social, and cultural capital (Samaluk 2016; Bauder 2006), are interpreted by the various systemic institutions (i.e. educational facilities, local councils, and the wider job market) in ways that assign different "social destinies" to foreigners (Balibar and Wallerstein 1991: 104). This means that, together with economic and political processes, wider cultural perceptions are also important in the distribution of migrants in the labour market. Bauder (2006) analyses how one's presentation (corporeal habitus) may not be aligned with whatever prevailing cultural standards in the host country are perceived to be required for specific jobs; importantly, these perceptions frequently carry latent racist presumptions, as in the case of an interviewed South Asian woman in Canada who, while speaking perfect English having worked as a librarian in an English library in her home country, was deemed to not have an adequate abilities to speak to people in Canada on account of her foreign accent.

Essentialisation functions in ways that ultimately close-off significant segments of the labour market while opening others up, *ultimately confining migrants to specific occupations without the requirement for overt legal interference*. However, rather than essentialist notions simply functioning to foreclose access to migrants, Anderson (2013) argues that corporeal signifiers of difference may in fact be specifically required in certain markets such as in hospitality services, which rely on selling a fetishized "experience" of difference (as, for example, do many restaurants which rely on particular migrant groups for finding workers). These combinations of culture and the economy serve to craft a popular conception of the migrant as *essentially*, *intrinsically* a worker, as opposed to a complete human being (Bauder 2006; Balibar and Wallerstein 1991). Importantly, Collins's (2000) work on Black feminist thought and intersectionality as well as Anderson's (2013) examination of concrete conditions migrants experience in the UK suggest that essentializing stereotypes change over time, shaping and in turn being shaped by the wider social context. In a context of tokenistic state-sponsored anti-racism, the articulation and operation of structural marginalisation might change, but under conditions of domination the underlying structure remains largely unaltered.

As previously held stereotypes converge and interact with wider structural forces to concentrate a population within a given sector or range of jobs, the jobs themselves become associated with the groups performing them (Anderson 2013; Anderson and Ruhs 2010; Maldonado 2009; McDowell 2008; Bauder 2006). The confinement of certain population to certain jobs is thereby characterised by Miles (1982: 171) as an "ideological effect in that it appears (i.e. can be interpreted) to demonstrate the 'suitability' of 'racialised' labour for only low skilled, low paid manual jobs". This confirms Young's (1990), Collins's (2000) and Butler's (1998) assertions that culture and the economy are inextricably linked. It also resonates with Smith's (2016) argument that the everyday lived experiences of the social whole are crucial in shaping the construction and reproduction of difference: the image of the Eastern European migrant worker working in specific jobs, defined by specific conditions and living in specific parts of the city, overall explicated by a wider xenophobic and essentialist narrative, is as central to migrants' exploitation as the macro-economic processes that structure their experience.

2: State Production of Migrant Vulnerability through Bordering

The politics of migrant labour in the UK and Scotland are intimately connected to wider global processes of uneven and combined development rooted in colonial and post-colonial relations (Hardy 2014; Virdee 2014; Cohen 2006). The labour requirements of specific economic sectors that were previously filled by a reliance on migration from the former colonies (Virdee 2014; Ramdin 2014) have now in the UK been largely succeeded by the migration of EU workers, a migration that is itself spurred by a variety of push-factors in their countries of origin such as debt crises, austerity and lack of opportunity (Samaluk 2016; Bradley 2016; Hardy 2014; Holmes 2013; Lapavitsas 2012; Bogiopoulos 2011; Berger and Mohr 2010). Countries and businesses within the EU, including the UK, depend on these circuits of migration and directly factor it in their economic planning (Boswell and Geddes 2011). The politics of migration control therefore emerge as fundamental operations of national states and supra-national entities such as the European Union (Geddes and Scholten 2016; Holmes 2013). Hardy (2014: 148-149) encapsulates the relations between states and the world market by writing that "the world economy and nation states are not dichotomous entities, whereby the coercive laws of value in the former unfold and are inflicted on the latter. Rather they are mutually constitutive in a process whereby nation-states are constrained and shaped by the parameters of the accumulation process in the global economy, but at the same time the strategies of states and capital reshape the accumulation processes in the global economy and forge a new set of parameters and dynamics".

While theorists such as Dorling (2014) and Beck (2007) promote a narrative of globalisation that centres on the retreat of the State vis-à-vis international markets, consequently leading to a significant reduction in the State's power and influence, other voices instead argue that the State continues to perform a fundamental regulative and productive role in the workings of the capitalist economy (King 2016; Lazzarato 2015; Anderson 2013; Anderson, Sharma and Wright 2011; Foucault 2010; Balibar and Wallerstein 1991). In tracing the development of the intrinsic logics and ideas of neoliberalism, Foucault (2010) discovers that competition - the basic tenet of neoliberal theory - rather than being perceived by neoliberals as a 'natural' state of affairs, above and beyond human control and therefore infallible, is instead thought of as constantly under attack and necessitating protection. The State's role, therefore, becomes one of attentively regulating all aspects of society that might impede competitive market activity. In order to allow competition to thrive, it is impelled to use juridical measures to control all non-economic spontaneity, leading to a situation of deep social control; "neo-liberalism should not therefore be identified with laissez-faire, but rather with permanent vigilance, activity, and intervention" (Foucault 2010: 132).

This analysis is further supported by Lazzarato's (2015) application of the Foucauldian notion of governmentality to the context of modern neoliberalism, leading him to the conclusion that, rather than only employing the "soft power" of biopolitics, states are increasingly reverting to a blatant authoritarianism. As international economies and national societies are constantly undergoing change, Harvey (2005:64) writes that "the neoliberal state should persistently seek out internal reorganizations and new institutional arrangements that improve its competitive position as an entity vis-à-vis other states in the global market". This process has increasingly come to involve the management and repression of everything considered detrimental to the market, with a resulting rise in the penalisation of poor and immigrant populations in the West (Melossi 2008). This line of analysis, rather than understanding States as entities at the mercy of the obscure operations of the global market, sees them as important actors in the modification of social and economic conditions through the exercise of their juridical authority. While it is true that neoliberalism is becoming increasingly imprinted on State function (Lazzarato 2015), it is important to not overlook the state's influence in directly managing a range of affairs that make a significant difference in people's lives.

Following and expanding these ideas, Anderson has done extensive work (2013; 2010) on how the State, and specifically its operations vis-à-vis territorial and imagined

borders, is instrumental in the production of migrant vulnerability and precarity. She writes that "through the creation of categories of entrant, the imposition of employment relations and the construction of institutionalised uncertainty, immigration controls work to form types of labour with particular relations to employers and to labour markets" (2010: 301). For example, most worker Visas for non-EU workers depend on the worker having secured a job prior to entry and are revoked once the job is lost or completed. As a result, migrant workers are directly dependent on their employer's goodwill and might be unwilling to unionise or otherwise claim a better working existence (Anderson 2013, 2010; Moore 2011). Bauder (2006) consequently argues that citizenship is a way of regulating the labour market: not only does it provide a clear way of establishing a primary differentiation between 'included' and 'excluded', but it affords the possibility of further qualifying this initial division and thereby distributing different ethnicities according to the requirements of labour markets and popular stereotypes. Simultaneously, the spectacles of detention and deportation, the ultimate expression of the State's power vis-à-vis migrants, are constantly operative in the background of their imaginations and imbue every moment with fear of expulsion (Montange 2017). This experience, whether through official rhetoric or media sensationalism, is increasingly beginning to apply also to previously status-secure EU migrants (Yeo 2018). At the time of writing, it remains to be seen how Brexit will impact the status and labour relations of EU workers. However, from 2021 all new migrant workers will face significant restrictions on their rights of entry and habitation in the UK (UK Government 2020d).

The State's functions of bordering do not only create migrant vulnerability through their direct operations; they also contribute to migrant oppression through their ideological articulation (King 2016; Anderson 2013; Anderson, Sharma, and Wright 2011; Balibar and Wallerstein 1991). Since ideas of the State are inherently tied to a particular normative conception of the 'people', which includes an imagined conception of their common values, mentalities, and aspirations, citizenship becomes associated with inclusion and shared participation in this ideological mix (Anderson 2013). Concurrently, these operations produce bodies that are codified as 'foreign', with all of the added weight that 'foreignness' carries in a structurally racist society (Virdee and McGeever 2017). This means that, even if a migrant succeeds in jumping through the hoops required for a nominal acceptance in the "community of value", they "must endlessly prove themselves, marking borders, particularly of course by decrying each other to prove that they have the right values" (Anderson 2013: 6). The State is therefore reproduced in the very interactions and self-awareness of the people it regulates and whose oppressions it structures; not only are migrants excluded by

mainstream society, but the logic of bordering penetrates so deeply that it has the capacity of structuring their own habitus: for example, Lever and Milbourne (2017) found that Polish migrants working in meat processing occupations reproduced their own essentialisation, consequently "pushing themselves to physical and mental extremes" (2017: 313).

The deep hegemony of the State and of its territorial and ideological uses of borders is also present in the rhetoric and actions of social movements fighting for migrant emancipation. For a start, Cappiali (2017) and King (2016) both locate examples, further discussed below, of 'local', non-migrant Left groups maintaining tokenistic relationships with migrants, effectively reproducing their subalternity while claiming to be acting in solidarity. In an examination of outreach projects targeting migrant sex workers in Spain, but nevertheless highly pertinent to the UK context, Agustín (2007) found that the goals and objectives of the NGOs were routinely put above the needs and wishes of their 'beneficiaries', who were often treated with contempt and borderline racist behaviours; essentially, the border which rendered the migrant vulnerable in the first place was being consistently reproduced in their interactions with the people who were supposed to be 'helping' them. This is in line with King's (2016) observation that the disproportionate access to privilege between local activists and migrants is rarely adequately confronted, leaving the interpersonal manifestations of borders uncontested. Additionally, in surveying the rhetoric and methods of anti-deportation campaigns, Anderson (2013) finds that, rather than challenging the nationalist "community of value" and attempting to promote an imaginary free from binary thinking based on ethnic stereotypes and exclusions, movements tend to replicate and organise themselves precisely along these dominant values. Thus, it is not uncommon to see an anti-deportation campaign arguing against an individual's deportation by reproducing popular discourses around 'deserving' and 'underserving', 'good' and 'bad' migrants. Similarly, King (2016) highlights the propensity of movements for recognition to be recuperated by the State, as the powers that be appropriate their demands into the dominant existing framework, simply extending the boundary of who or what is 'included' rather than allowing the logic of inclusion/exclusion to be challenged. This tendency has been increasingly visible in recent campaigns that aim to safeguard the rights of EU citizens in the light of Brexit, subliminally giving credence to the idea of migrant hierarchies without extending their solidarity to the many other migrant groups in the UK that are already experiencing the violence associated with lack of residence rights (Shaheen 2018).

3: Migrants, Unions, and Agency

Even though migrants occupy central positions in the structure of the UK's economy and are disproportionately exposed to the dangers of precarity, examples of migrant unionisation are comparatively rare. Despite a plethora of literature having been published on existing migrant labour campaigns (examples include: Alberti and Però 2018; Alberti 2016; Lagnado 2015; Lopez and Hall 2015; Però 2014; Adler, Tapia and Turner 2014; Jayaraman and Ness 2005), there are comparatively few studies focusing on why these campaigns have not proven generalizable. Furthermore, other than the Angry Workers' (2020) analysis of attempts to organise in precarious occupations in London, I could not find any literature specifically examining the barriers to migrant workers' mobilisations in the UK as a wider phenomenon outside the strict scope of unions. In the existing literature, explanations for migrants' lower unionisation rates as compared to local workers can be generally split into two strands: those that depart from the migrant condition and those that focus on how union activity fosters or impedes migrant unionisation.

Explanations grounded on how the immigrant condition impedes unionisation tend to base themselves on the subjectivities potentially produced by migration. Some present plausible arguments: for example, Kranendonk and de Beer (2016) locate explanations in the linguistic and cultural differences of migrants, the generally low union density of the private sector and, crucially, in the perceptions of unions that migrants bring with them from their countries of origin. Therefore "the more migrants are accustomed to the role of trade unions as a consequence of a high union density in their country of origin at the time they emigrated, the more likely they are to join a union in the country of destination" (2016: 864). For example, Moore (2011) finds that many Eastern European workers might be reluctant to join unions because unions were intimately aligned with the old communist regimes of their countries and are thereby historically tainted. As Sayad (2004) forcefully demonstrated, immigrants are also emigrants, they are subjects before their act of migration: the socialisation and ideas they developed in their home countries are transported with them to their new homes, accordingly influencing their actions. Finally, objective limitations connected to the immigrant condition are also important in shaping actors' choices: Marino, Penninx and Roosblad (2015) argue that insecurity stemming from precarious legal status may impede a migrant's desire to rebel against employment practices. In the UK, the right to remain of legally employed migrants from outside the EU is directly connected to sponsorship from an employer, and one's loss of work- whether due to union activity or otherwise- can swiftly result in deportation. This is a concrete example of how juridical

labour practices connect with employer practices and demands to render migrants more exploitable.

The focus on the migrant condition however entails the danger of resulting in crude trivialisations of the complexities surrounding the barriers to migrant workers' unionisation and collective resistance. For example, Castles (2000: 42) argues that "the majority of immigrants are not politically organised, whether through apathy or fear of repression". Generalising without grounding his arguments in empirical research, the author thereby performs an essentialising practice of his own. Indeed, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, many migrants are highly aware of the disadvantages they experience relative to British workers (Cook, Dweyer and Waite 2011). In a similar fashion, Piore (1979: 109-110) writes that, due to their temporary outlook, "migrants do not have a long-term interest in the community, and this is bound to affect their interest in political participation. As a general rule, they simply do not see themselves as being around long enough to make most issues of community development and structure relevant". However, this conclusion is not adequately justified- migrants' 'lack of care' is assumed to emanate from their temporary outlook, their 'dual frame of reference', and the economistic rationality mentioned above. Migrants are portrayed as selfish automata without a history or a sense of dignity. While the above approach can be a useful starting point in analysing subjectivities that are caught between two worlds, it is problematic if it leads to a reduction of the complexity of migrants' agency and structural positionality to a simple comparative calculation. An accurate generalisation of such a heterogeneous group cannot be made (Alberti, Holgate and Turner 2014). Nevertheless, when considering the combination of social forces structuring migrants' experiences outlined above, it is possible to conclude that migrants do not passively 'accept' exploitative working conditions simply because they are 'better' than the ones they left behind. Rather, it would be more accurate to ground such an analysis in the fact that migrant workers are positioned in specific occupations and conditions by a wide interplay of structural and cultural forces, including ones originating in their subjective experiences and goals. This line of reasoning is also applicable when examining migrant mobilizations: as will be illustrated, the barriers migrants are faced with are more multifaceted than a one-dimensional line of enquiry can provide.

Union-oriented explanations, by contrast, centre on how union strategies encourage or discourage migrant participation. Questions of difference, representation and intersectionality typically underlie such lines of analysis, such as whether unions should attempt to organise migrants simply as members of an undifferentiated working class or,

alternatively, focus on setting up special, separate structures that accommodate for migrants' differences and specific needs (Tapia 2014). Connolly, Marino and Martínez Lucio (2014) locate three separate "logics" that characterise union strategy towards migrant groups: those of class (focusing on the commonalities in the class location experienced by both migrants and locals) race or ethnicity (focusing on the empowerment and representation of migrant workers as members of minority groups) and social rights (targeting wider social issues that impact migrants' lives, such as the migration regime). They conclude that these three logics exist in tension and that one point of the triangle is lacking in most union strategies: in the case of the UK, they find that unions focus on class and race and ethnicity but generally neglect the domain of social rights.

Alternatively, Martínez Lucio and Perret (2009) trace three predominant union strategies through which unions attempt to reach migrant workers. The bargaining strategy aims to attract migrant workers through organising around labour grievances in workplaces, yet the authors find that specific concerns of migrants such as "extended leave for religious purposes or religious holidays, remain undeveloped" (2009: 334). In addition, focusing on specific workplaces neglects to account for the significant transience experienced by migrant workers. The second strategy is to incorporate migrants by setting up educational opportunities such as English classes or other training courses. However, the authors write that this strategy is unsuccessful in attracting more established migrant groups and that it employs hierarchical, messianic politics which are "obsessed with bureaucratically ensuring a controlled, regulated community" (2009: 335-7). The final strategy focuses on the recruitment and mobilization of community leaders. This strategy, however, impedes the participation and empowerment of the wider community and is primarily concerned with the development of union cadres rather than giving migrant workers the tools with which to organise themselves (2009: 337-9).

Upon interviewing British trade union officers, Wrench (2004) finds that some unions have attempted to ensure that minorities adequately represented in their ranks rather than viewing them abstractly as members of a wider undifferentiated working class. However, he writes that most unions have been reluctant to implement positive discrimination practices to fully ensure substantive representation, and he doubts that such a development will ever occur. Virdee and Grint (1994) write that formal proclamations of equality and inclusion often translate to practically little: they argue that empowerment of minorities arises primarily through semi-autonomous structures established within the wider institutional framework of unions that allow for minorities to freely organise and mobilise

themselves. Further supporting the claim that autonomy is essential for the empowered organisation of migrant workers, Marino (2015) finds that the unions with a less hierarchical, more democratic organisational structure that encourage and facilitate rank-and-file involvement in daily union praxis are more successful in engaging migrants. On a practical note, Martínez Lucio and Perret (2009: 706) point out that the approaches unions employ for outreach ("leaflets, meetings, officer led initiatives") may frequently inadvertently exclude migrant workers (for example, a meeting is hard to attend for someone on night shift or who is not fluent in English).

Based on the examination of a variety of migrant-centred union campaigns in the United States, Germany, France, and the UK, Alberti, Holgate and Turner (2014) find that the most effective campaigns engaged with migrant workers *as migrant workers*, conscious of their specific intersectional positionalities. The above studies therefore suggest that a key explanation for the comparatively limited engagement of migrant workers with unions is to be found precisely in the universalist and culturally insensitive manner through which unions attempt to engage with migrant workers, perceiving them as members of an undifferentiated, homogenous working class (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013; Jayaraman and Ness 2005). As Piper (2010: 109) writes, many unions choose to simply ignore migrant workers until they are "settled" or come to "dominate certain sectors of the labour market" (Piper 2010: 109). Finally, in a revealing analysis that is strongly applicable to the British context, Cappiali (2017) provides interviews with migrant workers in Italy who claims that they are being used tokenistically by organisations and trade unions in the Italian left: rather than focusing on empowering these communities, organisations may use their struggles instrumentally to increase membership or pursue some other concerns.

Focusing on the union strategies is effective in addressing the reductive propensity to attribute migrants' lack of labour movements purely to their migration. Nevertheless, these accounts tend to privilege top-down union strategies while side-lining the agency of migrant workers. For example, this is demonstrated in Gorodzeisky and Richards (2013) where they argue that organisational security (the extent to which they can reproduce themselves through recruitment) forms a central factor in unions' strategies to recruit migrant workers. They understand unions as primarily concerned with membership numbers and they therefore argue that unions are more likely to become interested in recruiting migrant workers when they are faced with a decline in membership. While this resonates with criticisms of mainstream unions such as those found in the Angry Workers (2020) and Ness (2014), as an explanation it is inadequate because it completely overlooks the agency

of immigrant workers and how their efforts can shape labour movements. It implies that the only legitimate forms of labour struggle are those which extrinsically attract migrant workers, ignoring grassroots initiatives by these same workers. However, there are numerous examples in the UK where migrants have taken it upon themselves to approach unions, in some cases proceeding to organise their own autonomous structures to meet their needs. These new formations subsequently attract and organise more migrant workers, as is the case of the United Voices of the World union (Lagnado 2015). Finally, Gorodzeiksy and Richards (2013) mistakenly assume that the main concern of unions is self-reproduction, rather than class solidarity. While this position may be partially true for some of the biggest unions (and even then, such a sweeping generalisation would be hard to defend), it cannot be generalised for all unions active in Britain.

The above article is the most illustrative manifestation of a wider trend present in the relevant literature whereby migrant workers are perceived, and presented, almost as objects in need of charity and inclusion rather than as active subjects that participate in crafting the socioeconomic landscape they find themselves in. Many of the aforementioned studies neglect to include the voices of migrant workers. While Però and Solomos (2010) correctly detect an increasing interest in that regard, the only studies in the literature covered that interviewed migrants were those centred on campaigns that had already succeeded in mobilizing migrant workers (such as Lopez and Hall 2015; Però 2014; Alberti 2014) or those examining other aspects of migrant's labour experience such as agency work (for example, Sporton 2013; MacKenzie and Forde 2009). Paradoxically, studies such as those of Wrench (2004), Connoly, Marino, and Martínez Lucio (2015), Martínez Lucio and Perret (2009), Gorodzeisky and Richards (2013), Piper (2010) and Kranendonk and de Beer (2016), investigating precisely the question of migrant mobilisations, give no platform to migrant voices. This reality is summed up in a migrant workers' frustrated statement that "there is no real platform where we can compete in the political arena as equals and make our own legitimate claims as individuals and as collective political forces. They always talk about us, but never truly with us!" (Cappiali 2017: 976). These paternalist and exclusionary practices directly foster migrant disempowerment since they hinder self-organisation and autonomy (Cappiali 2017). According to Freire (1993 [1970]: 115), a foundational feature of oppression is that the oppressed have had their means of articulating their reality "stolen from them". The reclamation of the right to, and the means of, speech, discussion and self-organisation emerges as a prerequisite for empowered political action (Freire 1993 [1970]). Regrettably, even supportive academic literature partakes in the erasure of migrant voices from the discourses that concern them.

This exclusion is clearly problematic for any contribution aiming to accurately research the barriers to migrant worker mobilisation. However, attempts to foreground migrant agency by locating empowerment in areas or behaviours where it does not exist are also problematic, tending to ignore the strength of the underlying forces that structure migrant oppression. For example, Parutis (2014) argues that migrant workers employ a strategic utilisation of precarity, taking advantage of their substandard employment to acclimatise themselves in the local labour market before progressing up the job hierarchy. Then, in an almost teleological fashion, Parutis describes Polish and Lithuanian migrant workers' trajectories in the UK as being characterised by progressive stages: the study argues that the gradual improvement in their 'human capital' (2014: 44) attained in precarious occupations can significantly help migrants progress from the 'any job', to the 'better job', and then to the 'dream job' stage. While these subjective experiences may be true for some, they constitute attempts to negotiate an objectively oppressive and unequal positionality- the fact that many individuals may choose to make the best out of the situation they are in is not enough to counterbalance the weight of the structural and institutional pressures that have been enumerated above. Moreover, a gradual progression to a 'dream job' remains an inaccessible fantasy for most (Sporton 2013; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010).

Another example of this tendency to locate empowerment in workers' individual acts of advancement rather than in collective action for structural change can be found in Alberti's (2014) work on the uses of mobility and precarity by migrant workers. In this article, the author argues that migrants may utilise the precarity of their contractual situation to quit their job when it becomes "unbearable or no longer useful to sustain their life or occupational projects" (2014: 875). Since labour power- our capacity to labour- is the most important resource given to employers by migrant workers, their agentic decision to withdraw that labour by utilising their precarious contractual relation is seen by Alberti as a manifestation of their power. Moreover, these acts are seen as directly confronting migrants' institutional and structural disempowerment that creates docile and readily available workers. In a highly relevant article criticizing subaltern theorists' analysis of agency, Mujamdar (2017) argues that "choosing between two options that have been generated by an oppressive social structure is not resistance — it is acquiescence to that order". In the case of the migrant workers studied by Alberti (2014), "that order" is one where the combined effects of intersecting socioeconomic and cultural forces confine migrants within a limited pool of precarious and highly exploitative occupations: given this context, Bernsten (2016) argues that whether migrant workers choose to stay in such a job or utilize their precarity in order to go to another precarious job is irrelevant to significant emancipatory social change.

As Young (1990) demonstrates, questions of class permeate all other social positionalities. Class and the UK's increasingly hostile environment are crucial components structuring the oppression of migrant workers. This is why collective class based oppositional action, commonly understood as the remit of trade-unions, enhanced by intersectional analysis yet without eschewing the importance of class, remains an indispensable component of migrant resistance (Però 2014; Moore 2011). Moreover, owing to the intersection migrant workers occupy between the domains of class, race, ethnicity, and gender and due to their close relation to large-scale social and economic developments such as precarity, globalisation and xenophobia, they are uniquely placed to contribute to the radical struggle against modern inequality (Jørgensen 2016; Casas-Cortés 2014).

Conclusion: Intersectionality and Examples of Migrant Organising

Existing literature on migrant-focused union campaigns highlights the need for migrant-led strategies that are closely connected with migrant communities (Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017; Lopez and Hall 2015; Fine and Holgate 2014; Alberti, Holgate, and Turner 2014; Martínez Lucio and Perret 2009; Jayaraman and Ness 2005). These conclusions mirror those reached in other eras of migrant struggle (see Chapter 1). The ongoing labour struggles of Latin American workers in London provide a valuable case study of migrant organising because these workers dealt with many of the difficulties migrants in the UK face with regards to precarity and labour mobilisations. In the example of the United Voices of the World, workers were initially excluded or side-lined in mainstream unions, and, when finally beginning to collaborate with Unite, experienced the tokenism described above (Lagnado 2015). They proceeded to break from Unite and join the Industrial Workers of the World, a move that allowed them more independence to struggle on the various intersections of their precarity thanks to the IWW's organising structure (Lagnado 2015; Jayaraman and Ness 2005b). Recognising the importance of participatory methods to ensure engagement and sustainability (Freire (1993 [1970], Jayaraman and Ness 2005b), they used educational work in order to both organise workers and empower them (Lagnado 2015), understanding that sustainable victories for migrants are inseparable from developing autonomy (King 2016). The Brighton example of Spanish precarious workers joining Solidarity Federation, an anarcho-syndicalist organisation that also centres autonomy and empowerment, further attests to the suitability of these methods in organising migrant workers (Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017).

There is a growing tendency in migrant movements to employ intersectional methodologies and combine their workplace struggles with wider social struggles while

simultaneously developing bottom up, participatory structures aimed at long-term empowerment rather than short-lived victories (Alberti and Però 2018; Lopez and Hall 2015; Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013). Intersectionality, originating from the struggles and analyses of Black feminists in the US and subsequently operationalised in various academic and social movement contexts (Hill-Collins and Bilge 2016; Yuval-Davis 2006; McCall 2005; Hill- Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1991; Combahee River Collective 1977), enables the creation of theoretical and practical links between ethnicity, migrant status, class, gender, and other categories upon which structural oppressions operate. Crucially, these lines of investigation and praxis are rooted in the experiences of the marginalised communities they involve, rather than being a product of external analysis imposed on oppressed people (Hill-Collins and Bilge 2016).

Even though intersectionality has distinct theoretical origins from other emancipatory traditions such as Marxism and anarchism, it has increasingly begun to inform the praxis and theories of different social movements working to empower marginalised and exploited groups. While many radical movements and scholars may criticise certain usages of intersectionality such as its frequent connection with individualist, deradicalizing identity politics, the essence of intersectional theory is centred on the deeply interlocking and cross-pollinating nature of systems of oppression and the corresponding social struggles to overcome them, and this is the sense with which the term is employed in this work (Lazar 2016). Intersectional frameworks see oppressive mechanisms as rooted in a combination of forces that are operative simultaneously on the economic, structural, cultural, and subjective domains. In the context of migrant workers' mobilisations, the operationalisation of intersectional frameworks involves primarily, but is not limited to, the linking of migration and class: substantial, empowering resistance practices therefore require the understanding that migrant workers are oppressed and exploited as migrants *and* as workers simultaneously (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013). Their migration, citizenship, and class statuses interact on the economic, social, and symbolic domains to produce and reproduce the socioeconomic conditions they experience.

The Latin American Workers Association (LAWAS) once again provides an important example of how these ideas are operationalised in the context of modern migrant mobilisations: Però (2014: 1165) writes that they "adopted a 'like for like' approach, training migrants from particular nationalities or ethnicities as organisers, thereby overcoming language barriers and helping to establish trust. It is in this context that a key member of LAWAS was selected to become a fulltime union organiser to be deployed in the campaign.

Migrant workers were thus being recognised as a resource for both the growth and the functioning of the union". This approach is echoed in a variety of other campaigns such as those discussed by Choudry and Henaway (2015), Roca and Martín-Díaz (2017), and Jayaraman (2005). Successful migrant organising frequently involves the mobilization of pre-existing social networks that are unrelated to specific workplaces; sometimes, unions are bypassed altogether, with one worker in Roca and Martín-Díaz (2017) expressing doubts as to whether formal unions are of any use to migrant worker organising, given the complexity of their employment conditions.

The creation and maintenance of physical spaces that allow for organisation and interaction emerges as critical elements to sustainable and empowering organising efforts by migrant workers (Choudry and Henaway 2015; Fine 2011; Jayaraman and Ness 2005). The multiplicity of interactions that are a prerequisite for empowered migrant struggles necessitate a consistent physical base; in this sense, a migrant worker centre or social space enables groups to organise language classes, legal advice sessions, drop in clinics, workshops, childcare, and other crucial components of social reproduction (Dee 2018; Frantz and Fernandes 2016; Federici 2012; Mart́ınez Ĺopez 2012; Fine 2011; 2005; Sullivan 2010; Chatterton 2010). In another significant contrast to the operations of mainstream unions, these social spaces enable migrants to organise against a wider spectrum of oppressions than a purely class-focused organising strategy would allow (Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017; Sullivan 2010; Jayaraman and Ness 2005). These aforementioned strategies form important pillars of building mass, participatory and autonomous movements: in 2018 the migrant-led union Independent Workers of Great Britain announced the biggest strike of outsourced workers in the education sector in the UK's history (Independent Workers of Great Britain 2018).

These approaches resonate with Virdee's (2000) writings on the unionization of racialized workers in the UK: together with Miles (1982), he identifies racialized workers as a class 'fraction' that experiences similar but also divergent realities in comparison to white British worker. Virdee (2000) argues that these structural and subjective differences mean that the adequate representation of racialised workers requires the formation of semi-autonomous structures within the wider union framework. In addition, Marino, Penninx, and Roosblad (2015: 10) write that the entire remit of unions must change to encompass concerns that are not exclusively tied to the workplace: unions must begin acting "as a civil society actor in favour of immigrants rather than as a strictly labour-related interest body". These calls for unions to expand their spheres of operations recognise that migrant workers' relative

disempowerment is not an exclusively economic concern, since the economy, culture and wider society intimately influence each other (Collins 2000; Butler 1998; Young 1990). For Però (2014: 1168) therefore writes that "issues of culture, identity, subjectivity, emotions and biography need neither to be seen as incompatible with, nor applied 'against', class-based collective actions"; rather, they need to be seen as essential aspects of modern class composition and therefore inseparable from the class struggle. The engaged incorporation of intersectional ideas by trade-unions and other social movements in solidarity with migrant workers is therefore a precondition for empowering and organising with migrant workers (Holgate 2018; Moore 2011).

Chapter 4: Methodology

1: Epistemology and Positionality

This research follows Feagin and Vera (2001) in asserting that, in an unequal society, the task of sociology should not simply be to produce detached analyses of the social world but to develop knowledge and tools that are of use in the struggles of oppressed groups towards social justice. I wanted to contribute to such efforts by examining the barriers faced by migrant workers towards collective organising to challenge the exploitation they experience in Scotland's labour market. The resulting text could therefore be considered as belonging to a growing body of "militant research" methodologies, premised on the understanding that all research is inevitably political and partial (Apoifis 2017; Russel 2015; Feagin and Vera 2001). This work therefore aims to participate and complement the initiatives of knowledge production which social movements around the world are already partaking in (Angry Workers 2020; Lopez and Fernandez 2012). I argue that this theoretical and academic standpoint does not diminish the quality or rigour of the research produced; rather, in creating a body of work that is practically useful and operationalizable, the researcher necessarily must employ reflexivity, criticism of their own presuppositions, and maintain a commitment to produce high quality material (Davis and Craven 2011; Harding 2009; Feagin and Vera 2001). Indeed, it was not uncommon for my findings to significantly challenge my theoretical, personal, and political presuppositions; I view these instances as fruitful to both academic and emancipatory objectives.

Implicit in the overarching aim of producing research that is practically useful to unions and social movements aiming to organise alongside migrant workers is the need to address the problematic tendency (criticised in the preceding chapter) whereby academics and social movements analyse and speak for migrant workers without actually including them in the process of knowledge production. This is both theoretically and politically problematic. Firstly, the lack of migrants' participation in the research that directly concerns them necessarily leads to the omission of valuable nuance which can only be provided by those directly experiencing the issues researched. Secondarily, such practices directly contribute to further perpetuating the subalternity of oppressed groups, as their perspectives are implicitly or explicitly relegated, their interpretations of their own experiences deemed unworthy. The phenomenon whereby theorists speak about oppressed groups without including or consulting them, analysing them as if they are mere exhibits, is a manifestation of the hierarchical, elitist and colonial legacy that is connected with the

histories of Western academic institutions (Walia 2013; Harding 2009; Said 2005; Holgate 2005; Haraway 1988). Inspired by Freirian dialogics (1993 [1970]), I wanted to not only examine, but also discuss issues such as migration, exploitation, precarity, and subjectivity directly with migrant workers.

My decision to adopt such a perspective was also directly informed by my personal history. Prior to my PhD I was a migrant worker employed in a variety of industries through a variety of precarious contractual relations. These experiences led to my active trade union participation, which is still ongoing through my activities as a union representative in Glasgow. Various unsuccessful or mildly successful campaigns and actions related to migrant workers in precarious workplaces led to my intensified interest in analysing the barriers to migrant workers' mobilisations in the UK. Therefore, despite currently being engaged in the privileged sphere of academia, I have directly experienced some of the issues that I am researching; conscious of my current positionality (Braun and Clarke 2013) as a white male from an academic background, I emphasised my past experiences during my interactions with migrant workers in order to develop bonds of mutuality. I also continued to work in precarious occupations during the course of my PhD and resumed my employment in one of the workplaces I examined (the logistics warehouse) after my PhD funding expired. I am therefore firmly enmeshed in the contexts I am examining.

The aim of producing research that would eventually be used to help *us* was always in the forefront of our conversations, with participants having been informed that the research conclusions would subsequently be disseminated in the public domain. Structuring the interviews in such a way was intended to include the participants as active contributors to the research (Feagin and Vera 2001). In an attempt to give back to the migrant workers interviewed rather than simply extract their experiences in the form of data (Davis and Craven 2011), I endeavoured to support them following the interview in my capacities as a trade union representative. This would usually consist of me pointing out relevant organisations that could help them in problems they spoke of. Moreover, in two blatant cases of employer abuse I represented two workers when they asked me to do so: in one case the worker was able to reclaim about £200 in stolen wages; the other launched an employment tribunal case into racist discrimination and harassment with my support. While this was not ultimately successful, the worker felt empowered and proceeded to become an active union organiser. Both experiences gave me significantly deeper first-hand insight into the lives of migrant workers in precarious occupations.

This research thus firmly positions itself in the tradition of situated, partial and engaged research (Russel 2015; Davis and Craven 2011; Osterweil and Chesters 2007; Negri 2007; Holgate 2005; Feagin and Vera 2001). Following theorists that are critical of the possibility, or even desirability, of seemingly 'impartial' social research (Davis and Craven 2011; Harding 2009; Feagin and Vera 2001; Haraway 1988), I chose a methodology and a standpoint that privileges the insights emerging from migrant workers' direct experiences of precarity and resistance. Since it is impossible to speak from everywhere about everything, it is imperative to depart from specific, situated, partial standpoints. This is consistent with Haraway's (1988) argument that knowledge production that is cognisant and inclusive of the multiplicity of social positions, and therefore arrives at accurate representations of social reality, necessarily acknowledges, and engages with, this multiplicity. This is "not partiality for its own sake but, rather, for the sake of the connections and unexpected openings situated knowledges make possible. Situated knowledges are about communities, not about isolated individuals. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (Haraway 1988: 590). This perspective assumes added value in our hierarchically organised society, where the structural disempowerment of marginalised and oppressed populations erases their perspectives from public discourse. In these conditions the purposeful inclusion of perspectives emanating from these specific positionalities is critical to developing a knowledge production that can contribute to the study of social reality *and* to emancipatory processes (Harding 2009). Naturally, this research cannot cover the positionalities of all migrant workers in Scotland; in order to specifically address the question of mobilisation within precarious occupations, my focus was confined to those workers who are located in some of the most exploitative and insecure parts of the economy.

I agree with Dweyer and Buckle's (2009) point that the position of a researcher always necessarily shapes our perspectives on the situations which we are analysing, differentiating them from those of the people we are researching. Nevertheless, I chose the methodology outlined below precisely in order to investigate nuances and perspectives that I have found missing or incomplete in the relevant academic and social movement literature; if I had only been a researcher, without lived experience of precarious work as a migrant in the UK or any involvement with trade union attempts to organise migrant workers, it is debateable whether I would have even noticed these lacunae in the first place. Additionally, my experience as a trade union representative has afforded me intricate legal knowledge on a wide variety of labour particularities that informed my interpretations. In

these senses, I argue that my positionality, partisanship, and previous experiences support, rather than hinder, the objective of producing valuable academic research.

2: Methodology, data collection and analysis

The methodology chosen for this project therefore directly reflects the aforementioned concerns and aims (Russel 2015; Harding 2009). A qualitative approach was selected upon considering what is missing from the general body of knowledge: the numerical, quantitative disparities between local and migrant worker resistance to precarity through unionization are known, as are those relating to other factors structuring the migrant worker experience such as occupational distribution, de-skilling and the use of agency labour. Existing knowledge about these issues was analysed in the previous chapters. What is not known is impossible to quantify: namely, the subjective or other non-quantitative reasons that migrant workers disproportionately do not join unions or other organisations resisting precarity, discoverable only through the analysis of words, meanings, and mentalities rather than figures (Braun and Clarke 2013; Bryman 2008; Feagin and Vera 2001; Sayer 1992). In order to try and understand these issues, I opted for a two-pronged approach consisting of interviews with migrant workers and covert participant observation in various precarious workplaces in Glasgow.

In total, 19 semi-structured interviews with a total of 21 participants were conducted. They were fully recorded on my phone and immediately transferred to a secure USB. They lasted an average of 60 minutes, with most interviews spanning around 40-60 minutes (although a few went on for significantly longer than an hour). In two cases, two people were interviewed at once. This occurred with the Angry Workers collective, who were interviewed as a collective, and with Raquel and Charles, a mother and son both working in hospitality who arrived together in a shared car and did not have time for separate interviews. Participants were given pseudonyms to safeguard anonymity and the interviews were fully transcribed immediately following their conclusion.

My previous research on barriers to migrant worker unionization (Theodoropoulos 2018) had principally relied on interviews from migrants who were trade union members. While this recruitment yielded valuable insights, I found it problematic insofar as it foregrounded the opinions of workers who already had high degrees of political activity. This time I focused on accessing people who were not, at the time of the interview, members of trade unions. Out of 21 participants, only 4 were unionised at the time of the interview (i.e. 19%- slightly higher than the rate of unionised migrant workers in the UK). In order to access participants, I relied on snowballing from existing contacts and posting a

call-out in neighbourhoods in Glasgow and online spaces (such as Facebook groups for migrant communities, including "Indians in Glasgow", "Greeks in Glasgow", etc.); however, most of my contacts came through snowballing from acquaintances who were employed in precarious occupations. I tried to find individuals that represented a wide range of precarious occupations, with interviewees frequently commenting on the wide variety of jobs they had passed through: 13 had worked/were working in hospitality; 4 had worked/were working in manufacturing; 2 had worked in the care sector and 2 were employed in transport logistics (see Appendix 1).

I conducted the interviews with the objectives of: (1) uncovering nuances that are rarely present in the literature and can aid in the understanding of the conditions in which migrants labour; (2) obtaining direct information as to the reasons explicating the distances between migrant workers and unions or other social movements; (3) understanding the ideas migrant workers possess with regards to their own position in work and society; (4) illuminating the differences (in mentalities, legal status and its effects, labour conditions, etc.) between migrant groups; and (5) understanding how migrant workers relate to relevant social movements. Room was therefore afforded for the emergence of inductive conclusions that would not have emerged from strict quantitative or literature-centred approaches (Bryman 2008). While I was initially following a loose questionnaire structure, the interviews quickly began to resemble a discussion as the participant's personalities and experiences led us down different paths.

In addition, following Walia's (2013) work on the Canadian No One Is Illegal group, attempts were made to interview relevant migrant worker organisations (whether trade-unions or other relevant autonomous collectives challenging precarity) as collectivities. However, instead of trying to access detached trade-unions officials, I opted to interview individuals that have direct experience of political action within precarious workplaces, i.e. as politically active migrant workers. Their activity being inseparable from their labour positionality, these interviews form part of my wider interview cohort rather than being considered as a separate act of the research section consisting of 'key informant' interviews with organisations. I therefore attempted to establish contact with activists from the Angry Workers (England), Filipino Workers' Network (England), Orgullo Migrante (Scotland), Oficina Precaria (Scotland), and United Voices of the World (England). The only time where this was successful was with the Angry Workers collective from London; nevertheless, their experiences and perspectives, also outlined in their recent book (Angry Workers 2020), provided important insights and are used throughout the

analysis. I also interviewed a migrant worker from the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union who had a long experience organising in precarious workplaces. Lastly, I kept close relations with my own trade union, the Industrial Workers of the World, throughout the course of this research. The above decisions were informed by Gordon's (2007) assertion that a prerequisite for anti-authoritarian and emancipatory theory is that it is produced through the dialogical interactions of the theorist with the social struggle in question and the people in it.

Most participants were migrants with EU citizenship. There was only one participant who was subject to the strict immigration controls that characterise the experiences of non-EU citizens in the UK. While I had intended to achieve a better representation of the diversity in the status of migrant workers, the focus on EU workers was nevertheless foregrounded in order to problematise and unsettle the "common-sense" presupposition that immigration status, tying people to a certain employer through a Visa and requiring more than £18,000 in savings to enable individuals to bring family members to the UK with them (Sirriyeh 2015), is a fundamental factor curtailing migrant unionisation and mobilisation. Since EU migrants don't experience this limitation and yet remain under-represented in unions, it seemed to me that reasons other than status might be significant in curtailing the mobilisation potential of immigrant workers in general. This decision follows Anderson (2013: 82), who writes that "EU8 nationals are a group where it is possible to examine migratory processes separately from immigration controls because, as EU nationals they are not subject to immigration controls. They are recognizably Piorean". Furthermore, considering the attacks they have been recently subject to (Rzepnikowska 2019) and their significant contributions to the UK economy, this group emerges as key in the analysis of migrant workers' position in the UK. Reflecting the increasing feminisation of migration and precarious labour in Western economies 13 of 21 participants were women (Anderson 2013; Mezzadra and Nielson 2013).

Nevertheless, the vastly disproportionate number of European citizens in my interviews also reflects the limits of snowballing; ideally, I would have liked to have interviewed more than just one non-EU citizen. However, my inability to access participants from other demographics itself reflects some key characteristics of the UK's economy and society. Primarily, due to the various processes of distinction (Bauder 2006) that contribute to the distribution of workers in the labour market (described in chapter 3), I rarely encountered any non-EU migrant workers in my places of work. Most of the workers from outside the geographical space of the EU nevertheless had obtained EU

citizenship (for example, a brother and sister from Guadeloupe had French citizenship), itself a reflection of the history of colonisation that characterises Europe's relationship with the rest of the world. Regrettably, my attempts to communicate with relevant gate-keeper organisations either went unanswered or fell through due to privacy concerns, and my attempts to recruit participants through leafleting and Facebook groups received little response. Similar problems were encountered with accessing BME workers (5 of 21). I attempted to ameliorate these gaps as much as possible by incorporating the insights of relevant anti-racist, Black and anti-colonial scholarship in the data analysis and consistently drawing connections between the situations I am analysing and what they mean for, or how they relate to, the conditions experienced by racialised workers and/or those with insecure residency status.

The second central component of my research involved a sustained period of covert, embodied participant observation in various sites employing migrant workers in precarious conditions and was undertaken alongside the interviews (following a methodology also employed by Alberti (2014)). Similar covert "immersions" in labour contexts include Bloodworth's (2019) "undercover" investigation of precarious occupations and Lugosi's (2006) research in English bars. This method was selected for a variety of reasons. Primarily, an immersed participation in the contexts I am analysing afforded me the opportunity to triangulate the information gathered from the interviews through a reflection on my own experiences within the labour contexts in question. Secondarily, the observation sessions hoped to illuminate various nuances which would not arise solely through the interviews or other methods (Calvey 2008): indicatively, the precise way that ethnic networks and hierarchies operate in some hospitality contexts would not have been analysed if I had purely relied on interviews and literature. Thirdly, as will be made apparent in the following chapters, the experience of actually performing the tasks one is analysing may afford rare insights into the wider social situation in question (Bloodworth 2019; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). I wanted to specifically address the embodied aspects of precarious labour in the contexts I entered and understand how precarity is lived on a daily basis and how these experiences in turn shape migrant workers' subjectivities.

Already highly acclimated to these environments through my previous experiences as a precarious worker in hospitality and manufacturing, it was not difficult for me to immerse myself in the daily life of the workplaces I entered. In this sense, I was following a tradition of "embodied ethnography" which relies on the researcher being a member of

the social group they are studying (Calvey 2008). However, as someone who has extensive previous experience of this type of labour immediately prior to being granted a PhD, I did not feel like an outside researcher who opportunistically benefits from and instrumentalises the trust of participants; indeed, it would be more accurate to position my research in a similar category to the "workers' inquiry" conducted by the Angry Workers (2020) in various London workplaces: an immersed method based on lived experience and interviews employed to deepen our understanding of the conditions that structure *our* lives as workers. Finally, as an individual who does not have career aspirations of 'becoming' an academic I felt, and still feel, significantly greater affinity and identification with the workers in the jobs I entered than I feel with academia.

The covert manner of the observation was chosen for three reasons: primarily, it seemed highly unlikely that I would otherwise have been afforded sustained, unhindered access to workplaces that were precisely selected for their alienating, precarious and sometimes dehumanising conditions. I am convinced that I would have never been allowed access as a researcher to observe the two most significant workplaces of my study. Second, I wanted to avoid "reactivity" from the part of managers and superiors who would know that their practices were observed (Alberti 2014). Third, I wanted to examine the interactions migrant workers had with each other and with local British workers; these consisted of the minute details that collectively form everyday life, described by Calvey (2008: 913) as "naturally occurring data": the discussions, the exasperated curses, the 'inappropriate' jokes, the instances of "re-working" (Bernsten 2016), the backstabbing. Once again, these observations would potentially be significantly altered if people realised that they were being observed. I maintain that this choice of method gave rise to important, previously unexamined data stemming from the daily lives of precarious workplaces which would not have been accessed through other methods. According to the ESRC (2012: 30), "the broad principle should be that covert research must not be undertaken lightly or routinely. It is only justified if important issues are being addressed and if matters of social significance which cannot be uncovered in other ways are likely to be discovered". I maintain that my choice to employ a covert method fits precisely within these parameters.

I entered a total of 6 workplaces characterised by contractual precarity in the areas of logistics, manufacturing, and hospitality. Due to the limited timeframe afforded to me in the course of the PhD, these periods were necessarily brief; however, I attempted to stay long enough in order to assume a detailed understanding of the conditions I was investigating. Alongside the four workplaces described below, I also did two trial shifts in

two additional restaurants, which I ended up leaving. One was a Spanish tapas restaurant where I discovered that I would be the only immigrant employed there, and consequently left. The other was an Italian restaurant that, once again, I left because of the limited number of staff working there. Between September and November 2018, I was employed as a manual labourer in a factory that manufactured heating equipment in Glasgow. In November I worked for 2 days as a production line operative in a factory producing salmon and other fish products. This was unsustainable because it was too far away from my area of residence and the bus schedule meant that I could never arrive at work on time. Nevertheless, this problem proved analytically beneficial, since in its place I found work in one of the largest logistics companies of the world as a picker and packer from December 2018 to January 2019, during the busiest period of the year. These postings were accessed through 3 different agencies. After a 6-month break from covert work to focus on gathering interviews, I resumed this line of research. Following 3 unpaid trial shifts (2 of which were in the restaurants I ended up leaving), I eventually worked as a kitchen porter in a large Mediterranean restaurant between July and August 2019. The experiences in the workplaces that my data draws upon were largely in line with what existing research, and my own previous experience, suggest are the dominant conditions that characterise these sectors and were used alongside the interviews and literature to substantiate, enhance, and add further nuance to the issues examined.

Workplace	Industrial sector	Length of Observation
Radiator Factory	Manufacturing	September-November 2018
Fish factory	Food production	November 2018 (only 2 shifts)
Logistics Warehouse	Logistics	December 2018-January 2019
Spanish tapas restaurant	Hospitality	July 2019 (one shift)
Italian restaurant	Hospitality	July 2019 (one shift)
Mediterranean restaurant	Hospitality	July- August 2019

Table 1: Workplaces accessed for covert participant observation

Data collection took the form of rigorous notetaking as soon as possible following a shift (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 49). Following Holmes (2013), in addition to observing my surroundings I also gave special attention to what I *felt* in the course of performing my duties: this enabled me to capture some of the stress, fatigue, and physical pain associated with working in high-paced, precarious, alienating and labour-intensive

environments. This is consistent with feminist epistemologies emphasising the importance of subjects' embodied experiences in the fields of social reality (Haraway 1988). Since description always involves a process of selection, informed by the researchers' unconscious biases and positions, I did my best to record absolutely everything I could remember, as well as recording *what* I was doing while I was making these observations (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). In the first period of observation (October- January 2018), the realities of regular shift work meant that I was sometimes too tired to record my observations immediately after the shift. In the second period (July- August 2019), I regularly had gaps between shifts where, in most cases, I could sustainably record my observations the day after the shift. There were some days that I had back-to-back 14.5-hour shifts, or a 14.5-hour shift followed by a slightly shorter one: in those cases, I would still try to record my observations as soon as possible.

Inspired by the anthropological work of Bourgeois and Schonberg (2009) and Holmes (2013), I took photos of incidents or surroundings that I felt would assist a realistic, immersive depiction of the workplaces observed. I was careful not to include identifiable images of individuals. These photos were immediately removed from my phone upon arrival at my house and securely stored in a USB. In addition, if something particularly important happened that necessitated very detailed recollection, such as an important statement made by a colleague, I would try to note it on my phone- all such notes were deleted immediately following transcription. I tried to use indirect quotations rather than paraphrase utterances (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). Whenever I referred to a specific individual in the notes, I would give them a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. Similarly, the names of the establishments I worked in are not provided; instead, I opted for generalised descriptions such as "Mediterranean restaurant".

After both strands of research were concluded, data interpretation consisted of identifying common themes emerging from the interviews and the participant observation that provided insights as to the plethora of intersecting factors that structure and reproduce migrant worker exploitability and regulate the various structural and subjective barriers impeding migrant worker mobilisations. The process of analysis consisted of manual coding aiming to draw out and explicate common themes as they emerged. The process of interpreting the data was both inductive and deductive. While I aimed to investigate particular topics, informed by my existing knowledge and experience with the subject, I was nevertheless open to whatever else emerged from the data. Indeed, it was not uncommon for me to find issues, behaviours and mentalities that complicated and

challenged the presuppositions I carried prior to the research, and these are present throughout the following presentation.

I was conscious of the significant disparities between the experiences of migrant groups (McBride, Hebson and Holgate 2015) and was careful about not arriving at the kind of universalising conclusions that usually favour the already-privileged (Young 1990). However, the operation of inter-related and overlapping social forces mean that the experiences of different migrant workers in precarious sectors also share significant similarities. Since the objectives of the research necessitated manoeuvring through, and between, the domains of structure and subjectivity, I eventually arrived at six broad categories of analysis: international geopolitical contexts spurring migration; concrete conditions of employment; experiences and manifestations of contractual precarity; migrant worker subjectivities (how migrant workers interpreted their position as migrants, workers, and colleagues); interpersonal relationships within workplaces employing migrant workers; and migrants' experiences of and perspectives on workplace mobilisations. Maintaining a commitment to foregrounding the voices of migrant workers, I subsequently isolated additional sub-categories that resonated with interviewee accounts. My personal observations were then included to supplement these accounts where necessary.

3: Ethical Concerns and Limitations

While my past experiences afforded me a high level of acclimatisation in the workplaces in which I conducted covert participant observation, they did not fully insulate me from various ethical questions that are associated with immersed fieldwork (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011; Calvey 2008). The main issue that emerged was that of trust; once I had established some cursory relationships with colleagues I liked, I began to feel like an imposter. In order to access all the jobs, I had lied in my CV to account for the entire year of PhD work that was missing. The lie that I had used was that during that year I was working in my uncle's olive oil farm in Greece, in which I have worked in the past. Revealing myself, even to friendly colleagues, would be highly disruptive to the investigation, especially since I never stayed in a location for more than a month. Furthermore, despite my acclimatisation, I remained nevertheless an educated white man who was proficient in English- while I explained this to my peers in terms of my 10-year tenure in Britain, my English was a key factor that separated us in the eyes of management. Consequently, there was always an underlying tension between my identities as a researcher and an embodied participant (DeLuca and Maddox 2016; Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011; Calvey 2008). This tension exploded when I found out that, due to my

rigorous performance of the 'good worker' stereotype, I had essentially replaced an older, black worker in the Mediterranean restaurant. When I discussed it with my superior he told me that had already been looking for a replacement before my arrival; nevertheless, this experience highlights the problematic ethical considerations that arise when a researcher inserts themselves, and impacts, the contexts they are researching. All these experiences, rather than being dismissed as glitches, were instead used to critically scrutinise the relationship of the researcher to the situations and people that were being researched (DeLuca and Maddox 2016).

Even though I strove to produce conclusions which were as coherent as possible given my access to participants and the PhD's time constraints, this research nevertheless suffers from noteworthy limitations. Primarily, the relatively small number of interviews significantly hampers the extent to which this research can be deemed as representative of the wide range of positionalities included in the term "migrant workers". Furthermore, the lack of participation of BME workers and non- EU workers leaves a sizeable segment of the migrant workforce in Scotland unaccounted for. This is both an academic and a political limitation (McBride, Hebson and Holgate 2015); as mentioned above, I attempted to rectify it by referencing the relevant literature were applicable, but the resulting representational gap remains. However, it is important to note that it would be highly ambitious to do all the observational work and interviews while diversifying my sample to the extent that I would like to in the space of a PhD. Future research would therefore be required in order to arrive at more representative conclusions about the experiences of different groups of migrant workers, building on existing studies such as Johansson and Śliwa (2016), Wu and Liu (2016) and Anitha, Pearson and McDowell (2018). In addition, the limited number of workplaces covertly observed, and the relatively limited time spent in these locations introduce additional similar problems that also call for further research. Finally, my personal involvement in the social movements that are related to the topic of research, albeit beneficial in some respects, nevertheless relates to subconscious or semi-conscious biases that influence the prioritisation of my observations and interview interpretations.

I addressed these limitations by maintaining a close dialogue with the relevant literature at all stages of the research, consistently comparing my observations and interpretations with arguments in existing scholarship. In addition, the utilisation of both interviews and covert participant observation aimed at addressing the omissions and biases arising from one side of the research with information stemming from the other. The

limitations notwithstanding, I maintain that this research uncovered nuances relating to a plethora of intersecting structural and subjective forces that have not been adequately addressed in the relevant literature; crucially, it did this while foregrounding the voices and experiences of migrant workers in precarious occupations as central facets of all theoretical conclusions. It should therefore be viewed as the start, rather than the end, of a long but important academic and political project.

Chapter 5: Contextualising Labour Migration

Introduction

An analysis concerning migrant workers is incomplete if it doesn't consider the international geopolitical relations that foster migratory circuits and the ensuing socioeconomic and cultural forces that structure future migrants' lives and choices in their country of origin (Berger and Mohr 2010; Sayad 2004). This chapter intends to set the context for the subsequent analysis of migrant workers' experiences in the Scottish labour market, their subjective characteristics in work and their relationships with unions and other social movements. This chapters intends to survey both structural and subjective triggers of economic migration to Scotland. A key argument is that migrant workers are not empty vessels that 'become' subjects only after the act of migration; an understanding of some of the main elements that structure their migration is important in explaining their motives and mentalities in the new society. Why do so many people accept working in worst conditions than they are qualified for? Why does the most exploited segment of the workforce not seek the assistance of trade unions? Are migrant workers simply responding to the situation they find in Scotland, or do they somehow partake in reproducing it?

This chapter will briefly trace the international forces that are involved in shaping the subjectivities and experiences of some groups of precarious migrant workers. It will start by covering how the workings of international capitalism have structured migrants' experiences in their countries of origin and conclude by surveying and discussing migrant workers' first steps in Scotland. Apart from attempting to provide a contextualisation of migrant workers' trajectories (Sayad 2004), this chapter also intends to address a lacuna found in the relevant literature which tends to analyse migrant workers' experiences in the UK labour market separately from the subjectivities and habitus that they carry with them from *before* their migration (see, for example, Lever and Milbourne 2017; Alberti 2014; Sporton 2013; MacKenzie and Forde 2009). While some studies have touched upon these issues, most nevertheless are confined to analysing the "dual frame of reference" and do not delve deeper (for example, Piore 1979 or Recci and Triandafyllidou 2010). Along with Sayad (2004), it is argued that these existing mentalities that are carried by migrant workers into the new country provide important information for a more complete understanding of their motives and labour market behaviours.

1: Uneven Development and Migration

Uneven economic development between countries and regions exacerbates inequalities that have their origins in the combined historical progress of capitalism and imperialism (Rodney 2018 [1976]; Hardy 2014; Harvey 2005). While a comprehensive analysis of these mechanisms is outside the scope of this project, it is important to include them as fundamental contextual factors in the study of labour migration. In relations of unequal exchange between countries, a variety of interrelated processes combine to extract funds, resources, and labour power from one country and transfer them to the other (Rodney 2018 [1976]). While recent years have seen a more complex differentiation and hierarchisation of global and national space than initially described by the theorists mentioned above (Neilson and Mezzadra 2013), traditional circuits of labour and capital remain powerful (Cohen 2006). Usually these patterns follow those previously established by colonial relations; however, in the case of the European Union, for example, relatively new configurations have been forged (Lapavitsas 2012). A key mechanism that maintains the development of the dominant nations and enforces the underdevelopment of the dominated ones is debt, managed through international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund with the complicity of national governments (Lapavitsas 2012; Harvey 2005). A recent example can be located in the aftermath of the economic crash of 2008, where intense austerity measures were imposed on virtually every European country. The conditions imposed on countries such as the PIIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) caused an explosion of unemployment while, at the same time, preventing any future substantial development from taking place since the majority of countries' surpluses were directed towards debt repayment (Lapavitsas 2012).

Concurrently, countries that recently entered the EU in Central and Eastern Europe saw a variety of conditions imposed on them by way of structural adjustment programs following the collapse of Communism in the 1990s and subsequent exploitative accession requirements, ultimately fostering insecure working and living conditions (Samaluk 2016; Hardy 2014). These conditions were exacerbated following the economic crisis of 2008 (Hardy 2014). The neoliberal and neo-colonial structural changes that characterise the post- 1989 development of CEE economies have been accompanied by corresponding ideological projects that symbolically construct the local working classes as under-developed and under-civilised, in contrast with the societies of core European economies that are perceived as more "modern" and "European" (Samaluk 2016). These factors trigger, and continue to sustain, new migratory circuits between nations (Heyes and

Hastings 2017; Bradley 2016). On the other side of the equation, receiving countries such as the UK actively structure their economies expecting migration to address specific needs in specific sectors (Boswell and Geddes 2011). Similar conditions- whether through the IMF's interventions, other international agreements, or postcolonial relations- had already been established in most parts of the world, and also spurred, and sustained, migration from 'underdeveloped' to 'developed' nations (Virdee 2014; Cohen 2006; Harvey 2005).

Such geopolitical relations amount to a constant transfer of resources which include people and their labour power (Lazar and Sanchez 2019; Samaluk 2016; Bauder 2006; Cohen 2006). Societies collapse or are caught in a never-ending state of stagnation. The welfare state becomes curtailed; hospitals infrastructure begins to unravel, leading to catastrophes such as flooding; homelessness and suicides rise; unemployment and underemployment flourish. When hope is lost, people's labour power, their capacity to work, becomes the latest export in the cycle of unequal exchange: it will be used to create ever more profits for companies in the receiving countries, while paying taxes and supporting the wider social fabric of those countries. In the meantime, their countries of origin are increasingly deprived of the human and technical capital that could be used to re-balance the scales, were the local authorities willing to do so. Berger and Mohr (2010:72) write that "migration involves the transfer of a valuable economic resource-human labour- from the poor to the rich countries". Most importantly, however, it involves the transfer of the unquantifiable raw materials of human hope, fantasy, and desire; qualities that are strong enough to maintain one's persistence and willingness to work even in the most adverse conditions.

Feelings of hopelessness and exasperation at the economic situation of their countries of origin were cited by most of the migrant workers that I interviewed. For example, Mateusz, a Polish migrant worker in his 30s who eventually became a union organiser, simply stated that he "came to the UK for a very simple reason: my government did not provide us with a safe and prospectful future" (Mateusz Interview). Similarly, another Polish worker that I spoke to during the course of conducting participant observation in a Glasgow radiator factory told me that he left because there was absolutely nothing to hope for in Poland. He pulled out his phone and started showing me pictures of potholes and closed stores in his native city. He told me that there are only 3 functional factories left in his region and that the pay is abhorrent. He then insisted that we stop the conversation because "these political topics" were making him "angry" (Fieldnotes, 31

October 2018). One's hopelessness regarding the situation in the country of origin is combined with one's hopes for the opportunities and potentialities in the host society:

> "Q: How long have you been working in the UK?
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> A: 2 years almost.
>
> Q: And why did you come to the UK?
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> A: I came to the UK to study, to do a Master's degree in journalism. It was one year Master course. And then I graduated and I started working.
>
> Q: And then you started working in your field, or in somewhere else?
>
> A: No. After my studies, I started working, I went to an employment agency.
>
> Q: Wait, you wanted to become a reporter in the UK?
>
> A: Yes.
>
> Q: Why did you not want to go back to Greece?
>
> A: Because Greece, in Greece we are experiencing a financial crisis at the moment and it is very difficult to go to find a job where it pays even like, a good wage, a wage good enough to be able to sustain yourself and be autonomous. Another reason is that here, even if you do a job that is not, that is a very precarious job, you may at least be autonomous. Have your own house and pay a rent. And also, there were other factors as well, I had my partner, I wanted to try and gain experience in journalism before I go back to Greece, save some money, pitch some articles to some papers. So I was hoping to build up some profile as a journalist."- Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality/freelance journalist.

` As the socioeconomic conditions that create and sustain migratory circuits become increasingly permanent and accepted as a part of daily life, a culture of emigration begins to establish itself as a feature of the home society's collective consciousness (Sayad 2004). Sayad has described this formation in depth in relation to the economic-migratory chain connecting France and its former colony of Algeria. As the first generation of emigrants communicate their experiences in the new country to those back home, an entire mythology emerges; emigration becomes naturalised. Networks of migrants are established in the destination countries which significantly reduce the anxiety of moving to a new and strange society. Migrant groups gradually become associated with specific jobs (Anderson 2013) and, in some cases, begin to be able to facilitate the entry of newcomers into these jobs (Vasey 2017; Bauder 2006). As the economic situation in the country of origin

remains stagnant or worsens, emigration-immigration slowly develops its own dynamic and becomes inseparable from the myths and dominant narratives that circulate amongst the country's working and middle-class populations. Those who can migrate, normally will. The economically well-off will go to study in the receiving country's universities, spurned both by an appreciation of the lack of opportunities in their home country and by a culturally relativistic belief (Sayad 2004) in the destination's country superiority; meanwhile, the working classes will migrate in search for better wages, better conditions, and the hopes of building something for themselves.

"Q: OK, so, does Lithuania have a culture of migration?

A: Yeah, very big.

Q: So, sort of like, from a young age you already know that this is a possibility for you, if you are like working class or middle class or something…

A: Yeah.

Q: Could you talk to me about that a little bit? Like, how did you feel, try to disentangle all of this thing.

A: Yeah, I feel like, when Lithuania was separated from the Soviet Union, it was a chaos. [...] So I feel like that's when people started migrating to western countries. I feel like in the 2000s a lot of people couldn't migrated to the UK because at that time Lithuania was not in the EU, it was really difficult, same with me going to the USA now, I could have a visa and everything, but if they don't like me in the border they send me back. And so, a lot of people started migrating to Spain, like my parents in this case, so yeah. It was like, also a possibility like, to kind of avoid that chaos. And we would go to another country, like my dad and mom, they started working in orange fields.

Q: OK, fair enough. What did you expect when you migrated to the UK? What sort of jobs did you expect to find?

A: Well, I'm just like, waitress and bartender to be fair.

Q: And you expected these difficulties with the contracts and stuff like that, you were aware of that?

A: Yeah. Like, not like I was aware of them, but, if I would come up to that, like it doesn't surprise me. I think it was because in Spain I was already an immigrant, and I could see that is the situation that my parents would face. They would like to find a job and

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everything. So I'm like "OK, if I am going to be a migrant that is what will happen"."-
Emma, Lithuanian female, early 20s, hospitality.

A similar perspective was offered by Viktor in an informal interview conducted in the same radiator factory mentioned above. Viktor is a Polish worker in his early twenties. He informed me that he had been a migrant worker since "basically forever", having worked in many different European countries close to Poland on his school holidays. Echoing Andrijasevic and Saccheto's (2017) writings, he mentioned living in agency hotels during these postings. This is indicative of a wider culture in countries like Poland where labour migration is seen as something quite unspectacular and can even be incorporated into one's holidays. It is expected that precarious and highly controlled conditions will prevail, and people are socialised into expecting them from a young age (Fieldnotes, 24 October 2018). Another indication of the prevalence of the culture of migration was given to me in another job where I was working as a kitchen porter. The kitchen was filled with mostly Albanian males, many of whom either were born or had lived in Greece and with whom we could therefore converse in Greek. One day, when discussing with John, an Albanian male in his mid-20s, I mentioned my surprise at how many Greek-Albanians live in Glasgow:

"Q: There is a lot of Albanians here in Glasgow, I've seen many of your compatriots.

A: What can you do man, you can't live in Greece.

Q: Yes, it's bad. I am just thinking about how difficult it is to migrate again.

A: Fuck it, man. We were always immigrants". (Fieldnotes, 7 July 2019- *translation mine from Greek*).

This small last sentence reveals both the depth of the culture of emigration and the conscious pain associated with it. Before the collapse of communism in their country, Albanians were already crossing the borders to Greece in search of employment and opportunities. When the regime fell and the borders opened, many thousands migrated to Greece alongside their families. At that time, the Greek economy was booming, and the new workers quickly became manual labourers, while at the same time being subjected to intense xenophobia and exclusionary practices at all levels of Greek society. Just as the second generation of Greek Albanians had begun to establish itself in the new country, the economic crisis of 2008 and the ensuing social collapse led many to mobilise their extensive European networks in search of new employment (Gemi 2017). The lyrics of

Eni-D, an Albanian migrant rapper who grew up in Athens and recently moved to Hamburg, encapsulate what John was saying: "my brothers are migrants, for a second time/ a cheap offering to the international market" (Eni-D 2016). There is an acute awareness amongst Albanians of the reality of the precarious migrant condition; yet, over time, it has become naturalised. Berger and Mohr (2010: 115) write that: "if he is aware of a current, a tide which is stronger than his own volition, he thinks of it, in an undifferentiated way, as Life [….] that is not to say that he will never resist, that he will accept every injustice. It is to say that tragedy is more real to him than explanations". In the above quote, this was most visibly expressed by John's "fuck it", encapsulating the combination of resignation and anger at the exploitation many migrant workers experience. As will be discussed below, it is the duty of social movements to provide the explanations and connect them to the "tragedies". Absent this involvement, the cultures of emigration combine with the international workings of capital unabated to produce migrant workers who have largely accepted their condition almost as a law.

2: Early stages of migration

Once in Scotland, as in other parts of the "developed" world, migrant workers frequently experience a process of de-skilling (Anderson 2013; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010; Bauder 2006). Recchi and Triandafyllidou (2010: 133) write that "a higher salary abroad was exchanged with a decline in social status", as new migrants are keen to accept the first jobs they can find (Piore 1979). This process of de-skilling is enhanced by various local and national mechanisms such as the non-recognition of foreign credentials, a decision that involves the coordination of professional associations, licensing bodies and other actors (Bauder 2006). Bauder (2006: 43) sees the nonrecognition of foreign credentials as representing "the collective labor market interests of nonmigrant professionals and solidifies the grip of nonmigrants on the primary segment of the labour market"; these restrictions, which do not reflect an objective qualification of competencies, further interact with other essentialising social processes that confine populations to specific jobs (McDowell 2008) and exacerbate tendencies towards de-skilling of migrant workers.

This combined process is further accentuated by the operation of labour agencies, which are frequently the first point of contact for migrant workers looking for jobs in their new labour market and direct them towards "low-skilled", precarious occupations (Samaluk 2016; McKay and Markova 2010). According to statistics compiled by the Scottish Government (2019: 14), 65.5 percent of EU nationals and 62.3 per cent of non-EU

nationals in employment with degrees were employed in "high or medium-high skill level occupations (e.g. nurses, health associates, construction trade requiring a body of knowledge and above)", compared to 81.2 per cent of British nationals. While there nevertheless exists significant scope for a rise up the occupational hierarchy through the acquisition of qualifications, migrant workers remain more prone to finding themselves at the bottom of the labour market *despite* their credentials (Scottish Government 2018; Bauder 2006). De-skilling was mentioned by most of my interview participants: some were lawyers in their home countries that had been confined to working in hospitality; I also spoke to one journalist, one graphic artist, one sound-engineer, two graduates of a prestigious philosophy department in Europe and a film director. All were doing jobs that would be considered less 'skilled' than their qualifications. One example:

"Q: And why did you come?

A: I came because I lost my job as a lawyer and jurist in France. I wanted to go back to my island- Guadeloupe, in the Caribbean- so I thought about Miami because is not far away, but I thought about Donald Trump and he changed all the immigration laws. I didn't know what to do. I got a friend, we used to work with the Foreign Ministry in France, and he just told me "maybe you can go to the UK", like a step, you know.

Q: You are still an EU citizen in Guadeloupe…

A: Absolutely, absolutely. I'm French. And he said, "you can go to the UK and maybe find some work or an American company and then maybe they can send you to Canada or Miami or something". Yeah why not, but there is the Brexit. And I came here 10 years ago to visit Scotland, and I knew that they rejected the Brexit, so I just said, "I'm going to Scotland, just for me, to try to maybe go back to uni". Because I knew that I couldn't work as a lawyer or a consul here.

Q: Why?

A: Because I have to go back to uni.

Q: They don't accept your qualifications?

A: Exactly, or even my experience. I can work. I can work as a legal counsel in a legal firm or something like that, but they just don't want me.

Q: Why?

A: Because I have more experience and qualifications than the people I have in front of me. I speak several languages.

Q: So, they told you that you were overqualified.

A: Yeah, all the time. And that they need Scottish degree or a Scottish Master on law. And I was, "but you know, I got international degrees, international Master, international law and human rights". I can work here. Because I can work in England. Even I can work in New York as a legal counsel, and go for the bar in New York, but not here.

Q: How did that make you feel? When you came here and you found out that your qualifications will not get accepted?

A: I knew that, since I came here. I knew that it's… it would be difficult. But I didn't expect that it was so much difficult.

Q: When you say you had so many interviews, how many interviews did you have?

A: Maybe 10. Just for law firms. For me, each interview is like an experience. You know? I discover new things and I improve myself all the time, so for me it was good.

Q: Of course. But these jobs were jobs that normally you would qualify to do?

A: Yeah.

[…]

Q: So you didn't manage to find a job in your qualifications, and then you did what?

A: I started looking for a job, like bartender, things like that, because I needed money.

Q: Just in between, like, until you find…

A: Yes. Until I… I wanted to go back to uni, so I applied to do a Master with British and Scottish law in Edinburgh, but there were kind of problems. They asked me, "we can't say yes for your application for the moment because you need to go pass the TOEFL test". And I was just, "yeah but I'm here almost 1 year and a half, I speak English all the time". And they said "no, it's like that for everybody, because you are not a native English speaking". And I was "fair enough", but it was complicated because when they told me that, it was, maybe the 20th of November and they said you have until the 27th to give us the results of your test, and it wasn't possible [laughs]. So yeah, and I just try to stay positive and say "ok, I'm going to do things after, and the Brexit is not even here for the moment, so maybe is a good thing that I didn't go for that". So, I don't know what to

say…. The more days come and things like that, the less I want to go back to uni. Because it costs money. And I don't find any job in my area. I'm just working in hospitality, it is the only, as an immigrant, is the only chance that people give me" - Anna, Guadeloupean (French) female, late 30s, hospitality.

Direct discrimination can also impact one's prospects for, and experience in, employment. Arjun is a migrant worker from India who, at the time of the interview, was working as a carer due to the non-recognition of his qualifications. He is also a Sikh. In describing his experiences trying to find work, he told me the following:

"A: And one thing I feel- not related to the union but related to employment- is that… some people have certain identification. We wear the turban. We are identified from that. You don't have to say anything, people judge you. So this happened to me, I worked in Sainsbury's in Southampton for about 2 years in the tills. When the recruitment process begin, I… there is a procedure. First you do the online test. If you pass the online test then they call you to the interview. There is 2 tests in the interview, and if you go through that you pass. I did online test and I scored the highest, so I got called for an interview. I applied for the customer service job, they didn't select me. I know my answers were correct. I didn't have a job, so I applied second time. Second time also didn't select me. I applied part-time. Not selected. I applied full time. Not selected. At the fifth time, I got the manager who was in the first interview. So I said "I am not going to give you the test. Just tell me what was wrong in my first interview." So he was quite ashamed, I just tell him a lot of things. He told to me "your first exam you scored 100%".

Q: So basically, it was directly ethnic or religious discrimination. He didn't even try to have an excuse?

A: Yes [laughing], no excuse. And even the fifth time he didn't take my written exam. I without shame, I know the questions. Because I was taking them a fifth time. [laughing]"- Arjun, Indian male, late 40s, care sector.

The reality of de-skilling was something that I also experienced in my attempts to find a job during the participant observation research that informs this project. Furthermore, apart from the structural underpinnings of de-skilling such as the non-recognition of qualifications, it could be argued that some migrant workers with qualifications are put in a position of performing an 'unskilled' identity in order to conform to perceived or real requirements held by employers. These performances are interwoven with the essentialising and racializing processes that structure migrant workers' location in

the labour market (Miles 1982); 'enacting' de-skilling thereby further accentuates the processes that essentialise migrant workers by cementing an essentialised identity. Nevertheless, acquiring a job without reproducing this performance could be difficult. Employers fully partake in crafting and reproducing this essentialisation by connecting specific migrant groups with specific behaviours and thereby 'naturalising' their suitability for certain jobs (Anderson 2013; MacKenzie and Forde 2009; Maldonado 2009). The following is derived from my fieldnotes after being interviewed by an employment agency:

"I was conscious of the stereotypes that I was expected to embody in order to 'qualify' for this specific job, in the eyes of the interviewer. To begin with, I had to make significant alterations to my CV. I did not include my Master's Degree, my ongoing PhD program, or various jobs that I have done in social movement contexts, such as a fundraising coordinator for the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. This was inspired by three factors: first, I had once in the past spoken to a colleague in a warehouse who had 3 Masters degrees, but told me that he has to hide them in order to get these low paid jobs- they wouldn't employ him in the jobs that he was qualified for without experience in the UK, and they wouldn't employ him in manual, 'unskilled' jobs because of his degrees. The second reason was to hide my social movement background. This was derived from my previous experience working in warehouses in Bradford between 2013-2016. I found that when I hid these elements of my life, I was more likely to get hired.

The final factor was my understanding of the complexities of migrant labour, a landscape that acts upon, and through, various stereotypes. I had to fit in to their stereotype of a 'migrant worker' in order to be accepted. What they (perhaps) don't know is that a lot of migrant workers hide their qualifications; workers and agencies therefore combine to create an artificial account of reality. In any case, I knew that in order to be employed, in the specific sectors, looking the way I look (visibly not British, with many people's first thoughts being that I come from Poland), I was expected to perform certain traits that corresponded to the established norms of the context (Goffman 1959: Chapter 1). Not only did I have to perform the stereotype of the type of personality that would go for a warehouse job, but I also had to perform the role of the 'good migrant/good worker' (MacKenzie and Forde 2009). However, it is important to note that I did not hide all of my qualifications. I purposefully left my BA in International Development, which was awarded with first-class honours, in the CV. I also purposefully left the proofs of my proficiency in Greek, Spanish, and English. Two days later, they offered me an "unskilled" job in a factory producing radiators." (Fieldnotes, 18 October 2018)

Some key subjective responses that enable migrant workers to rationalise and tolerate the new conditions they are confronted with include an appreciation of the urgent requirement to make money to establish themselves, a corresponding sense of temporariness since they hope and expect to move up the occupational hierarchy, cultural and linguistic difficulties, and a "dual frame of reference" whereby they favourably compare their situation in the new country to that of the one they left behind (Samaluk 2016; Anderson 2013; MacKenzie and Forde 2009; Bauder 2006; Piore 1979). These mechanisms were briefly touched upon in chapter 3 and will be further scrutinised below, but it is important to situate them in the context of one's recent arrival to Scotland and the hopes that come attached with migration. Contrary to some theories that paint migrant workers as cogs in the international machinery of capital (as expressed, for example, in Castles 2000), an understanding of motivations and existing ideas illuminates the exercise of agency at all levels of their- objectively- intensely exploitative trajectories in their new labour markets. When I first met John in my role as a kitchen porter, we briefly touched upon these issues:

"Q: Are you also Greek?

A: Yes, I was baptised in Greece, in Athens.

Q: And what are you doing here?

A: What am I doing? For the money man, what are you doing here?

Q: The same! [we laugh] How do you find it over here?

A: The money, man. Fuck it. There's no sun here, there is no fun, but the money is very good. I can work for 5 years and make about £100,000. You go back to Athens and you are set, you can establish a small business.

Q: What are you talking about, man? £100,000 in 5 years? How much do you intend to work, 80 hours a week?

A: As much as I need to man, you'll make £70,000- £100,000.

Q: Yeah, but only if you don't do anything else.

A: What else is there to do? This is why you are here!

> Q: So you are telling me that you want to put your head down and do nothing else, just work and sleep.
>
> A: Yes, exactly." (Fieldnotes, 7 July 2019- *translation mine*)

Here, the comparison between Greece and Scotland, and the meanings attached to each of these locations, is evident. Greece is seen as a country with sun and fun but lacking in opportunities. In contrast, in Scotland "the money is very good", and John hopes to save up enough to become fully autonomous in the future. Echoing the writings of Bauder (2006), Piore (1979), and Berger and Mohr (2010), he wanted to work as much as possible and welcomed the grueling 14.5-hour shifts that we were regularly assigned to. John didn't expect this to last forever though: he had a clear plan in his mind to work as much as possible for "5 years", expecting to amass an objectively huge amount of money for someone who is only paid £8.21 an hour (which was the minimum wage at the time). Further testament to the existence of the dual frame of reference were his opinions that in the UK, contrary to Greece, employers couldn't arbitrarily fire workers because this practice was illegal and Employment Tribunals were there to support vulnerable workers (Fieldnotes, 7 July 2019). He erroneously believed that it was possible to claim unfair dismissal after 2 months of employment, when in reality one needs to be continuously employed for 2 years.

Despite a desire for economic security and a relatively uninformed understanding of labour rights, John did not passively accept the hegemonic neoliberal social narratives that exist in the UK and had an acute perception of class and hierarchical inequalities. For example, in my last day at that workplace I bumped into him as I entered; he had just been told to leave because it was a quiet day. He told me that "these fuckers don't care, but in December they will be begging us to do 14 and 16 hours". When I told him that I was going to leave because I had found a better job, he replied: "then why were you here in the first place? It is horrible. The other guy, he had booked holidays, they had agreed to them, and in the last minute they didn't let him have them and he lost his tickets. They do things like that. They don't care." He then went on to tell me that the only reason he kept this job is because he wanted to improve his English and gradually rise up the job hierarchy to become a chef. (Fieldnotes, 22 July 2019). These conversation encapsulates many of the theoretical points outlined above: the trade-offs many migrant workers make in accepting unfavourable working conditions in order to gradually move up the labour hierarchy and learn skills; the unrealistic expectations that are borne out of a mythologised comparison of the home country's conditions to those of Scotland; the short-term inclination to work as

much as possible in order to secure a livelihood in the long term; and, concurrently with all these, an acute awareness of the exploitation that permeates their working lives.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a cursory survey of the complex of subjective and structural factors that combine to produce the realities migrant workers in precarious occupations experience in Scotland. Economic inequalities expressed at the international level are transferred to the Scottish reality through a variety of mechanisms. As the accounts provided by Berger and Mohr (2010) and Sayad (2004) illustrate, economic migration, particularly the type that ends up fulfilling the labour requirements of precarious, exploitative, and 'low-skilled' occupations, is fuelled by the contradiction between one's hopes and needs and the objective reality they find themselves in in their countries of origin. As emigration becomes an inseparable feature of a country's reality, a culture develops which accepts it, naturalises it and encourages it. This is, of course, not an exclusively intrinsic development; it is actively enforced by a web of organisations, labour agencies, and intergovernmental agreements (Andrijasevic and Saccheto 2017; Samaluk 2016; Menz 2010). The migratory circuits, alongside other economic circuits of unequal exchange, function on the global scale in a way that maintains existing inequalities and further empowers the markets of the receiving countries at the expense of the sending ones. Once an immigrant worker arrives, various subjective attributes combine with the structural demands and conditions of the local labour market to push them towards specific occupations which are usually precarious and 'unskilled'. However, it is important to understand that migrant workers themselves participate in reproducing these structures, for example, through the commonly present initial preference for quick but precarious jobs (MacKenzie and Forde 2009; Bauder 2006). An understanding of the complex ways in which personal attitudes and goals combine with wider, structural, international processes is indispensable to any subsequent analysis of the conditions and resistances of migrant workers in Scotland.

Chapter 6: Manifestations and Effects of Precarity

Introduction

Newly arrived migrant workers to the UK, and Scotland, are likely to find initial employment in precarious occupations. This is a result of the need to find a quick job to begin settling down and acclimatizing to the new country (Piore 1979) in combination with the various multi-scalar operations of the local labor market (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Bauder 2006), juridical and cultural exclusions and boundaries (Anderson 2013), and subjective factors such as potential language difficulties or unfamiliarity with the necessary networks and avenues for employment (Recci and Triandafyllidou 2010). Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti (2015) refer to employment agencies as tools that filter new migrant workers to the country's labour market, socializing migrant workers into specific labour regimes. However, many migrant workers avoid agencies, instead finding themselves situated in other precarious employment relations. This chapter will attempt to examine the contractual manifestations of precarity, with reference to agency work, 'verbal contracts' with varying degrees of informality, and zero-hours contracts. These distinctions are crucial for the subsequent examination of subjectivities and resistances: for example, a worker on a zero-hours contract, albeit precarious, has significantly more scope for appealing to an Employment Tribunal than a worker who is employed and gets paid 'under the table'.

This chapter will also attempt to briefly examine the subjectivities that employers are seeking to promote in their workers, thereby trying to discern the real manifestations of power, docility, and management tactics. It is argued that precarious jobs socialize workers to specific labour regimes; however, workers are not passive receptacles of extraneous socializing forces: as subjects they always have an awareness of what is being done, and are, to varying degrees, complicit with, or resistant to, the system's reproduction. The discussions concerning the different manifestations of precarity and the subjectivities required by employers will be combined to introduce two ideas stemming from participant observation: the "socialization of precarity" and the "agency arena". The "agency arena" refers to the inherent competition that exists in precarious occupations between workers, which problematize solidarity and stifle the possibility of developing bonds. The "socialization of precarity", applying the ideas of writers such as Federici (2012) and Lazzarato (2015) concerning the proliferation of precarity to all aspects of social life, extends these observations and tries to interrogate how the political and social subjectivities of migrant workers are shaped by their experiences of situations such as the

"agency arena". Once again, these are presented as preliminary foundations for the analyses in the following chapters.

1: Manifestations of Precarity

1.1: Degrees of Informality

Escaping the economic crisis in Greece, Takis arrived in Glasgow without any existing connections to the city, essentially having to start from nothing. While staying in a hostel, he immediately began looking for a job. His trajectory is fully in line with Bauder's (2006) description of the importance of ethnic networks and relationships in structuring migrants' initial experiences in the host country. Takis's first job was in a Greek restaurant, for which he was paid cash-in-hand in order to earn some quick money. Importantly, his first apartment was also located through the network centered around the restaurant. Takis introduces two points that will figure prominently in subsequent discussions: the first concerns the role of ethnic networks in assisting immigrants cover some basic immediate needs following migration, such as finding a job. The second is the fact that it is not uncommon for established migrants to exploit newcomers in a multitude of ways. The segment below illuminates some of the overlapping webs of informality, precarity, and ethnicity that migrant workers might find themselves in.

A: "I worked in a Greek restaurant for a month, and they found me a house. They said "we have a landlord, so you stay somewhere for a start, make some money, and then you can leave". I wasn't fooled, I could tell there was some dirty business going on. They know that people will come, and they say "we will pass you on these guys so you can make money also". And the room was horrible, very small, and the guy was completely untrustworthy. Once something was broken, he never used to come, until I started threatening him, "you will either do something or I am leaving today".

Q: Was he also Greek?

A: He was Algerian.

Q: Strange!

A: And then I am considered a racist!

Q: Alright… [I can see he is visibly uneasy]. Come on man, what's the matter?

A: I feel that everyone who is here, other than the British, the other ethnicities that are here for years and have set themselves up nicely, they are all exploiters! I clearly consider them

exploiters. They have all become landlords and things like that, they have all opened businesses and now, whoever comes that is new, they will drink his blood. That's it!"- Takis, Greek male, mid-30s, hospitality [*translation mine from Greek*].

As Marion Young (1990) points out, affinity through shared ethnicity and community is clearly not enough to disrupt class-based and other forms of exploitation. The struggles of past migrant generations do not necessarily equate with solidarity towards new arrivals. The variety of forces pushing migrant groups towards degrees of informality may give rise to a vicious cycle of increased informality, with multiple hierarchical positions within that sector. Unsatisfied with the hours and prospects he was receiving, Takis decided to find a different job. Once again, this was arranged through informal channels, but this time the boss was Scottish.

"Q: Was this job under the table also?

A: No, the payments came through the bank, but you know, basically it's black money, I didn't pay taxes, nothing, it was just a deposit in my name, nothing more. I worked in leaflets for one and a half years. I can say that as a boss, the guy was straight with me. He didn't make you work overtime with less money, the payment was every Friday, I always received the money I was supposed to get. It was a hard job and essentially it really is a job for immigrants that don't know English.

Q: And how much did you get paid?

A: in the beginning it was very low, at £45 a day, so…

Q: So they paid you daily and not hourly?

A: They paid you by thousandth. Which was never a thousand. We handed out about 850, but it was £45 for the thousand. If it was a good area we finished in 6 hours, if it was a bad area in 8.

Q: Were your colleagues also immigrants?

A: Yes, the main ones were Hungarians. I had spoken to the boss. Scottish people had also come, but these guys never came for work. They came to make a quick catch for one week, make £300 pounds or something and disappear. I personally told the boss to not get Scottish people for the job. He told me "I know, I know, I want to work with Scottish people but they don't stay".

[…..]

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A: I started with £45, then they became £50 and the last three months they had become £55. I can say that when they were £55, I was economically satisfied.

Q: But you didn't have any of the rights of a contracted worker.

A: No, no, but as a first job, because this is what I consider to be my first job, it was good".
Takis, Greek male, mid-30s, hospitality/speaking about leafleting [*translation mine from Greek*].

Here, it is evident that Takis made various trade-offs. Firstly, he chose to be paid illegally, and frequently under the minimum wage- £45 for 8 hours amounts to £5.6 an hour, which is less than the minimum wage was in 2012 (UK Government 2020). Secondly, his employment relation left no space for the defense of any labour rights. However, these risks were calculated as necessary in the context of getting a "good" "first job". This was because it was stable, "the boss was straight", and the non-payment of tax meant that his final wage was close to what a contracted worker would make on minimum wage. As will be examined in the following chapter, in informal occupations interpersonal relations replace contracted employment relations: people's relationships with their superiors therefore assume an overwhelming significance in forming their experiences, and many choose to stay in these jobs precisely for those relationships. Cognizant of the adverse conditions in various agencies, warehouses, and similar precarious occupations, Takis chose to enter this type of employment and he told me that he would have stayed there if it wasn't for the Scottish weather. That said, it is important to remember that many workers, especially those under more restrictive immigration statuses than EU workers, are structurally compelled into illegal employment without any choice (Anderson 2010). Nevertheless, Takis's example illustrates that precarious workers are not *only* fashioned through "hard" migration controls such as detention and visa schemes (Anderson 2010); precarity and illegal employment conditions are also conditioned by the multiplicity of other borders, exclusions, and partial inclusions that collectively structure labour markets, nurture these spaces of informality, and direct workers in various ways towards them (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Anderson 2013; Bauder 2006).

Similar informal relationships exist at many levels of the Scottish labour market, with the hospitality industry being a significant employer of migrant workers in various continuums of legality-illegality (Lucas and Mansfield 2010). Below is an example from one of my interviews illuminating the contractual relations that underpin an important segment of labour in hospitality.

> "Q: Do you have a contract in that café?
>
> A: Without a contract. They ask me for my personal details, national insurance number, photo of my passport, address, so the whole idea was: "I give them this information, I will get the payslips, it's still kinda legal. Like, the right way to do it, just without a contract". So for me, it was, how you say, working without a contract I had nothing, like, we didn't agree on anything. And that was the struggle because I was expecting completely different thing.
>
> Q: Did they tell you, for example…. Did you have a verbal idea of the basics, like how many hours you will work, what your pay is, or something like that?
>
> A: They told me "we need you for like Christmas period, and it's gonna be full time job, but later on we might not need you", that is all. But the way they were treating me during that Christmas period… I wouldn't get rota in advance, they would give me any hours they want. Like 4 hours per day, sometimes like 10 hours per day, whatever they want basically. They had this kind of power. Cause we didn't sign anything, and I didn't have money, and I needed the job."- Irene, Lithuanian female, mid- 20s, hospitality.

Once again, there is a clear trade-off between employment security and labour rights, underpinned by the need to get an immediate job to make money. All workers are legally entitled to receive a full written account of the terms and conditions of their employment within three months of starting it (UK Government 2020b). However, my interviews and participant observations suggest that this is not always the case; the degree of informality prevalent in each workplace plays a key role, and many workers in hospitality have never seen a detailed account of their rights even after years of constant employment. A combination of forces, including the material imperative to make money, result in migrant workers accepting insecure employment relations.

While structural constraints operate to shape and direct the available choices for all workers, the degree of compulsion differs and is significantly conditioned by migration status (Anderson 2013; 2010). Four of the workers I spoke to that had, in different times, worked in the same café all referred to a worker who was there and had assumed managerial duties. She was a woman from Bangladesh who was relying on her employment at the café to safeguard her right to remain in the UK. While I was not able to interview her as she had left Scotland at the time of my research, her colleagues' accounts of her experiences are indicative of the intensified degree of exploitation faced by non-EU

migrant workers, and of how migration controls create specific employment relations that render them more vulnerable and exploitable (Anderson 2013; 2010):

"I was seeing the girl from Bangladesh, she had responsibilities as a manager, but she wasn't officially a manager there. And she was very badly treated. I would say that they were exploiting her in a very bad way. At the beginning I was saying "I am very happy in this job, this job is fine" and she would tell me "no, this is not a good job, these guys are very bad"." – Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality
"It was a situation with our colleague where she had serious injury and we called the boss, and she said to us "never call the ambulance, just get her home and she has to call the ambulance from home"."- Agnes, Polish female, mid-20s, hospitality
"They were doing that because when you are migrant worker it is much less likely that you will be self-aware of your rights, you feel a bit more insecure and whatever they ask you to do, you will be more accepting, you will do it more easily. The Bangladeshi girl was reporting hours in the Home Office as well, and she was in a very insecure position."-Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality

1.2: Agency Work

Employment agencies are significant actors in precarious labour markets, allocating migrant workers to quick, generally "unskilled" occupations while at the same time providing employers with a disposable workforce that has few labour rights (McKay and Markova 2010). Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti (2015) argue that agencies perform a process of socialization, inculcating new immigrant workers within specific labour regimes: a new migrant worker learns what's expected of them as they traverse the various agencies and sectors of the labour market. While agencies do offer quick, legal occupations to migrant workers, many of these jobs also tend to be intensely exploitative, low-paid, ununionized, and involve unsociable hours (Lever and Milbourne 2017; Anderson 2013; McKay and Markova 2010). However, 3 of my interview participants spoke about positive aspects of agency work: for example, Agnes found a job through an agency as a bartender at prestigious concerts, enabling her to enjoy live music while getting paid for it. In two other instances, Lois and Suzan spoke of how the constant change of jobs provided welcome respite from the boredom of warehouse work. These testimonies further illuminate subjective reasons as to why many migrant workers might choose to work with agencies. Nevertheless, these arguments must be seen within a wider

context of precarity and insecurity that structures and constrains workers' available options and directs them to certain sectors, occupations, and mentalities (Briken and Taylor 2018; MacKenzie and Forde 2009). Furthermore, it should be noted that in these three instances the reported benefits of agency work are related to possibilities and opportunities which are separate from the work itself, and which are considered valuable precisely because they alleviate the feelings of boredom, fatigue and exploitation that are associated with the essence of the jobs performed.

Agencies, businesses, and workers operate in a triangular relationship that disadvantages the worker: the agencies have a constant pool of available workers, ready to dispatch them according to the needs of the businesses they serve; businesses contact the agencies when they have any labour requirements that need fulfilling, whether they are long or short term; and workers have to either accept the employment offered (and excel at performing it) or fall into disgrace in the eyes of the agency, who will privilege other, more flexible workers above them in the future (Andrijasevic and Sachetto 2017; Choudry and Henaway 2016; Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus, and Alberti 2015; Sporton 2013). Highlighting the multiple benefits of agency labour to employers, Lever and Milbourne (2017) recount an incidence where unionized, Portuguese workers were fired *en masse* and replaced with un-unionized Polish workers. The intimate connection between employers and agencies is such that frequently boundaries are blurred: in 2 of the 3 workplaces that I accessed through an agency, the agency offices were located inside the premises of work (Fieldnotes, 27 November 2018; 12 December 2018). Notably, these were the largest workplaces in terms of company prestige and capital. This is in line with Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus, and Alberti's arguments (2015) about the monopolization of certain sectors by certain agencies, to the extent that the two sides of the triangle are becoming increasingly inseparable. Below is an example of a migrant worker's experiences with agencies when they initially arrived in Scotland, corroborating various points made here.

"A: So I've been doing pretty much shit jobs for 3 years. I just started a new job 3 years after, which is also very precarious because it is in the charity sector. So I started my first job, two jobs were in an agency. So basically they call you whenever they need you to go somewhere and to work for a few hours. So one of them was in a horrible place, the first one, it was in a sort of garage and they had, I don't know, it was like a place of transit where people were gambling for cars, and then it was like this horrible little café full of grease and fat, and I was basically… my role was to clean the table and wash the dishes. Imagine, like, washing these massive pans full of like, grease and fat that has been stuck

there for… it was horrible. Yeah. That was the first one, and then after that I went to an event with another agency, and it was better, I got paid more money, but it was 10 hours work in a row with no break.

Q: So, these first 2 jobs that were through an agency, did they provide with the full rights that you were entitled to, holiday pay, stuff like that?

A: Ummmm, no. No. That was only like, I attempted only 2 times, but I knew people that told me that they had to fight to get their holiday paid. Because they were doing that full time, so the more that you were available, and the more they liked you, the more they will call you. But it was still incredibly precarious because they phone you whenever they have somebody to do it, so in the event, in this event I met many Spanish. I would say 90% of the staff at this event, where I worked 10 hours and I got more money, they were all Spanish people that had been working with these agencies for a long time. And many of them were telling me "yeah, they were asshole, yes they pay you more than others, but then you really had to push it to get your holidays paid"."- Leila, Spanish/Tunisian female, early 30s, hospitality

Leila's account highlights how some agencies try to further increase their profits by blatantly disrespecting labour legislation, in this case through the non-payment of accrued holiday pay. The non-payment of holidays and workers' ensuing battles to get paid is an issue that I came across multiple times during the course of this research and is exemplary of how agencies and other employers in precarious occupations disregard even the limited rights workers are currently afforded. While some laws exist that attempt to safeguard the rights of agency workers, they are easily bypassed by employers: for example, agency workers in the same workplace for 12 weeks or more are entitled to the same rights as contracted workers; however, this does not prevent agencies laying workers off after 11 weeks, and then re-employing them (Andrijasevic and Sachetto 2017; McKay and Markova 2010). Quite simply, many employers choose to pay extra to get agency labour because of the significant benefits they gain from having a disposable, flexible, and un-unionized workforce; ultimately, their profits rise thanks to reduced "indirect costs" and the increased productivity of a workforce structurally compelled to perform as best as they can to maintain the job (McKay and Markova 2010: 454). Nevertheless, despite offering 'legal' employment when compared to fully illegal or cash in hand work, many agencies rely precisely on migrant workers' lack of information to exploit them in ways that extend beyond their contractual status. Instances such as the non-payment of holiday pay, or the

refusal to allow their workers to take their legally entitled breaks, featured prominently in my interviews and participant observations.

> "A: We didn't know how to claim our rights, and since I didn't even know the language they were throwing me from one place to the next, and you shouldn't speak, and if you spoke, from tomorrow you're fired!" Suzan, Romanian female, late 40s, hospitality and logistics [*translation mine from Greek*] [describing work in a factory through an employment agency]

Agency work therefore represents a particular manifestation of contractual precarity, sharing characteristics found in both informal labour markets and in formal, more traditional employment relationships: instead of imagining a strict split between 'legal' and 'illegal' forms of work, my findings suggest that it is more accurate to speak of a broad continuum of precarious labour. While the worker does have a contract with the agency, the agency is under no obligation to guarantee that they will allocate them to a job; and if they do, they are under no obligation to guarantee hours or conditions. Since the worker is employed by the agency they can easily be replaced if they don't conform to the employer's requirements. Furthermore, the vulnerability of migrant workers due to the combined effects of various subjective characteristics and their contractual insecurity enable some agencies to cut corners and attempt to save money at the expense of legality. For example, when I was working in the radiator factory through an agency, I found that I was being taxed more than I should have been, even after the situation had been apparently resolved (Fieldnotes, 9 November 2018). However, perhaps the most significant factor that differentiates agency labour from other forms of precarious employment is the mobility that is associated with it. Workers know they are employed on a temporary basis and may be easily fired or made redundant; furthermore, they know that in order to keep the job, they have to perform their role as "good workers" to the utmost (McCollum and Findlay 2015; MacKenzie and Forde 2009).
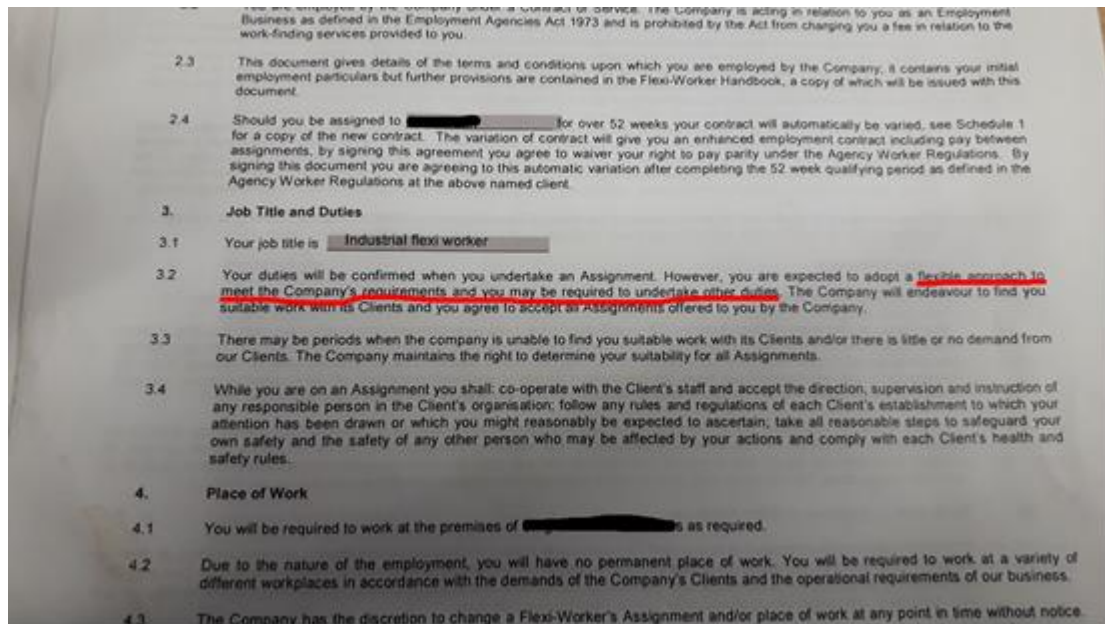
Figure 1: An example of an agency contract

1.3: Zero-Hours Contracts

Zero- hours contracts have been extensively analyzed in the relevant literature and are the most prevalent contractual manifestation of precarity in the UK (Bloodworth 2019; Briken and Taylor 2018; Lever and Milbourne 2017; Bradley 2016; McCollum and Findlay 2015; Meardi, Martin and Riera 2012; Moore 2011). As with agency labour, these contracts do not guarantee specific hours. However, a zero-hours contract in the context of this research is distinguished from agency work because it involves a two-way arrangement between the employer and the employee and involves working in specified conditions and locations. This form of work varies from sector to sector and workplace to workplace; for example, Anna told me that she would regularly work more than 50 hours a week during her time in a hotel. Richard, again working in a hotel, told me that he had a zero-hours contract but had verbally agreed to 20 hours a week with his manager. This last instance makes clear that despite the existence of a legal contract, in such situations interpersonal relations play a key role in workers' allocation of hours. The zero-hours contract enables employers to rapidly and without warning alter workers' hours, and this is frequently done punitively. This was the case with Anna, who saw her 40 and 50 hour-weeks reduced to absolute zero in the space of a day after a conflict with her manager. Zero-hours contracts are mostly used for the flexibility they provide to employers. Similarly to agency work, this results in workers' having very little control over their employment conditions, a form of disempowerment that is further exacerbated by the added difficulties migrant workers face with accessing representation.

> "I was on a bank contract, so, what they started… I realised that the manager is a bit biased against me. What she was doing is, because I was in a bank contract, zero hours, if there is availability they call you. So there were 4 service users. She put me with one person only. The person who she put me on required minimum support. So I was getting weekly just 10 hours, 2 hours, 3 hours, something like that. The wage was good, above the minimum wage, but the thing is I was not getting much hours there although there was hours available."- Singh, Indian male, mid 40s, care sector.

1.4: The Precarity Trap

Parutis (2014) conceptualizes migrant workers' trajectories in the EU as passing through a series of stages leading to their "dream job", or a job that is "challenging, creative, facilitating learning, intellectually stimulating and therefore offers self-development opportunities" (2014: 47). Parutis (2014) argues that many migrants, initially experiencing de-skilling and needing some money to establish themselves in the new society, begin by finding precarious, "unskilled" jobs through agencies, before gradually moving up the occupational hierarchy. This may be done by eventually being offered a permanent role in the workplace they are employed in through the agency, or by abandoning the agency job in favour of working somewhere they consider preferable (2014: 43-45). Skills learnt in other countries take a while to be translated or accepted within the labour regimes of the host country (Bauder 2006); migrants may initially choose an "unskilled" job in order to better learn the language and acclimatise themselves to the new culture (Anderson 2010), all the while planning their gradual ascent. All my interview participants came to Scotland with goals that far exceeded their job status at the time of arrival. The dream of gradual progression was further corroborated through my participant observation sessions: every migrant worker who wasn't in a position of authority wanted to 'move up' the occupational hierarchy.

However, dreams and expectations aren't always realised, and many theorists problematise Parutis's (2014) arguments as they pertain to migrant workers' gradual progression. Bauder (2006), for example, offers an intense criticism of such accounts, arguing that structures of distinction and hierarchization operate throughout society to systematically position migrant workers in precarious, "unskilled", stigmatised occupations. He writes that "the subordination of many immigrants in the labour market is not a pure function of inferior education, lack of professional competence, or language deficiencies, as human capital theory suggests- otherwise, immigrants would gain access to their legitimate occupations once they upgrade their employment and language skills. […]

Rather, the subordinate position of immigrants relates to the manipulation of cultural identities, unfair evaluation of foreign credentials, enactment of corporeal conventions, classification based on citizenship, and other processes of social and cultural distinction" (2006: 52). Despite their hopes, many immigrants remain situated in precarious occupations many years after their initial arrival (Choudry and Henaway 2016; Sporton 2013; Recci and Triandafyllidou 2010). Lever and Milbourne (2017) note that the intensity of their labour, almost exclusively alongside co-nationals or other immigrants, deny migrant workers the time and opportunity needed to develop the required competencies for progression outside work hours. When migrant workers manage to acquire these competencies, they nevertheless remain confined in jobs that conform to existing stereotypes and which associate certain groups with certain sectors: for example, a Polish male interviewed in Johansson and Sliwa (2016) remained employed in the same typical "Polish" jobs despite significantly improving his English. The combination of social and economic pressures that concentrate workers in precarious occupations has been described by Standing as the "precarity trap" (2011: 81-83).

My findings mostly confirm these arguments. Out of the 21 migrant workers interviewed, only 2 had experienced a substantial improvement in their occupational status. Many others did experience some advances by moving through jobs in order to find one whose conditions they preferred (Clark and Colling 2018; Alberti 2015), but all of them remained strictly confined to the realm of precarious occupations characterised by limited advancement opportunities, lack of control and stability with regard to hours and performance, and high levels of stress. For example, after experiencing racist and abusive behaviour working in a warehouse through an agency, Lois found work as a bartender in a hotel with a zero-hours contract. However, her hours were unstable and could not guarantee income security. Having amassed experience after more than a year at that workplace, she moved again to work in another bar with more stable hours and an atmosphere she enjoys. Despite this, her contractual circumstances are largely unchanged, and her prolonged comfort in this job intimately depends on her interpersonal relations with the bosses and managers. Another example of the "precarity trap" is offered below:

"Q: Anyway, ok so you left that job, and then did you manage to leave precarity or…

A: No, I went back to precarity! Precarity has always followed me!

> Q: Right now, we are on the fifth job that you had since coming to Scotland. Garage, event place, then you had the job in the French restaurant, then you had this job, and now we are talking about…
>
> A: No! I have the job in the 2 event ones, the other one was in the French restaurant, then was [an NGO]… No! Then was the café, yes, and then I went to somewhere else.
>
> Q: And that was in the space of how long?
>
> A: A year and a half."– Leila, Spanish/Tunisian female, early 30s, hospitality

When combined with the conclusions of previous research, my findings suggest a social landscape in which many migrant workers move between various contractual manifestation of precarity in search of improved conditions. However, fully escaping this precarity seems to be a complex and drawn-out process, involving more factors than acclimatization and an improvement in qualifications. It is true that employers may offer some workers permanent contracts; however, this is usually a privilege strictly reserved for the best-performing workers. For example, the logistics warehouse I worked in demanded extremely high pick rates, sustained over a period of 9 months, before considering offering permanent contracts. Even if one met these criteria, it wasn't enough to guarantee labour security: I spoke to a worker who told me that, after continually meeting all targets for many months, he was fired with no notice at all, only to be re-employed a few weeks later by the same agency, in the same workplace (Fieldnotes, 31 December 2018). Indeed, it could be argued that the promise of permanence is a tool used by employers to compel workers to increase their productivity (Briken and Taylor 2018; Interview with Angry Workers). Despite employers' promises and migrant workers' own dreams, my findings correlate with those of theorists such as Anderson (2013) and Bauder (2006) in illustrating a labour market inherently dependent on precarious migrant labour, which, through various interrelated cultural, juridical and economic processes, confines many migrant workers in the same occupations designated for them when they arrived.

2: Mental Impacts of Precarity

2.1: The "Agency Arena" and the "Good Worker Paradox"

I have argued that precarious labour conditions place workers in multiple overlapping and contradictory positions of instability and insecurity. Drawing on the accounts offered in the interviews combined with observations made while working in various precarious settings, I will introduce the twin concepts of the "agency arena" and

the "good worker paradox" to encapsulate two aspects or manifestations of anxiety that are specific to precarious labour conditions and hold explanatory value for subsequent discussions on subjectivities and resistance.

Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti (2015) discuss the various methods used by labour agencies to maximise their workers' productivity and manage, inculcate, and direct their behaviours and loyalty towards the company. Agencies, alongside other precarious employers, utilise precarity as a filtering mechanism that enables them to sort through workers until they find, and keep, the individuals that conform to their "good worker" standards. Usually, these involve personality traits that migrant workers are expected to perform, such as flexibility, docility, and high productivity (Anderson and Ruhs 2010; MacKenzie and Forde 2009). In their attempts to gain stability and security, many migrants willingly perform these characteristics, a performance that frequently presupposes and involves indirect competition in relation to other workers (Lever and Milbourne 2017). This competitiveness is inscribed in the system of agency and precarious labour, as the pool of available workers is consistently larger than the available jobs (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015). There is therefore an underlying, constant competition unfolding between workers as to who will excel at this required performance.

Moreover, as Lazzarato (2015: 186) notes, this competition is also one held against one's own self: "the permanent negotiation with oneself is the form of subjectivation and control specific to neoliberal societies. Just as in the Fordist system, the norm remains external, it is still produced by the socioeconomic system, but everything occurs as if the norm originated in the individual, as if it came solely from the individual". Implicit in most zero-hours and agency work is the promise that through excellent work, the worker conquers a coveted job that now becomes unavailable to someone else. By not taking days off due to sickness or holidays, by tolerating infringements on labour rights, and by accepting all overtime that is requested, one might be laying the foundations for a permanent contract. These structural-turned-subjective mental projections secure everlasting, frenetic productivity on the part of the worker, while also guaranteeing profits for both the renting company and the agency. To put it in Marxian terms, these forms of precarious labour are therefore generative of individualism on the part of workers which disempowers them in the face of the collectivism exercised by the owners of the means of production. This is the "agency arena". While it most fittingly describes agency labour, it can also be a useful concept for analysing trajectories in other zero-hours contractual arrangements such as those found in hospitality.

However, a worker's best efforts are frequently not enough to guarantee, or even approximate, security. This is especially true with agency labour, which is frequently utilised by employers to fill short-term requirements. For example, my job in the large logistics warehouse of an important multinational corporation was accessed through an agency because they needed workers for the extremely busy Christmas and New Year period (Fieldnotes, 21 December 2018). Other times, for example in manufacturing, an employer might use agency labour to fulfil a certain particularly demanding order. The flexibility of the agency contract enables employers to use workers and then easily discard them when they are no longer required. While there is always a glimmer of hope that a minority of those workers might be seen favourably and offered permanent contracts, everybody operates with the knowledge that the overall volume of work is limited.

Workers are thereby caught in a seemingly irresolvable contradiction: in order to be perceived as a 'good worker', they need to be fast and efficient; this is the only way that they will be kept on the job and ensure that the company will not request a replacement. A positive review from the employer also signals to the agency that a worker is 'profitable', which then opens the path towards rising up the hierarchy of seniority and being offered more jobs in the future above other agency workers (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015). However, in the proficient performance of the 'good worker', the worker progressively reduces the amount of work that they are required for; essentially, they are working towards their own redundancy. This paradoxical rationality is a requirement for the worker to be able to sustain their own precarious condition (the work supplied by the agency). The alternative would be unemployment, and a gruelling campaign of rising up the occupational hierarchy in a new precarious setting. These requirements lead to the internalisation of disciplinary control on the part of workers, ensuring the reproduction of the prerequisites for worker exploitation. One's attempts at surviving precarity therefore oil the wheels of the wider structures that foster and propagate precarity. This is the "good worker paradox".

> "Because they were operating with leaflets and cards, calendars, many calendars, we would produce so many calendars every day, but by that month we would need to sell this amount of calendars. So we needed to work fast. Build up pallets of so many calendars. There was this dilemma therefore, that you either work slow and you don't follow what they want you to follow, to be able to produce, to make all these calendars, and this would be a problem for you, or you work very fast but you might end up not being necessary any more there.

> Q: So you are progressively reducing your job?
>
> A: Yeah, in a way we knew that if this finishes, they might not give us so much shifts. Because when we were doing the calendars, they would ask for more and more workers there. Because there was a great need to work fast and efficiently. And at some point we realised "Oh my god. When we finish these calendars, they might give us much less hours". I remember I was discussing that a lot."- Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality [speaking about her time working in a print factory]

2.2: Lack of Control and Anxiety

The threat of unemployment combines with the multiple anxieties triggered and maintained by the precarious condition to fundamentally disempower workers. These anxieties have both 'negative' and 'positive' aspects: knowing that they could be fired any second with no recourse to any form of representation or help, workers are compelled to foster high productivity levels and comply as fully as possible to company requirements; on the other hand, a successful performance of the 'good worker' might open the doors for more secure employment. Multiple theorists have referred to the intense levels of stress that these contradictory experiences, always underlined by the threat of poverty, trigger in workers (Lever and Milbourne 2017; Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015). My findings largely confirm these analyses.

> "I couldn't plan my week; I couldn't plan my life. And they had a lot, they wanted to stay in control all the time. […] So it was like, situation like this, and I just, at this point, if it was an argument, he would tell me like "yeah, this is your job, it has to be like that". And I was like, I'm thinking to myself "I have no contract, I have no rota, they treating me like, not as equal, whatever". And yeah, they pay me money, everything is fine with that, but at the same time I am not happy how everything is working. And I don't like the control they are having on my life. And at some point they give me less than 20 hours a week or something like that, sometime they give me 30, sometimes 40, sometimes 50 even. Its fine if I want to work more, but without rota, everything is… you can't control it." Irene, Lithuanian female, mid-20s, hospitality

Anderson (2013: 84) points out that the "consequences of precariousness and its implications for time use, the balancing between work, family (reproductive labour) and leisure, are gendered and experienced differently at different points in life". As has been repeatedly argued, race, gender and class interact to position workers in particular jobs that correspond to existing sociocultural structures (Anderson 2013; Federici 2012; McDowell

2008; Bauder 2006). For many workers, the pressures experiences by the precarious contractual relation overlap with, and are significantly exacerbated by, their social experiences as women and mothers. These effects of gender and ethnic essentialization when combined with a precarious contractual relation are encapsulated by Suzan's account, who worked for over a year as a hotel cleaner while being alone in Scotland with 2 young children.

> "A: Zero-hours. So when you spoke up about something, anything….
>
> Q: They cut your hours.
>
> A: And these hours! They were 4 hours a day, and it took 1.5 hours to get there from my house and another 1.5 to come back. And I had to pick my child up from school and there was never enough time. It had gotten to the point where I had to hide keys so the children enter the house. I had heard, and believed, that if the children stayed alone in the house for 10 minutes they would be taken and put to an institution… I was very scared because the work in the hotel began at 9.30. I had to stay at least until 14.00 or 15.00, and how was I supposed to pick my child up when his school ended at 15.00? How do I return home? I lived every day with this fear of something happening." Suzan, Romanian female, late 40s, hospitality and logistics [translation mine]

3: The Socialisation of Precarity

The structural characteristics of precarity discussed above interact with subjective traits such as temporariness, language and cultural differences, and anxiety to produce a specific form of labour socialisation which I term the "socialisation of precarity". Similar to other aspects of socialisation that are conditioned by and in turn contribute to the reproduction of dominant social structures, the socialisation of precarity is a behavioural and subjective disposition that refers to how migrant workers in precarious occupations relate to, and perceive, their identity in work. I argue that this term is useful in analyses of migrant labour because it provides a specific conceptual framework for understanding the complex ways in which structurally-generated experiences can impact workers' subjectivities and behaviours; furthermore, it provides a framework through which to view exercises of agency, as well as illuminating some of the barriers towards collective action.

Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, and Tsianos (2016: 227) provide an important first step towards conceptualising precarity as an aspect of a wider socialisation when they write that "various embodied experiences of precarity constitute the primary terrain on which value creation takes place; simultaneously they are all confronted with the structural

insecurity imposed by the system of a nationally organized compromise of normal wage labor (that is, full time, long term wage labor). The system of wage labor and the corresponding welfare system produced a space-fixated work subjectivity (i.e. normal, full-time, wage employment) measured according to work time. Precarious labor implodes this subjectivity on various levels: it is not space-fixated, the precarious worker works in a multiplicity of locales; his/her work cannot be quantified and remunerated according to the system of wage labor measurement; finally, the experiences of precarious workers cannot be accommodated in the unified subjectivity germane to the national social compromise of normal employment." They go on to state that, "precarious labor exists only in the plural, as a multiplicity of experiences variously positioned, exploited, and lived in the system of embodied capitalism, and not as a unified subjectivity or 'precariat'" (2016: 227).

I agree that the multiplicity of experiences impedes all attempts at defining a universally applicable theoretic "subjectivity"; this is the basis of Hardt and Negri's (2017) argument that the modern revolutionary subject is to be found in the "Multitude". However, I argue that precisely this volatility, this insecurity, this constant motion, can contribute to the production of a specific, very real, form of socialisation. This argument follows, expands and localises the conclusions drawn from various theoretical sources (Berrardi 2017; Hardt and Negri 2017; Fisher 2009; Bauman 2001). Bauman (2001) argues that, under conditions of neoliberalism, the only remaining guarantee is that of liquidity, transformation, and instability, engendered by the deepening ruptures of social bonds and the onslaught of individualisation and responsibilisation as replacements to collective engagements and understandings. According to Bauman, precarity is internalised particularly by those caught in precarious occupations: "they know that they are disposable, and so they see little point in developing attachment or commitment to their jobs or entering lasting associations with their workmates. To avoid imminent frustrations, they tend to be wary of any loyalty to the workplace or inscribing their own life purposes into its projected future. This is a natural reaction to the 'flexibility' of the labour market, which when translated into the individual life experience means that long-term security is the last thing one is likely to learn to associate with the job currently performed" (2001: 152). Berrardi (2017: 113) enforces this line of analysis, writing that "social precarity can, indeed, be described as a condition in which workers are continuously changing their individual positions so that nobody will ever meet anybody in the same place twice. Cooperation without physical proximity is the condition of existential loneliness coupled with all-pervading productivity". These individualising and isolating circumstances combine with institutionalised insecurity to produce, and reinforce, a general disposition of

resignation defined by Fisher as "capitalist realism", which acts "as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action" (2009: 15). The limits of what is possible are therefore strictly confined to what already exists.

These debilitating and stifling circumstances are further exacerbated by social marginalisation, essentialisation, language and cultural barriers, and lack of access to representational and collective institutions. The individualisation and solidarity-destroying tendencies highlighted above were most clearly manifested in how people socialised during breaks in the factories and warehouse settings I was in. People just looked at their phones, exchanged very few words with each other, and kept their distance: there is no apparent need to develop connections with someone when both of you will probably not be in the same location next month. Furthermore, the socialisation of precarity pervades all aspects of one's labour existence; for example, Lois talks about how people are afraid to risk claiming very basic rights, resulting in them working for 10 or 12 hours without breaks:

> "So on a 12 hour shift, you get 1 hour break, and they don't take it. They don't have time to eat, they don't have time to drink. It's ridiculous. No one is there to replace them. For example, this guy at the reception, he often comes and asks me to give him crisps from the bar. And I am like "why are you eating crisps, eat something from the things we have for lunch" and he's like 'I don't have time to go get food, I don't get breaks at all". And I am like "why do you accept this", and he's like "there is no one to replace me". So many people tell me these things, but I say, "I wouldn't care, I would still try to take someone to replace me". It's not your problem. Things like that. Or another problem is that they might be overwhelmed by the hours they have per week, but they still accept working ridiculous amount of hours just because it's work.
>
> Q: Are they afraid that if they don't accept it something will happen?
>
> A: Yeah, it's basically fear being completely normalised and accepting like, the most extreme situation just because you are afraid to risk, to claim your rights as a person. And I see that very often." Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality.

I observed the socialisation of precarity in multiple instances during my participant observation. Examples such as those described by Lois were extremely frequent, especially in restaurants. Crucially, the fact that these behaviours have been normalised means that new workers are socialised into also accepting them, as not doing so would disrupt the entire flow of the workplace. For example, in one kitchen I worked in as a kitchen porter,

breaks were only taken when the workflow permitted them (of course, if there were more employed workers, there would be more opportunities for achieving a better balance- but this would mean paying extra wages). This resulted in me regularly working more than 10 hours without a single break; however, if I did take my break, this would result in someone else from the already understaffed kitchen having to pick up my work. This would in turn further disrupt everything, alienate me from my colleagues, and possibly lead to my being fired as a disruptive member of the workforce.

> "As I am rushing to complete my tasks, I am conscious, once again, of capitalism's cruelty. I have had one break in 10 hours. My feet are pulsing and aching from the sole to the calf; I have been working with a cramp for more than an hour, adapting my movements in order to keep working with minimum pain. This is fully counterproductive, as it makes me work slower on the one hand, while worsening the pain on the other; however, taking a break right now is out of the question. My right shoulder blade feels damaged and as if it would pop out if I pushed it a bit with my muscle. This is from constantly lifting stacks of heavy plates to place them in an overhead shelf. My palms are full of scattered open burns and cuts, to which I have almost grown oblivious."- Fieldnotes, 17th July 2019.

When people are immersed in oppressive social and economic conditions, Bourdieu (1984) argues that the operations and reconfigurations of habitus turn necessity into virtue. This transformation has been noted by other researchers examining migrant workers in the UK: for example, Datta and Brickell (2009) find a process of self-essentialisation occurring in the subjectivity of Polish workers, who use their perceptions of "superiority" vis-à-vis British workers in order to negotiate their disadvantaged position in the labour market. Similar conclusions are drawn by Lever and Milbourne (2017), who argue that Polish workers in the meat-processing industry internalise the discourses that essentialise them as "good workers" and try to maximise their performance, pushing themselves to mental and physical extremes. These mental processes neatly align themselves with the socialisation of precarity as they enable the subject to rationalise their disadvantaged position through a narrative that turns this disadvantage into favourable self-representation which emphasises skill, durability, and perseverance. This narrative, borne of concrete social conditions, is thereby owned by the worker, who then proceeds to proudly reproduce it in the context of their labour performance and their relationships with other workers. In the kitchen setting presented above, these operations were also mediated through workers' perceptions of masculinity. One cannot simply refuse to work hard; this would immediately be met with ridicule.

"I understand by now that you cannot complain about the difficulty of the job; it is part of the prevalent habitus to 'pucker up' and pretend like everything is cool. Later on, I hear George tell another worker, in a loud voice which might have been intended for everyone else to hear, to "never let it be seen that you are not in control. You might be panicking inside, but on the outside you should always look like you are in control". However, there were times when my facial expressions were betraying me.

At one point, Eni came up to me and asked me how I was. I told him that I am beginning to struggle and that, in busy periods, this job requires at least 2 people. He replied that "this is a job for 3 people, but you have to have the ass for the job! The ass! The ass!".

In this case, it is true that virtue is made of necessity: the soul-destroying labour conditions, whereby the company chooses the save money from the employment of an extra worker by imposing an extremely heavy workload on the existing worker, is completely taken for granted as unalterable and therefore not worthy of discussion. The focus shifts on the personal qualities of the worker, who must have the "ass" for working in gruelling conditions for minimum wage. His capacity to persevere and keep up is a measure of his worth and his ranking in the "good worker" hierarchy, a stereotype that everyone in the kitchen has internalised. This is something that unions and other social movements will have to contend with, as a large group of people have elevated their suffering into a form of righteous struggle that they *identify with*". Fieldnotes, 10th July 2019.

The socialisation of precarity interacts with the "agency arena" outlined above and the other forms that the internalisation of precarity assumes, resulting in the complete normalisation and acceptance of precarious working conditions. As has been repeatedly noted, employers of precarious occupations are looking for specific subjective characteristics in their workforces: these can summarised as a willingness to accept the arbitrariness and instability of one's personal working conditions, combined with a demonstrable and effective desire to perform the employment obligations. Their daily operations and entire structure intimately depend on workers' acceptance of these requirements. The internalisation, re-conceptualisation, and eventual reproduction of precarity, encapsulated in the concept of the "socialisation of precarity", therefore further fortify the conditions that position migrant workers in the most precarious, insecure, and stigmatised occupations. When oppression is accepted as "just the way things are", alternatives are pushed beyond the realm of imagination.

> "At one point, cognisant of the fact that this is one of my last observation sessions, I remember that I haven't ever seen Jonathan since the first time I came in for the trial shift. I ask Marcin what happened to him and he replies, "he was fired, he worked too slow". I am taken aback at this terse proclamation divorced of any empathy, so I ask Marcin whether he thought it was deserved. He just replies, "I don't know, but he was very slow, and they fired him".
>
> Drago comes up next to me, and I take the opportunity to ask him what happened. He replies that "he wasn't good at his job. He was here for 4 weeks and we kept on having to show him how to do everything. We showed him how to close the washing machine 3 times, and he still left it open 2 times and went home." I said that it's a shame because he was a good guy. "Yes, but being a good guy is not enough in a kitchen like this. You have to be up for the job. Plus, then you showed up, so we had another reason to get rid of him".
>
> This realisation hit me like a wall of bricks. I respond that I never wanted to take anybody's job, and he responds by saying "Yeah well, life is unfair. That is just the way it is". Once again, this is evidence of the almost complete acceptance of capitalist realism, without any desire to imagine alternatives or to even critically engage with the situation".
>
> Fieldnotes, 24th June 2019

Conclusion: Precarity and Migrant Workers

The broad analytical category of "precarity" has multiple contractual expressions which include illegal and semi-legal labour, verbal contracts, agency work, and zero-hours contracts. Due to a variety of overlapping, cross-pollinating social forces in combination with subjective characteristics associated with the migrant condition outlined above (the need for quick money, lack of information, etc.), migrant workers are more likely to find themselves staffing these precarious occupations. As has been argued above, the operations of a significant segment of the UK, and Scottish, economy have been designed in such a way that they intimately depend on "flexible" labour, and employers know that there is a steady supply of willing workers to fill their vacant positions; importantly, contractual precarity enables them to dispose of these worker when they are no longer required, and absolves the employer of any long-term responsibilities towards the worker. Indeed, precarious contracts are frequently used as a *management tool*, enabling employers to sort through various workers until they find the individuals that most closely fit their standards.

As I experienced, a worker may be kept on a precarious contract even after their permanence has been established in the minds of management:

"With the days ticking by and nothing eventful or worthy happening, I decided to move on to a new job and notify the factory of my departure. This gave me the opportunity to make a few crucial observations. I went early in the morning and spoke to the supervisor, Jim. He told me that he is surprised because he wanted to keep me because I am a "good worker". He then proceeded to offer me a temporary, 3-month contract directly with the company if I stayed, bypassing the agency they were employing me through. He said: "the way I use agencies is that I take guys on and keep them if they are good. I have already sent 2 or 3 guys home but you are good and you work well within the existing team. There is a lot of work and we were planning to keep you guys for some time".

This showcases the fact that agencies are an organising and distributive mechanism for migrant workers in the labour market. Jim uses them to sort through migrant workers, as if they are mere objects, and keep the ones he wants. The process of manufacturing the core part of a radiator is anything but unskilled: it requires patience, finesse, physical aptitude, and concentration. It takes about 2 weeks of constant training to learn how to assemble a small core, and at least a month until you can begin assembling a medium sized one. Turnover is *not* something that this company desires.

At the same time, he kept Viktor in an agency contract even though Viktor had been an exceptional worker for over 3 months. Viktor was visibly anxious about his future and regularly voiced concerns to me about whether he would get fired or not. Why did I get offered a direct contract? *Because I told them I was leaving*. This is the only reason. Otherwise, they would have been happy to keep me through the agency, like they did with Viktor who had been there longer than me and was a better worker than me. Our precarious status was maintained for as long as possible, like a carrot they dangled in front of us, making us compete for something we had already won." Fieldnotes, 9th November 2018.

However, migrant workers are not passive objects that merely conform to external economic calculations: people's acceptance of precarious conditions is nuanced and conditioned by a variety of factors such as wishes of progression up the job hierarchy or the need to make quick money to support children. However, as the short-term interests of migrant workers coalesce with both the short- and long-term interests of employers, migrant workers undergo a process of socialization (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and

Alberti 2015). This "socialization of precarity" stems from the cumulative reflections one makes through being present in precarious workplaces, including aspects such as the "agency arena", the "good worker paradox", and the all-encompassing pressures to constantly perform while knowing that labour security is far from guaranteed. The combined effects of these pressures result in various behaviors such as workers distancing themselves from each other, overexerting themselves, and internalizing the characteristics required of them; gradually, they become complicit in their reproduction.

The workings of the national economic structure (juridical impositions such as the permittance of zero-hours contracts, the setting of the minimum wage, etc.) thus combine with employer demands and subjective features of migrant workers to create, and reproduce, a complex of social and economic relations that, ultimately, reinforces its own neoliberal foundations. My findings confirm arguments by other theorists that position migrant workers at the forefront of the precarious condition (Briken and Taylor 2018; Duda-Mikulin 2018; Hardt and Negri 2017; Standing 2011).

> "Q: And you think that she is trying to employ immigrant workers on purpose?
>
> A: Yes!
>
> Q: To be able to have this power over them?
>
> A: Yeah, because she knew that you are here by your own, so basically our family is back home. You are come over here because of study, make money. […] So she knows that we are looking for a job, basically, you need to pay for your living, so you are in that situation that you need to make money, and when she knew that you are foreign, so you have no family here, so basically you can't afford your rent, you're going to be homeless, your mum is in a different area than you so if you can't afford your rent, you will just move. So is more complex and more complicated in my opinion, and that is why she is doing it on purpose."- Agnes, Polish Female, mid-20s, hospitality

Chapter 7: Conditions in Precarious Workplaces

Introduction

Migrant workers in Glasgow work in a variety of industries, including those of hospitality, logistics, manufacturing and care (Scottish Government 2019). My findings generally confirm the assertion in most of the relevant literature that large numbers of migrant workers are concentrated in the most precarious, exploitative, and stigmatised jobs of the occupational hierarchy (Piore 1979; Miles 1982; Bauder 2006; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010; Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012). Within these jobs, they seem to be more likely to be placed in worst positions than their British counterparts (Bauder 2006). The precarious contractual relation analysed in the previous chapter, apart from generating insecurity and pressures to conform, also makes it possible for bosses, managers, and locals to abuse migrant workers in subtle or overt ways (Sporton 2013; Anderson 2013). Significantly, it emerges that workers in these occupations have very minimal control over the totality of their experience, corresponding to classic Marxist accounts of alienation and objectification (Meszaros 1970; Marx 1844). These situations are made more difficult by one's potential language difficulties and lack of information about their rights. While most migrant workers carry aspirations that enable them to temporarily tolerate such conditions, Recchi and Triandafyllidou (2010) note that these often remain unfulfilled as the same systemic, structural constraints that direct migrant workers towards precarious jobs function to keep them there.

This chapter offers a brief glimpse at the realities in the shop floors, bars, kitchens and streets where some of my interviewees work. After describing the internal conditions in some workplaces, I will then analyse them in terms of workplace hierarchies, health and safety, abuse of authority, and alienation/stress, in order to establish the structural foundations within which migrant workers' subjectivities develop in relation to their environments and working conditions.

1: General descriptions of workplaces

My findings generally confirm the assertion in most of the literature that migrant workers are disproportionately located in jobs considered 'unskilled' or 'semi-skilled' (Angry Workers 2018; Berger and Mohr 2010; Bauder 2006; Piore 1979). This designation is misleading, as it involves a qualitative assumption that is itself largely socially constructed based on what is designated as "skill" within a given context (Anderson 2013). Indeed, most of the jobs I experienced or talked about necessitated a high level of

virtuosity. Some jobs, such as the one I performed in the radiator factory, required high levels of precision and hand-eye coordination, and it took workers more than three months to fully grasp the delicate motions required. Others, such as many people's experiences in hospitality, required both high levels of affective labour (friendliness, communication abilities, etc.) and physical skills (coffee or cocktail making, cooking, etc.).

Nevertheless, these jobs remain overwhelmingly repetitive, physically arduous, and mentally straining (Harvey 2019; Angry Workers 2018). Workers often have very little control over how the job is performed and almost every movement is predetermined and calculated by the employer. This occurs within a wider context of disorientation, as workers perform strictly compartmentalised tasks within a larger division of labour which they often have no connection to or full understanding of. These factors combine with contractual insecurity and high turnovers to establish what I term the "socialisation of precarity" (analysed in the previous chapter). Some examples of the conditions that migrant workers find themselves in are provided below:

> "We would do some jobs like going all the agency workers to sit on a table, with also some contracted workers, but we were only females. We would have a task, for example to put a sticker in every book with a code. They were school books, some of them. And there was a sticker with a code. Or there would be like, to cut some pages from some books. This was the table work. This was the most easy and everyone liked that, because you would sit on a chair most of the time. The funny thing was that there were certain jobs on that table, and they would ask us at the end, every time we would do 100 books or whatever, 100 of something, to put a piece of paper with our name on it and stack it all together. By the end of the shift there was this anxiety that you needed to have many packages done under your name, to prove you are a 'good worker' working sufficiently in a fast-paced environment and everything. There was this indirect competition, who would do the most packages. And I was good at it, I liked that, in a sense it made you occupied, but it's ridiculous. And this was the table thing. Apart from that, we would do the machines. We wouldn't operate with complex machines, but for example there was a machine, there would be pallets full of pages of books, so you would have the section for page 33, 34, 35. Someone else will have the section for the others. And there was a very long machine where every worker would have his own section for the 3 or 4 pages and we would need to feed the machine with the pages every second so the pages come out all together to create the book. So you needed to be fast to replace them with new ones. Sometimes there would be an issue with the pages not being good on the machine, you

"The job was dull and repetitive which consisted of about the same 10 movements over and over again for 8 hours. A worker operates on a table upon which the central part of the radiator is placed, consisting of thin sleeves of metal positioned next to each other. Our task is to primarily construct the core, and then to place long tubes through it. These are the tubes that fill up with hot water and make the radiator warm. To do this you have to put a 'sword' through the tube and thrust it inside the core, which is held firmly in place by the table. It is very easy to make a mistake here and to tear the entire radiator, which usually results in the whole thing being thrown away. We work individually on our tables, constructing the core and then placing the tubes through it. In the first few days, I had another worker who was helping me. Every day I was making progress, eventually being allowed to build it myself. This is testament that this work is anything but "low skilled". Indeed, one of the Polish workers was very proud about his proficiency at making the most complex radiators. It requires excellent arm-eye coordination, a combination of firmness and delicacy, acute attention to detail and above-average fitness to be able to stand up for so long while performing this repetitive thrusting motion." – Compilation of fieldnotes, Production Operative, Radiator Factory.

"I was placed on a production line in the packing area, working with the finished product that would be shipped to supermarkets. All around me, the overhanging smell of dead fish. As you walk through the factory to go to your position, you pass through the various stages of production. Dead fish are hanging. Dead fish are being chopped up. There are buckets with bits of fish that are discarded, there are fish remains on the floor. The job was extremely repetitive and was the worst production line I had ever been in, because, other than the standing around, the gory surroundings, and the boredom, it was also very cold. We were given things to do without any opportunity to have some autonomy or understanding about what the schedule was, something which people there told me is pretty common: "they don't talk or explain anything, they just expect you to get on with what they tell you". This results in a feeling of disorientation which in turn fosters a behaviour of resignation and submission, since it reinforces the already prevalent feeling that you are nothing but a cog in the machine. The socialisation of precarity is visibly at

play- we don't talk, we don't exchange names, we simply put our heads down and try to think of something else."- Fieldnotes, Picker and Packer, Fish Factory, 27 November 2018.

"Picking and packing during the incredibly busy Christmas period. There is a trolley on which we place the bags, inside which we place the items we pick from the shelves, after we are instructed to do so by a hand-held scanner. Everything happens through the scanner. It organises everything and tells you where to go, what to do, and what to do after you have finished what it told you to do. The workplace during my shifts is staffed almost exclusively by migrants. Managers are Scottish except for one Bulgarian guy. They are helpful but still expect you to work fast. You are thrown into the deep end almost immediately and are supposed to figure things out yourself or get help, but if you get help you waste time- and your timing is recorded and monitored electronically by the machine. The work also involves going in a freezer and a chilled room, with temperatures of -20 and -0.8 degrees Celsius. The freezer is incredibly difficult to be in, which makes you work even faster in order to get out. Protective clothing is provided but in order to wear it you lose time, so your rate drops. It is left up to you whether you wear them, so your choice to protect yourself could ultimately contribute to you losing your job. Trying to find the correct glove size for your hands is particularly time consuming, so many of us don't waste time on them. This means that your hands and fingers painfully freeze within the first 2 minutes of being inside, and you continue working in that pain. Sometimes the scanner plays games with you and sends you back to the freezer repeatedly. This involves going back out into what is termed "ambient" (as opposed to freezing), assembling the trolley with the bags, and then going back into the freezer. This results in get a constant exchange between warmth and cold which soon produces minor health impacts like runny noses, sore joints and fatigue. The deep annoyance this back-and-forth causes can only be understood by those who have experienced it. Finally, there are hidden cameras in the warehouse. These are directly connected to the managers' phones, and I saw them laughing about one person who they were watching."- Fieldnotes, Picker and Packer, large multinational logistics warehouse, 21st December 2018.

In highly controlled environments such as these, performance is simply a quantitative calculation and all behaviour is judged according to the company's targets. The worker is reduced to an appendage, an extension of a machine and a company that are completely indifferent to them. (Bloodworth 2019; Moore and Robinson 2016). While this is consistent with classic Marxist theory, an important distinction is that these operations take place inside a society that is characterised by the destruction of solidarities and

previous community based- identifications (Bradley 2016), thereby exacerbating disempowerment and isolation. These mentalities are replaced by a profit-oriented collective scrutiny in which everyone is invited to "rate", classify and monitor each other. Sociability is therefore not destroyed (as long as people work alongside each other, some sort of sociability will emerge); however, it is meticulously moulded and directed towards different directions, in this case favouring the demands and priorities of capital (Harvey 2019). The photograph below is a potent example:

Figure 2:In the job described above, workers are encouraged to nominate colleagues for excelling in the performance of the characteristics deemed most important in the job. This paper offers a glimpse into the values that dictate workers' experiences in the job.

Despite tendencies towards the destruction of solidarity, the workplaces in the aforementioned examples nevertheless are still based on inter-communication between workers. In contrast, the relatively recent growth of the extensively automated, hyper-precarious "gig economy" replaces almost all interactions with the relationship between the worker and a machine (Bloodworth 2019; Fleming 2017). At the same time, elements of employment individualisation and de-socialisation are enhanced through the worker's contractual status as "self-employed", in what Fleming (2017) terms a process of "radical responsibilisation". They are thereby de-facto denied even the most basic rights available to agency and most precarious workers. Additionally, the platform owners refuse to properly inform workers of various aspects of the details of their jobs, thereby establishing a permanent state of disorientation and insecurity. All this is further aggravated by the clients being invited to rate the workers, creating a vicious cycle of multiple pressures to perform which are combined with the omnipresent anxiety of the precarious condition:

"Q: So you are rated individually?

A: Yeah, as a rider I am rated if I am really late. I don't think most people rate me, but for example once a lady got really angry at me and she said "I'm going to rate you really badly", and at the moment I was really worried. I thought I was gonna be fired or something. Nothing happened but basically yeah, you are like, a bit exposed to like, your skills are exposed to the public in that way.

Q: So do you want to tell me what happened that made her angry?

A: I arrived very late, but it was like one of my first shifts and I had taken too many deliveries in a row. While you are riding they can ask you to go to another place, and I chose like 3 and I didn't calculate the time correctly. And I was very late. Many times, like, you just receiving notifications and you have to stop and decline it or accept it and, well, I took the risk there and… yeah.

[……….]

Q: And do you get paid by delivery, per hour?

A: It's delivery.

Q: And how much is it?

A: Normally the rate is between £4 and £8.

Q: And what determines how it fluctuates?

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A: I think it's the distance of the restaurant from the client. I'm not entirely sure. I have to like, cycle 12 minutes to this restaurant and I receive £12 and I have to cycle 6 minutes to this other restaurant and I receive £6 so, I think it is from the restaurant to the client. I'm not sure if the price of the food has anything to do. I thought in the beginning it would have but I'm not entirely sure.

Q: And do they give you any way of finding out? Is there any calculator there or something?

A: I can check but it's not something they explain to you when you come in. I talked with one of my flatmates and he isn't sure either. He's done it for quite a while.

Q: So then of course, you have to do this thing without knowing how much you get paid, in whatever conditions, so for example you get paid the same if it's raining and the same if it's an amazing day.

A: Yeah.

Q: And how much do you work, if you can make an estimate?

A: Well, a day, I try to do 3 deliveries. Which might be 2 hours, 2 and a half hours. So I don't work too much but it is quite intense because it can rain, or…. One day it just started hailing and I was like, yeah…. And I get to choose my hours which is like. I've been doing this mainly to get some extra money. But for someone who has to do it for a living, it's a living hell, because like, it's complete uncertainty and if you have to feed your kids or whatever, it's something that I wouldn't even see possible. And there are people who do it for a living." Alexander, Spanish male, early 20s, student/courier.

2: Migrant Workers in the Workplace Hierarchy

Upon accessing employment, migrant workers are more likely to be placed in lower positions in the workplace hierarchy than their British counterparts (Bauder 2006; Acker 2006). This can be attributed to a combination of objective factors such as a relatively lower proficiency in the English language and/or a lack of adequate skills for the particular job during the first weeks or months of holding it. It can also be attributed to agencies supplying temporary labour for precisely those jobs that are more "unskilled", interchangeable, and offer few mobility opportunities (McKay and Markova 2010). However, my interviewees and participant observations indicated that, in some workplaces, migrants are automatically positioned in lower rungs of the labour hierarchy

where no apparent reason exists for this positionality. In others, a fairer balance exists between ethnicities. Factors such as ethnicity, gender, and race do play a role in the distribution of workers in a given workplace (Acker 2006). Additionally, a less-extensively analysed contributor which emerges from the findings is the relation between the prevalent culture of the specific corporation and the specific functions performed by the worker.

Occupations utilizing agency workers have some of the most clear, blatant divisions between staff. The employers pay the agencies to supply them the 'best' workers they can, utilizing criteria such as productivity, efficiency, flexibility, etc. It is therefore imperative for them to be able to precisely monitor those workers. Lois describes the divisions between agency staff, most of whom were migrants, and permanent staff as it was expressed in a print house:

> "I remember the first day I went there, from the moment we came in, it was even more intense, the feeling that we are just numbers. Because they immediately gave us a jacket and this was, as I was told from another colleague, to separate the agency workers from the contract workers. We were the only ones wearing the jacket. They asked us to sit, to stand around a table, and do a specific work with some leaflets, put some leaflets inside other leaflets, something like that. We were asked to wear earplugs and I remember the feeling, when I went to the table, you couldn't even look at the other person directly, you needed to have your head down and just do your job."- Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality/ freelance journalist (describing working in a print house)

Here, agency workers are not simply divided geographically through positions, or occupationally through tasks, but are visually branded. Sporton (2013) describes the various ways in which agencies and employers attempt to control migrant workers' subjectivity through arbitrary dismissals, the overhanging threat of penalties, random deductions, unscheduled calls, etc. The above quote is the most extreme example in my findings of how employers attempt to symbolically reinforce workers' disempowerment. Implicit in such statements are feelings of shame, of weakness, of despair. "We are just numbers" that "couldn't even look at the other person directly"; every movement was controlled, every aspect of humanity or solidarity curtailed, and it was all reinforced and expressed through the jacket. Other workers corroborate these practices and echo similar resulting sentiments:

> "Q: So, what is the hierarchy there? Who is above you, and how much control do you have about what you do?

> "A: I have no control over what I do. So it's like, the domestic, which is people that clean, me on the same level, band 2, band 3, I don't know. So basically, in my job, it's me, the nurses, the kind of like, the line manager of the ward- this is like the top nurse- and the doctors. Then the top manager. So it's like, a really, really hierarchical place. You have no ownership of what you do, you don't know what… so like, I was taking blood, blood pressure, I don't know what to do with that, cause the only thing they told me… I don't have no connection to what happens after me, and the doctors can tell me like, jump in the hoop and you have to do it because they are doctors, and the nurse can tell me jump the hoop and I have to do it because she is a nurse, you know." Eleni, Greek female, mid 20s, care sector.

Workers also reported instances of an extreme disproportionality between the jobs they were performing and their official designation in the workplace hierarchy. This was most prominent in those working in the hospitality sector. For example, Felix, a hospitality worker in his early 30s from Guadeloupe, complains that he is routinely made to perform jobs that are much worse than the duties stated in his contract. Similarly, Eva, a Moldovan in her early 20s working in the same hotel, states that she is regularly looked down upon and made to perform the most degrading, symbolically stigmatised tasks, while younger, Scottish workers with much less experience than her are treated more favourably. Nicole further enhances these points with her own experiences from a different hotel:

> "Q: Were there other immigrants working there?
>
> A: Mainly Polish, some French.
>
> Q: And was there any connection between ethnicity and position?
>
> A: I asked them, to promote me because- and give me supervisor position- because they were using me basically when there was no supervisor or other staff there, they were taking me in the front and they were using me to do all the paperwork, to, you know, teach everyone. And once someone new, clean, was trained to do whatever, they send me back. And then I told them "look, this is the end, I'm leaving", and then "no, no, please, because is the other girl who is going on maternity leave" and bla bla bla, they were just promising me things, things, things and never keep it. In the end I just said "you know what, so long".
>
> Q: So you were actually doing the job, you were a waitress but-
>
> A: I was doing the supervisor's job!
>
> Q: And this was on minimum wage?

A: With minimum wage. In some point they give me, when is not a supervisor on my shift, and is just me in charge, to be paid as a supervisor. That was just for 1 or 2 weeks, they said it's very hard to keep the track and everything, and so, they kept me there with a minimum wage. And I never been promoted."- Nicole, Romanian female, mid-40s, hospitality.

These depictions of workplace hierarchies were confirmed in some aspects of my observatory work and were rejected in others. For example, in the radiator factory, most of the "skilled" jobs were done by Scottish workers. Migrant workers, including myself, were confined to the first stages of production, had limited access to subsequent stages, and absolutely no access after a certain level regardless of how many years they were with that company. The management staff, as far as I could tell, were also exclusively Scottish (and were working in a separate area, divided by a wall, in which us shopfloor workers had no access to). Furthermore, all the migrant workers apart from myself were Polish, reflecting dominant essentialising stereotypes about Polish workers fitting the "good worker" paradigm (MacKenzie and Forde 2009). I also had a very surreal experience on my first day: I was inducted alongside another, Scottish, 16-year old worker for whom this was his first ever occupation; yet, I soon learnt that he had been given a temporary 3 month contract through the company, whereas I (and all the other migrant workers) had been accessed through an agency! As mentioned above, this company was built on values of coherence and long-standing, tight-nit relationships (Fieldnotes, 23 October 2019 to 9th November 2019). It therefore gave priority and various benefits to those that were culturally proximate to the existing composition of the dominant strata. Behaviours, gestures, mentalities, even pronunciations were important factors in determining one's position (Bauder 2006; Bourdieu 2010).

By contrast, in the large logistics warehouse I observed a fairly equitable distribution of migrant workers performing the picking and packing duties, which consisted of the majority of the warehouse's operations. The managers were predominantly Scottish, but within the non-managerial workforce there were workers from all over the world with various levels of seniority and respect. Here, cohesion was maintained in ways that superseded or replaced the traditional modes of belonging visible in the radiator factory. First, the desubjectivisation inherent in the control of the machine meant that everyone was an equal cog, and there was a sense of mutuality in strife. This process of desubjectivisation is coupled with intense monitoring of workers' personalities, with the drug and alcohol test received in the induction being this trend's most invasive

manifestation. They essentially monitor even what workers do in non-company time. An intense focus on personal attitudes enhances this. This company wants workers who live for their job and become inseparable from it until they get fired for underperforming or they are amongst the 'stars' that get promoted to a permanent contract. Furthermore, the company spends a tremendous amount of resources and energy in establishing something resembling a collective culture: they give regular "gifts" to winners of productivity competitions, the walls are lined with slogans such as "always ask questions, don't be ashamed' and productivity- boosting quotes such as "customer obsession". In the canteen there is always free coffee, tea, and chocolate available, and usually there are snacks left on the table for everyone. There is a small meeting at the beginning of every shift where the managers explain what the main goals of the shift are, and on the notice boards you are invited to "rate" your managers on how well they explain things. These attempts at cohesion, however, have to be seen from the perspective that most workers are not expected to work there for a significant amount of time: the majority leave after a few months at the most, while a small minority get given permanent contracts and stay.

The most important aspect of the above analyses is that migrant workers in the UK are not exclusively designated to entirely separate workplace spheres from locals, as was traditionally analysed by Piore (1979). Nevertheless, this does not mean that equality has been achieved. The culture, product, and mentalities of each specific workplace influence workers' role allocations. While many workplaces do confine migrant workers in the most unskilled and precarious positions, others maintain more equitable distributions between migrant and British workers. Nevertheless, my observations indicate that these latter examples are not instances of a purposeful, equality-oriented development, but rather simply reflections of the fact that these specific workplaces do not feel they require a strict separation of roles in order to maintain profitability. Temporariness and the lack of substantial communication between workers are key contributing factors to this. Finally, the fact that many British workers are found in these precarious positions (Bloodworth 2019; my fieldnotes) is less an indication of progress for migrant workers than it is an indication of the stagnating economic conditions experienced by the British workforce after decades of neoliberal policies.

3: Health and Safety

One crucial aspect of the lives of migrant workers that doesn't get adequate attention is the sheer, raw intensity of many occupations. While various studies have looked in depth at the daily struggles and consequent health problems of some of the most

disadvantaged migrant groups (see, for example, Holmes' 2013 ethnography on Mexican migrant workers picking strawberries in the United States), comparatively fewer work has been done that focuses on less strenuous, but still significantly arduous jobs. Alberti (2014) mentions the difficulties she experienced during her participant observation in a hotel, but generally theorists prefer to focus on more general issues, as if the corporeality of migrant workers is already naturalised as one involving significant strain. For example, Boswell and Geddes (2011: 86) casually write that migrant workers "may also be ready to work on a casual or temporary basis, or with less comprehensive health and safety standards" than British workers, which they view as giving them an "advantage" in securing employment. This is testament to the extent that academic analysis into work can run the risk of becoming entirely detached from the real significance of the categories it refers to.

Of course, a British worker is also likely to be positioned in an unhealthy or risk-inducing environment; however, as has been repeatedly stated, a key difference is that a British person will more likely have access to the various subjective and institutional resources to challenge this situation- resources which many migrant workers lack (Barnard, Ludlow, Fraser Butlin 2018). One of the most common themes emerging from my interviews is an overarching lack of respect for health and safety guidelines in workplaces, and the concurrent difficulty of challenging these conditions due to their precarity. This was clearly illustrated by Mateusz, a union organiser for the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union when describing his experiences in a cake factory.

"A: [laughs] Inside the factory? Terrible. Basically, as I remember, there was no existing health and safety. You had cables on the floor, the floor was on a flood, and on those flood was laying cables and stuff like that, the machine don't have any covers to protect your hands, sometimes we have to put, when we do the cakes put plaster. Basically it's like a big tub with the holes in it, and you have to press the mix inside those holes, but the tumbler is constantly moving, so if you don't remove your hand quickly you gonna lose your finger. So…basically the treatment of the people, they used them for the maximum… if you have a job you have to work overtime, you don't, we don't have the right to say no or something. Our managers, we had Polish managers, but because they was on a position they treated us even worse than we should be treated. Our boss, he was basically racist and he discriminate people constantly, especially with migrant workers, when he have a bad mood he coming over to you "you don't work any longer here".

[…]

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> Q: Was that workplace mostly migrant workers?
>
> A: 90% migrant workers. We have basically 4 group of migrant workers over there. 80% was Polish, few percent was Czech, Slovakian, and the rest was Scottish. So 4 groups."- Mateusz, Polish male, mid-30s, union organiser with BFAWU. Here he is referring to his time in a cake factory.

Once again, the contractual precarity that underpins migrant workers' labour is shown to be easily mobilised by employers in order to subjugate workers. The connection Mateusz drew between insufficient respect for health and safety and a rigid and arbitrary disciplinary system, with the constant, overhanging threat of instant dismissal (Sporton 2013) illustrates how difficult it is for workers in these conditions to claim even the most basic rights. Mateusz's comments exemplify the ways a variety of factors, in this case the combination of precarity and a lack of a trade union presence, combine to produce and enhance workers' disempowerment. These are conditions that are more or less accepted in many similar workplaces all over the UK. However, they sometimes can coalesce into seriously detrimental health complications, which further illustrate the importance of trade union presence and the availability of information to workers. Suzan's experience is exemplary:

> "A: For one and a half, two years, I never had a weekend, never had time for myself, to say 'I have a free week!'. I worked every Saturday, I didn't have a life anymore, my child. Nothing.
>
> Q: Let me ask you: because in the beginning you said that they only gave you 4 hour shifts…
>
> A: This continues. You never work more in the hotel. What they say are fairy-tales. In the hotels the job is hard, and they tell you that you have 15 minutes per room. This is never true. You have 15-20 rooms to clean in the space of 4 hours, and you always go over, normally by about 1 hour. Which they pay you for, it's not like you work for free, but you don't have any energy to work more.
>
> Q: Yeah, so it destroys you.
>
> A: They don't give you 8 hour shifts because you wouldn't be able to handle it."- Suzan, Romanian female, late 40s, hospitality and logistics [translation mine]

This segment encapsulates the intense pressures to perform that workers experience in labour contexts where the demands of profit result in attempts to squeeze tasks inside

the smallest possible timeframe. Based on what Suzan said, a hotel cleaner is allocated about 15 minutes per room. The pace is frenetic, and the pressure to complete all tasks in the allocated time combined with an insecure contractual position results in acute stress. Charles, a Portuguese worker in his early 20s who also works as a cleaner in a hotel, confirmed this. In Suzan's case, the over-exertion required for her to perform her job together with her precarious contract which precluded her from securely claiming sickness pay led to severe physical complications. Her employer never accepted responsibility or assisted her:

"A: I have a problem. 2 years before I came to the UK I had an operation because for a detached shoulder. My problem was healed, everything was good, but with 2 years of working in the hotel, it had returned. I go to the doctor, the doctor sees me and he says "you have to be crazy to be doing what you are doing", and he gives me 2 months off. He asked me 'how long do you want to stay at home, from 1 to 5 months'. I respond "are you crazy? I'm going to go hungry!". He tells me that "no, you will be paid, and if you were permanently employed you could collect your pension!". I told him he shouldn't give me things like that, but he said "woman, you have to sit at home, or the day after tomorrow you will come to me again and I won't be able to help you. You have to go through check ups. We have to see what happened to your arm". It had started detaching itself during the night also. So 2 or 3 times per day, and then again in the night, I had many stories. Anyway.

Q: And you were working? You were just popping it back in and…

A: Yes. Because if they found out they would say that I am not for them, they would have to pay me, so they would get rid of me as fast as possible. When I couldn't take it any longer, that's it, I left! I just remembered. I went to the doctor and he told me "it can't go on any longer". So I took advantage of it, since it was summer. My shoulder popped out during work and I just went and sat there with my shoulder hanging out. They called the ambulance and the supervisor came with me to the hospital. Everything was official. I went to the doctor and he told me "what did I tell you?", and I thought "if you only knew how many times it has happened!". But now I wanted them to know because I wanted to go on holidays, and I said "let's see what happens. They will pay me and you'll see what happens". So I went to the doctor and all that. I go to the GP and he says "how much time do you want off?". I say "2 months", because I wanted to go back to Greece, to the doctor that performed my first operation. He told me to take the paper to my work and "goodbye".

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Q: You were there for 1 year?

A: 2 years.

Q: You definitely deserved it.

A: Of course. But I did the stupidity of telling one colleague about my plan. She betrayed me. She went to the manager and said, "Suzan is alright, she is a liar". I went there and told them "are you crazy?". They told me that they didn't know and thing like that. I told them "wait a minute…. So the doctor, is he crazy?"

Q: Did you show them the note from your GP?

A: Yes. They told me to give them the GP's phone. I did. They call the doctor and he confirms it, he tells them "she was here 3 months ago and I told her to stop then, but this woman is hungry and she couldn't stop working" and stuff like that. What do they want? But they told me that they think I am lying to them. The doctor told them "the woman didn't want to tell you about it because she has 2 children at home, and when she came here I told her I should give her 5 months off but she asked me not to, she told me "doctor please, don't do this because I won't have anything to give my children and I don't believe they will give me any money from this story and I don't have enough for the bills. I am a single woman with 2 children"". They shut up, they accepted it. And when I left for holidays….

Q: Did they pay you?

A: No, they didn't pay the holidays, they didn't pay medical expenses, but when I came back, they pulled some papers out, some of their own stories, that supposedly I wasn't supposed to leave Glasgow, England, because they had to monitor me and that I had taken advantage of the doctor's orders in order to take holidays.

Q: I see.

A: I told them that I don't care what they believe. I will sue them for this and this…. I had found something online about having a workplace accident, and if you have witnesses, you could get some money, and stuff like that. I pick up the phone, the woman was trying, but she was fresh in the job. I tried to do something but I didn't manage to do anything, but I recorded and I probably have that recording somewhere. I thought that it might be useful in the courts. Anyway, I didn't manage to find a solution, and they basically forced me to quit. I was telling them that I wanted to go back to work. 'I am alright and tomorrow I

want to begin working', but they were saying 'it's impossible, you have to sign this paper and you can't continue working with us'. 'No, I will not do it'. And in the end they fired me. The story ends there. I didn't know what else to do.' Suzan, Romanian female, late 40s, hospitality and logistics [*translation mine from Greek*]

This example highlights the daily risks that workers subject themselves to due to the combined pressures of precarity, family responsibilities, employer carelessness, and a lack of information which is significantly worsened by one's unfamiliarity with the new country. It is exacerbated by the lack of proper institutional or community-based support networks for migrant workers. The need to make money overrides health concerns (Holmes 2013). Suzan needed her job and her insecure status did not give her the confidence to consider pursuing some sort of resolution until it was too late. This is most vividly demonstrated by her questioning the sanity of her doctor when he first told her to take time off: "are you crazy? I'm going to go hungry!". Even after her shoulder popped out during work, her employers- a very large multinational hotel chain- used all the resources in their disposal to fire her as swiftly as possible without paying her any compensation. In the end, Suzan didn't know "what else to do". Legally there were a lot of avenues that she could have pursued. But left to her own devices, with a significant language barrier, two young children, and no union or similar organisation she could contact, she simply moved on. By the time we spoke, it was too late to bring this issue to an employment tribunal, something which is experienced by many migrant workers (Barnard, Ludlow, and Fraser Butlin 2018). This exemplifies of how government policies interact with employer practices to fortify workers' precarious statuses. At the time of the interview, her shoulder was still in a horrible state, but she had found another job and kept on working.

4: Informality and Abuse

Precarious contractual relations combine with wider xenophobic and authoritarian social attitudes to render migrant workers susceptible to abuse from the part of employers and higher-positioned colleagues (Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017; Alberti 2016; Anderson 2013). Frequently, these colleagues are themselves migrant workers (Sporton 2013), as Mateusz points out above and as will be further analysed in the following chapter on relations at work. Various participants mentioned experiences of humiliation and degradation. The cultural and institutional informality present in many precarious workplaces is often used by employers to support and subsequently cover up abuses of

authority. In these contexts, interpersonal relations assume an overwhelming importance, since they essentially *replace contractual security*.

My direct experiences in various sectors during the months of conducting participant observation sessions attest to the various ways that formality, informality and abuse interact and structure one another (Clark and Colling 2018). Each workplace's particular requirements and existing cultures play an important role in shaping workers' experiences. For example, rather than using agency workers as a pool of temporary, flexible labour, the radiator factory I worked in used agencies in order to procure permanent workers: the initial contractual insecurity was a way for them to avoid committing themselves to someone who they didn't want in the long term. For this reason, almost all interactions were amicable and respectful. This company cared about who the worker was as a person- they knew that that years of working with someone that is disgruntled and feels disrespected is not conducive to either profits or wellbeing (Fieldnotes, 18 October 2018- 9 November 2018). On the other hand, my experience in the fish factory was exactly the opposite. While there was a degree of formality, since the labour was resourced by one of the largest existing global employment agencies, it was cold and demonstrably careless. They had a very high turnover due to the intensely unpleasant nature of the work and they did not invest in their temporary workers' wellbeing (Fieldnotes, 27 November 2018). The complete inexistence of any written contractual relation can be found on the bottom rungs of the various manifestations of the formality/informality ladder, and it is where many of my interview participants were located. Due to an intense turnover rate and the resulting almost complete absence of unions, these conditions are mostly prevalent in the various small business of the hospitality industry (Lucas and Mansfield 2010).

"I got led to the kitchen. The entire thing, where both cooking and washing take place, is about 10-15 meters long. The cooking bit is about 2 meters wide, and the washing area is about 1 meter wide. I got led inside this place which looked like a hole, and quickly noticed bags overflowing with rubbish, lying on the walls, next to the dishwasher, covering the right sink, and under both sinks. The spot stunk of decaying rubbish and there were flies everywhere. Above me, there was an electric bug-catcher and a strip of Sellotape hanging from the ceiling, both of which were full of dead flies. Joe quickly apologised: "sorry for this mate, this will all be gone tomorrow. It smells a bit, but you should be fine for today". I told him that I would probably manage, but I still hadn't seen everything. The kitchen was generally filthy and completely disorganised. The washing machine was

broken. The sinks didn't have access to hot water. There were food leftovers all over the place, cooked and uncooked. There was no clear place for anything."

[….]

"I tried to instigate a small conversation with Joe, who I was told does all the hiring and firing. From what I could tell, there was no manager, it was just Joe and Tony. I asked him what happened to the previous KP. He responded that "he left". I asked why, and gestured at the situation around me to infer that maybe he had left because this place was filthy and difficult to work in. Joe said "no, we kicked him out. He was talking back too much. I'm a nice guy and I try to be understanding, but when you talk back to me, that's it, you're out. He was always complaining, [makes thick, heavy imitation of an apparently stupid voice], "uh, uh, uh". He got the sack". This shows how intensely precarious the workplace environment is, with a complete lack of labour rights. Then he asked me what sort of hours I was looking for. I told him that "I am available whenever you need, if you need me, I'm here", invoking my knowledge of the reality of precarity both from my experiences and from my research. He replied "that's what I like to hear. The other guy was always complaining. We do a wee clean-up every Sunday and he always wanted to avoid it. Always talking back, always complaining". It became evident that interpersonal relationships are paramount, and these consist of 1) being positive with Joe; 2) not talking back to Joe; and 3) generally making yourself available when Joe needs you." Fieldnotes, Kitchen Porter, Spanish tapas restaurant, 1st July 2019.

I didn't stay long in that restaurant because of its small number of staff- I wanted to go somewhere where my observations could produce more widely applicable findings. However, a significant amount of my interview participants (13 out of 21) either had worked or were working in hospitality, and many of them recounted intensely traumatic experiences that were underpinned by informality. In the following excerpt, Agnes describes working in a Glasgow city-centre café without a contract. She was one of 3 participants I interviewed who worked in that specific café, and all the interviews roughly describe a similar situation. It is important to note that, in this specific context, the employers used a narrative of 'family' and 'solidarity' to obscure the structural and contractual inequality that manifested itself in almost every sphere of the employment relation. The employer's bursts of drunken abuse and blatant disregard for her employee's mental and physical health were supposedly counterbalanced by gestures such as a monthly meal for all the employees, paid through their accumulated tips.

"Q: So what is the atmosphere like there? How did she treat you?

A: Well, basically when she was drunk- because she has a really proper alcoholic problem- she was nipping all the time, like "BA BA BA BA BA, you're doing it wrong!"

Q: She was drunk in work?

A: Yes, plenty of times!

Q: And she was, like, your direct boss, not like your manager or something?

A: Yeah, she is the owner. She was drinking during the work, and the coffee shop is in the shopping centre, and this centre have no license, so basically only place with a license is the whisky shop downstairs. And she was going to the toilet to drink, and she smells like a brewery in front of the customers. And she didn't drink beer, she drank vodka. Not only recently, she was drinking a lot and she was smelling like a brewery and she was barely standing in front of the counter. So basically she was facing the customer and everyone see her. She was nipping on us because when she was drunk. Her another nature was waking up and she could scream on the employees.

[….]

And another issue was the tips. We are not getting tips. I got told we were getting about £5 a day. And there were about 5 workers a day. So everybody should get about a pound a day. And she was like "let's go for a dinner together, bla bla bla, for our money, we worked hard for it". How come, if we are getting £5, how come, and its 31 days a month, so is £155 month. And how come we are going for a dinner every month we can afford £300? 300-pound dinner…

Q: So the tips were going into the meal supposedly?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you were not actually seeing the tips?

A: No. So basically, we see the bill for the food. So, if we get daily £5- and she was like sometimes we get only £1- but let's say we get some days £1, some days £10, some days £5. So, she told us that is £155 pounds. And we were going for that dinner every single month and the bill was £300, and it was only tip money. So how come from £155 pounds it escalate to £300? And then, she even give us the money for a taxi home. So, let's say it was for 7 people and everybody got a tenner. So it's £300 and £70 for a taxi, so how come

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> £155 escalate to almost £400? And she said she never paid any money for it from her own pocket." Agnes, Polish female, mid-20s, hospitality.

However, informality can manifest itself even within the contractual relation. Most zero-hours contracts are not, in themselves, a significantly stronger guarantee of contractual security than the verbal, non-written contract. While they do offer employees the opportunity to pursue and substantiate some claims, they can nevertheless be used punitively by employers. Hours can be reduced at short notice, leaving the worker in an immediate and unplanned state of economic insecurity (Sporton 2013).

> "A: So there was a lot of rivalry within the team. You would never hire guys for waitressing. The guys were always in the kitchen, it was always girls. They just had this horrible paranoia of trying to compete among each other to, because, basically if the boss doesn't like you that means that your life was going to be hell and that he wouldn't give you enough hours.
>
> Q: Were all the other girls also immigrants?
>
> A: Yes. The only one who wasn't was the manager. Who was a bitch! An absolute, the worst person I have ever met. And I am so gutted that I couldn't punish her. That my confidence was so low, that I could put up with her shit. She was a cunt! She was just a terrible person. Because she was sleeping with this guy, she had so much power. And she was, yeah… Basically because I wasn't getting on with the girls, nor with the chefs. I started like, having less and less hours.
>
> Q: How did this happen? So you were having, like, a disagreement and then your hours would be cut?
>
> A: Yeah! Literally. So basically, yeah, it was just like you know, speaking my mind, and then my hours would be drastically cut." Leila, Spanish/Tunisian female, early 30s, hospitality.

The contractual inequality in zero-hours contracts enables and encourages both abuse and informality, which then feed into each other. Formal disciplinary procedures can be completely replaced by unilateral actions from the managers or bosses, while at the same time the workers lack the confidence and resources to resist. Authority is no longer simply asymmetric; the foundational inequality is extremely aggravated by the almost complete absence of substantial workers' rights. Emma, from Lithuania, worked in an Eastern European restaurant in Glasgow on such a contract. The restaurant was exclusively

staffed by migrant workers. Front-of-house staff consisted of white, European workers, while back-of-house staff included some deeply precarious workers without papers from outside Europe. The owner was himself a migrant, albeit a wealthy one. Through brute force and an outright threatening behaviour, he had the confidence to try and avoid some fundamental employer responsibilities, including attempting to withhold wages.

"A: Zero-hour contract this time, and you would get payslips as well, and the taxation, but in this case the boss wouldn't pretend she is nice, and he would kind of run the place in terror. Literally like Hitler. Because he would go down to the restaurant in the top floor, and then you go downstairs in his office and just look through the cameras if we are working.

Q: Did you know that there were cameras?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, like he would sometimes literally phone you being like, "Hi, I can see through my camera that there is a kid touching the window, make him stop".

Q: And there were mostly migrant workers there also?

A: Oh yeah. Because it was like a Russian restaurant, he would employ people from Eastern Europe.

Q: Fair enough. And, so that place, it has a very strict boss. Your other rights, for example, holiday, sick pay…

A: Oh, no holiday pay. Nothing like that. My colleague only got the holiday pay because he was doing the manager work. And he really, really insisted. It was only, like, 4 days.

Q: And how was the discipline process in that place? So, for example, if you did something bad, something wrong, what happened?

A: [laughs], so for example once I was working in the bar and I smashed some glasses. And after that the next day the boss came and he was like "OK, now if you break this, it will be like 20 pounds for each broken glass".

Q: Really?

A: Yeah. He never discounted anything, but it was like a threatening environment. I feel like, in a busy environment it is very easy sometimes to make a mistake, or order, I don't know, instead of rice, tomatoes or whatever to the kitchen. And in this case, he would just start shouting at the workers and, for example, once in the kitchen we put in the lift two different dishes for different tables because they were similar, and then the boss went to the

guy that put it in the lift and just started shouting at him in front of everyone. And also, a girl that I was working with- she was my colleague, she was a bartender there- and she really needed a day off on Friday and he didn't give it to her, so that kind of started there, and she was like "I can't come because something really serious has happened" and *then he didn't pay her for the whole week, but he made her work*. He put her in the rota to work the next week, and he was like "if you come this other week then I will pay you", and she was like "well, if I am not getting paid I'm not going to come". But eventually her friends started sending him text messages being like "OK, pay her or we are going to Citizen's Advice", and then eventually he did pay her, but he also sent her very threatening text messages. And it's not the first time. In his community he already has this type of fame."

Emma, Lithuanian female, early 20s, hospitality [italics mine].

5: Lack of Control and Alienation

The aforementioned conditions in combination with the insecurity stemming from the precarious contractual relations result in feelings of alienation and disempowerment which can eventually lead to resignation. Alienation, as developed in classical Marxism (Marx 1844; Meszaros 1970), further elaborated in critical theory (Marcuse 1991 [1964]) and then again re-formulated in various ways in more recent analyses of precarity and subjectivity (see, for example, Hardt and Negri 2017), refers to a multiplicity of feelings, tendencies and dispositions that arise as results of workers' emotional detachment from the labour they perform, and their physical detachment from the fruits of their labour. According to Marx (1844), alienated labour, uninspiring, soul-damaging labour done purely for one's survival, involves "1) estrangement and fortuitous connection between labour and the subject who labours; 2) estrangement and fortuitous connection between labour and the object of labour; 3) that the worker's role is determined by social needs which, however, are alien to him and a compulsion to which he submits out of egoistic need and necessity, and which have for him only the significance of a means of satisfying his dire need, just as for them he exists only as a slave of their needs; 4) that to the worker the maintenance of his individual existence appears to be the *purpose* of his activity and what he actually does is regarded by him only as a means; that he carries on his life's activity in order to earn means of *subsistence*."

All the jobs described above fit squarely within these parameters. The enhanced proliferation of machines into this equation exacerbates the already deeply alienating conditions of the factory, restaurant, and other precarious workplaces (Bloodworth 2019). As was shown above, even *within* these jobs, migrant workers are more likely to be placed

in the least rewarding and creative positions. All this is further compounded by the wider social trends of individualisation and the collapse of trade unions and other collective institutions (Bradley 2016; Wacquant 2008). These are exacerbated within the workplace by temporariness and insecurity.

"A: The problem I was facing was that I felt like a number there. They were treating us- not like dogs or something like that, dramatic- but they were very snobbish and they had an attitude as if we were just numbers there, working. The agency workers were experiencing that much more than anyone else who was there with a contract. You could see that we were just doing our job and we weren't considered proper workers. That is how I felt.

Q: So you were not treated with respect.

A: Exactly. Also the conditions were very negative. Intense white lighting, which for me, I believe it is not healthy to stay under this light for long hours and missing out natural light. So you would go early in the morning in the dark and leave in the afternoon. The only time you get to see the sun is during the break, which was of course a very small break. Also, the wage was minimum wage. There was a lot of noise of the machines because it was a printing factory and the noise was creating anxiety in me. So this, the light, and the way they were treating us with disrespect and also the precarity and feeling that "I don't know how long I will be able to stay there" because I didn't have any contract, I was with a zero hours contract by an agency, and they could sack me anytime, it was not a very nice situation." Loise, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality/freelance journalist [describing working in a print factory].

While the above statement resonates with most popular understandings of alienating, exploitative factory labour, the development of Western capitalism has meant that compartmentalisation of tasks has been extended to a wide variety of occupations. The neoliberal imperative to squeeze costs has resulted in a rise of alienating experiences and increasing precarity even in occupations that wouldn't normally be associated with these characterisations (Lazar and Sanchez 2019). One such example involves the National Health Service's use of agency workers to fill short-term staff shortages. Here, the vocational quality characterising popular perceptions of nurses and doctors is stunted and stifled, resulting, once again, in stressed, overworked, and insecure workers.

"A: I have no ownership of what you do, you don't know what… So, like, I was taking blood, blood pressure. I don't know what to do with that, cause the only thing they told me, I don't have no connection to what happens after me. And the doctors can tell me like,

jump in the hoop and you have to do it because they are doctors, and the nurse can tell me

jump the hoop and I have to do it because she is a nurse, you know.

Q: So how was the experience there?

A: It was shit! Yeah, it was shit because, first of all, I worked for the bank, I didn't have a

stable workplace. The ownership of the work I had was zero. You go there, they tell you

"what's your name, this is what you have to do today". You don't know where, like the

storage is, you don't know who to speak to, you don't know anything, you are completely

disposable basically. And that's fine for some people, but for me it was my only job

basically and it really fucked me up. Because I could, I didn't have ownership of anything I

did, they told me "you have to do this", I was running from buzzer to buzzer to, like, you

know, just like provide personal care for people. That was it, that was my whole job."

Eleni, Greek female, mid 20s, care sector.

I shared these feelings in all the jobs I was involved in during my participant observation. One of the characteristics that made the biggest impression on me was the difference between how people in those environments responded to the end of the workday when compared to the attitudes one finds in academic contexts. Undoubtedly, academia also contains high degrees of contractual precarity (Woodcock 2014); but there is a significant qualitative difference in the content of this precarity, as mental labour usually involves a degree of creativity and personal control which is completely absent from factory, warehouse, and kitchen settings. At the end of the working day, the University of Glasgow's sociology department is relaxed and content. One sees professors and PhD students casually leaving their offices, eager to stop and have a chat if you bump into them on the stairs. There is an abundance of activities throughout the day for which participation is voluntary, such as seminars and lectures. People attend these even though they wouldn't be penalised if they didn't: they attend them out of personal interest, out of a commitment to the wider structure of the work that they do. In contrast, precarious occupations create a deep, violent split between one's labour existence and one's personal existence: objectification is complete. There is nothing voluntary, nothing fulfilling about this kind of labour. And it is exemplified by how eager people are to leave at the end of the day:

"The final important observation of the day was that, despite seeming comfortable in the

job and despite the comparatively civilised labour conditions, everyone was in a hurry to

leave. As soon as the alarm went off signalling the end of the workday, everyone was out.

They were lined up in front of the clocking-out devices 30 seconds before they became

activated. They hurriedly clocked out and left, some of them almost jogging down the stairs. Once outside the factory, people rushed into their cars and sped off. In a direct confirmation of Goffman's (1959) analysis on the mask, all the masks fell instantaneously. This is indicative of the level of experiential awareness of alienation. Nobody likes this job, even those who have comparatively good positions in the labour hierarchy. We are all caught, out of necessity, together in this environment, and we don't want to pretend, even for a minute, that there is anything fulfilling or satisfying in our predicament. As soon as we can, we drop everything and leave. We don't exchange lots of words outside. We walk fast. If it were socially acceptable, perhaps we would run. To make up for our lost time. To hug our partners and our children. To crash in front of the TV, not caring about anything for a few hours."- Fieldnotes, Radiator Factory, 24th October 2018.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to illustrate the real conditions many precarious workers find themselves in. Initially, it aimed to describe what some workplaces look like, drawing both on my observations and on interviews, in order to situate subsequent discussions and investigations in real contexts rather than in abstract theoretical schemas. More specifically, it has attempted to show some of the pragmatic consequences of the precarious contractual relations examined in the previous chapter. Other than the anxiety brought forth by precarity, there are other very real anxieties, pressures, abuses and health violations that are enabled and enforced by workers' disempowerment. When analysing barriers to migrant workers' unionization or mobilisation, it is important to understand why such resistances are necessary in the first place. It is also important to acknowledge that "precarity" means much more than a generalised sense of anxiety. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand how debilitating "precarity" can be, and how this debilitation further reinforces migrant workers' disempowerment. This chapter illustrated some practical facets of the manifestation of worker disempowerment, namely hierarchy, health and safety, informality and abuse, and alienation. Thus, moving from the abstract to the concrete and from the structural to the subjective, it sets the foundations for the following chapters, which will be focused on examining the subjectivities, relationships, and resistances of migrant workers.

Chapter 8: Migrant Worker Subjectivities and Precarity

Introduction

The multiple structural and subjective effects of precarity interact with a series of subjective traits that are connected to people's experiences of migration. These multiple levels coalesce in structuring, and reproducing, migrant workers' accentuated exploitation and disempowerment in the workplace and society. The literature covered in chapter 3 surveys a variety of arguments relating to migrant worker exploitation and to the subjectivities of migrant workers who experience exploitation (for example, see Anderson 2013; Bauder 2006; Sayad 2004; Piore 1979). In this chapter I draw on my empirical research to examine and analyze the existence of some of these traits in greater detail, focusing on the effects of temporariness and disorientation, the "dual frame of reference" and the fear or resignation stemming from disempowerment. Despite the significant and innumerable differences between migrant groups and between different individuals within those groups, these three characteristics are widely shared amongst relatively new migrant workers, and they therefore hold explicatory and analytical value when attempting to understand migrant workers' subjectivities. This chapter will examine how these interact with previously introduced ideas, such as the "socialization of precarity", to ultimately enforce the totality of the system that creates and maintains migrant workers' exploitation in precarious jobs.

This chapter will also attempt to analyse migrants' conceptions about their own condition as migrants and will investigate the degrees of class consciousness manifested in the migrant workforce. It will be argued that Piore's (1979: 53) famous designation of migrant workers as "probably the closest thing in real life to the *Homo economicus* of economic theory" is reductive: while migrant workers do tend to initially practice economistic, opportunistic behaviours in order to secure their livelihoods, they nevertheless fully retain their critical faculties and agentically negotiate the various contradictions they encounter. Workers' subjective acceptance of exploitative labour conditions needs to therefore be viewed in the context of multiple forces that structure these labour conditions; my findings indicate that these workers' grudging submission to exploitation does not equate with an acceptance of the structure that breeds it. This is consistent with King's (2016: 29) call that migrants must be seen as "active participants in the construction of reality, not simply as people reacting to economic or social factors".

Nevertheless, my research suggests that subjective consequences of the lived experience of temporariness, the "dual frame of reference", and insecurity and disempowerment constitute significant barriers to migrant workers' organisation. While many migrant workers have developed an understanding of their exploitation *as migrants*, and while many also have a clear class analysis that firmly positions them as *exploited workers*, the aforementioned subjective elements and their interactions with the socialisation of precarity and the wider socioeconomic structure significantly hinder their organisation in unions or other oppositional networks. While many migrant workers rationalise their exploitation as being connected to their status as migrants, the development of a "politicised" identity (Bradley 2016) *as migrants* is so far mostly confined to those individuals who were already politically active prior to migration. In contrast, all migrant workers interviewed had a fully formed class consciousness, usually borne out of their direct experiences of exploitation. Even then, most interviewees had not proceeded in expressing this consciousness in the form of political action. These realisations enable a fuller understanding of migrant workers' subjectivities and will be employed in subsequent chapters to understand workers' interrelationships and resistances.

1: Subjective Aspects of Migrant Workers' Labour Experiences

1.1: Piore's "Homo Economicus", Temporariness and Disorientation

As has been repeatedly noted, newly arrived migrant workers are likely to find quickly available, "unskilled" jobs that will allow them to initially settle down and begin acclimating themselves to their new society (Bauder 2006; Piore 1979). It has been previously argued that the economy is structured in such a way as to enable it to attract migrant workers and direct them towards precisely those temporary occupations which are most in need of flexible and vulnerable labour (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus, and Alberti 2015; Sporton 2013; Anderson 2013). Over time, specific occupations or workplaces may become associated with specific signifiers of difference, a process of essentialization which further enforces migrant groups' distribution to certain jobs and sectors (McDowell 2008). While most migrant workers are not necessarily conscious of the wider structural forces at play in the moment that they accept a precarious and exploitative job, my findings indicate that many are fully committed to moving on as soon as it is reasonable to do so. This desire to 'move on' may take different forms, always conditioned by an individual's class background and habitus; many may be satisfied with rising up the occupational hierarchy in a specific workplace, for example by becoming managers. Others may view the job instrumentally to get some quick money, get some experience, and then progress to other

goals. Nevertheless, the initial temporary outlook cited by Piore (1979) and other theorists is thereby confirmed. However, disorientation also plays an important role: workers' initial economistic outlooks and their acceptance of quick, precarious and exploitative occupations is supplemented by their wider disorientation in a new society and the resulting lack of knowledge of their rights and available representational avenues. As has been argued above, this outlook may result in workers' engagement with intensely exploitative labour practices.

"Q: OK, so why did you, so you thought about contacting a union here. Why didn't you contact a union?

A: At the beginning because I was doing other things. Before contacting a union, I need to work! And then, it was something like that….

Q: So, you didn't want to take the risk, lose your…

A: No no no! at the beginning, the most important thing, I cannot search, spend my time looking for a union and that stuff. Now, for example, I have been working in Glasgow 2 months, more than 2 months, and yes, I should do that before.

Q: OK, so…. What about your, what about the situation with the money that you were owed, with those 500 pounds? Did you think that "I will just let this lost situation…"

A: No, I was just… one month ago, when that happened, I decided to fight. But first I need to go to a union, and I just do other things. Like postponing the situation. In Spain, you can solve that problems during the next year. So, you have a lot of time to decide to act. I didn't know that here is three months."- Manu, Spanish male, mid 20s, hospitality- Active in Clydeside IWW Migrant Workers' Network.

In the above excerpt Manu clearly states that the most important priority for him upon arrival in Glasgow was getting settled and making some money in order to be safe. Manu had arrived in Scotland to work as part of the live-in staff in a small hotel in the Scottish Highlands. Employed on an intensely precarious basis, he was fired without warning; upon receiving his final wage, he noticed that a substantial sum had been redacted. In the course of our interview, it also emerged that he had not been paid any of his accrued holiday pay. However, for a new migrant, fighting to reclaim unpaid wages is not a simple task. He says that "before contacting a union, I need to work"; the need to establish security through finding new work was more urgent than the need to fight over unpaid wages. This is in line with Però's (2014) observation that migrant worker

movements emerge from communities only after some more basic needs such as income security, housing, and immigration are addressed.

The above quote also illuminates the extent to which workers' defense of their rights is hampered by their lack of awareness of UK law and the wider disorientation they experience in their new society. Manu didn't know which union to contact, and, even more detrimentally, was not aware of the very strict time-limit imposed by Employment Tribunals on the filing of claims by workers. All this is consistent with Barnard, Ludlow, and Fraser Butlin's (2018) study on the uses of Employment Tribunals by migrant workers. Of course, it may be the case that the worker does not feel exploited, and therefore does not feel the need to inquire about their rights. Nevertheless, this feeds a cycle of disempowerment, as workers are not equipped to challenge their employers should the need arise.

Q: So, I have two last questions. The first one, immigrant workers like you are usually in the most insecure jobs and in a worse situation if you compare it to locals. But very few immigrants are members of unions, or they, most people don't know about their rights. Have you ever tried to find out about your rights? Or have you ever been in contact with any organisation to find out what your rights are?

C: No.

R: No.

C: I never knew my rights.

Q: OK. I don't want to be annoying, but why? Why did you not try to find out?

R: Right…

C: I never had a reason to find my rights. And I never had some like big problems, so, so yeah.

Q: It wasn't a big issue. How about you?

R: Yes, the same.

C: But I should know, yeah, of course.

R: And we are always so tired, that when is a day off you go to sleep, you just want to rest. And that's it, you know."- Raquel and Charles. Both are Portuguese. Charles is a male in his early 20s. Raquel, his mother, is in her mid-40s. Both work in hospitality.

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The above excerpt further illuminates the conditions that hinder migrant workers' awareness of their rights. Sometimes, the outright physical and mental exhaustion resulting from precarious, exploitative occupations can be enough of a reason to prevent a worker from pursuing further knowledge. This is combined with the prioritization of making money and with the initial disorientation experienced in the new society. Initial disorientation can also be exacerbated by the shock workers may experience at the harshness of the labour conditions they find themselves in. The physical and mental exhaustion that is felt at the end of the working day, combined with the isolation experienced as a result of the precarious employment conditions outlined in the last 2 chapters, may result in a wider sense of resignation. This resignation may in turn prevent workers from seeking assistance and pursuing an improvement in their working conditions. All this is in line with Anderson's summary of Piore's theories (2013: 82), arguing that "the imagined temporariness of new migrants' stay means that at the earlier stages of a migrant's immigration career, perhaps when he or she has lower subjective expectations, less language, and more limited understanding of the labour market, he or she is more likely to view work purely instrumentally". This instrumentality is also a reason that some migrant workers will not waste time and energy on fighting for their rights. It can potentially combine itself with the resignation resulting from the socialization of precarity to direct workers' aspirations simply towards securing enough capital to be able to move on to a different job.

"A: Unison is active in the NHS.

Q: Did you join it?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: I did not join it. Why? I think I have a personal reason and a political reason. I think when I came here, I was a bit in shock. I think, for me, doing the job was really soul destroying. In the sense that, I really wanted to separate my identity from it. So, I didn't want to consider that I was like, I was doing any more than just working. Which I can realise now, after being here for 2 years, how non-beneficial it was to me, but back then I was like "I want to do a job, I want to finish this job, and leave, and never think about it again". Because it really fucked me up, basically." Eleni, Greek female, mid-20s, care work.

The concept of the "dual frame of reference" (Piore 1979) refers to an attitude prevalent in recently arrived migrant workers whereby one's current situation is judged based on understandings and criteria imported from their country of origin. In this sense, it corresponds to Sayad's (2004) assertion that a migrant is also an emigrant: this means that one's subjective transformation to conform with the standards and mentalities of the new country is a process rather than an instant development. The dual frame of reference may encompass a variety of factors: one might be satisfied with receiving a higher wage in a precarious job, since it would be better than working in much worse conditions in their home country (Lever and Milbourne 2017; Anderson and Ruhs 2010). One might have higher levels of trust in the totality of the British system, a belief that, in the new country, everything just works better (Samaluk 2016; Sayad 2004). Finally, one might still maintain strong attachments to the identity developed in their country of origin; many migrants indeed view their migration as temporary, and therefore instrumentally: their greatest concern may consist of what they will have achieved once their migration is over and they have returned to their home country (Berger and Mohr 2010; Piore 1979). When one has no intention of developing substantial bonds in a place, they might have little interest in investing time to improve local labour and social conditions. These outlooks are always conditioned by migrants' class backgrounds in their country of origin and the consequent ways that class habitus and past experience has shaped their aspirations. Nevertheless, like the dispositions outlined in the previous section, these also interact and overlap with the socialization of precarity to foster a sense of detachment and disengagement from the wider issues in each workplace.

> "You need to work. If they exploit you, that is better than don't work. So, anyway, the situation is better than in Spain. In Spain, all the people is getting exploited. So that is the usual way to work. So here I am better, but the situation here is bad too for the migrants. And if you, if your labour rights are respected here, I think that the most part of the migrants are earning the minimum wage, and for the Scottish people is not like that. In Spain, the higher aim of the worker is to win the minimum wage. So when I came here and I started to earn that money I was happy, "finally!". But then I noticed that it was legal but a lower wage than the normal people, the Scottish people. So, we are discriminated."- Manu, Spanish male, mid 20s, hospitality- Active in Clydeside IWW Migrant Workers' Network.

"A: As a migrant coming here two years ago, I could barely speak the language, you know, I was like "I don't know anything". And coming from Greece, I do have the mindset that tells me "you are not entitled to holidays"; 35 hours a week is a very good condition because in Greece, would be 40 or 50. So I definitely have the mindset and I understand it a lot now, being here, that I do have this mindset of Greek worker that like, works for 3 euros an hour […]I think it's a mindset, it's not just "happening". It's a mindset you have when, and you try to get rid of. Because I think, I was living for, the less, how is it called, less privilege place you come from in the country of origin you are, the less you expect, you know. I was doing lots of shitty jobs while I was studying and like, I never knew about contracts, working rights, I never even thought about these things, even though I considered myself politically active. But the workplace is something different I believe. I guess like, I don't know, that is how I had it in my mind, you know. And coming here, I definitely have this mindset of like, "oh shit, I can't really ask for holidays" because I don't know, I can't really ask. I do it now, but like, it takes time, I think." Eleni, Greek female, mid-20s, care work.

Both participants above directly refer to the aspects of the "dual frame of reference" that are analysed in the relevant literature (Anderson 2013; Piore 1979). Manu talks about how, in a Spain ravaged by the effects of austerity and economic crisis, the highest aspiration of a worker of his class is to achieve a salary that resembles the country's minimum wage; by comparison, most precarious occupations in Scotland begin by offering the minimum wage. For him, just getting a foot in the labour market was initially thought of as a significant improvement relative to the conditions he left behind. Similarly, Eleni contrasts the long working hours of most precarious occupations in Greece to those she experienced in Scotland. Importantly, she refers to the "dual frame of reference" as a "mindset" which is initially powerful and is then gradually overcome. This is fully in line with Piore's (1979) main arguments, whereby the initial temporary and instrumental outlook may be gradually abandoned as the migrant worker acclimatises and gains information and confidence. Importantly, both interview participants make direct connections between their class backgrounds in their country of origin and their expectations of, and responses to, their labour conditions in Scotland. These accounts therefore add further nuance to classic Piorean ideas of migrant subjectivities by including the deep ways in which habitus influences the "dual frame of reference".

However, the heterogeneity of migrant groups means that this process is not uniformly experienced. Since migrant workers carry with them a habitus which is shaped

by personal experiences, and partly by the histories and cultures of their countries of origin (Sayad 2004; Piore 1979), it follows that degrees of politicisation and trade union/migrant solidarity/ other contestational praxis in the country of origin play a role in structuring a migrant worker's acceptance of exploitation in the country of destination. For example, Roca, B. and Martín-Díaz (2017) examine Spanish migrant workers' radical organisations and allude to the existence of already politicised and active migrant section among their ranks. Similarly, when examining the trade union activity of Latin American workers organised in LAWAS, Alberti and Però (2018: 702) write that "the founders all had a history of union militancy in their countries of origin and their migration was connected to that. Their political background and identity had played a very strong role in their participation in LAWAS and indeed its creation".

It could thus be argued that, contrary to Piore's (1979) rigid analysis, the "dual frame of reference" may, in specific cases, *foster* political action and an engagement with the commons rather than simply leading to individualistic and economistic behaviours. In any case, the specifics around its manifestation are conditioned by the individual's experiences in their country of origin and are once again intimately connected to their class and political backgrounds; for example, Manu became involved with the Clydeside IWW Migrant Workers' Network after only 2 months in Scotland. In contrast, many of my other interview participants had never been active in the UK, even after years of secure stay. In the excerpt below, Leila provides some additional examples of how differently the "dual frame of reference" may operate between different groups of migrant workers. Importantly, she cites the importance of class and cultural capital as factors that contribute to how workers respond to their new experiences: for example, she attributes what she considers as Spanish migrants' increased propensity for unionisation to their educational status, whereas she sees Polish migrants as more focused on making money, which could be a result of differences in the cultural capital and class background of the two groups.

"A: My experience, and I don't want to be judgemental: *different migrants have different relationships towards exploitation and unionisation*. Spanish migrants I think might be more young, like me, most of them are educated and went to university, so they know what they are doing, they know that, yeah, material benefits for… anyways. So, they, I think they will be keen to unionise, or French like, you know, employees. I think for instance, Polish people are more in the mind-set, which is absolutely respectable- and again I talk about those who I have met, again is a very limited experience- but in our workplace they were much more focused on, look: "I am not going to be here forever, I am not going to be

in this country forever, I just want to make money; I want to buy a house in Poland and provide myself to some stability". Their goals were other. Their goal was to make money and it doesn't matter." Leila, Spanish/Tunisian female, early 30s, hospitality *[italics mine]*

1.3: Disempowerment and Insecurity

The pragmatic effects of the disempowerment and insecurity engendered by precarious contractual arrangements have been extensively analysed in the previous chapters and in the relevant literature (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015; Sporton 2013; Standing 2011; etc.). However, the migrant condition adds additional degrees and forms of difficulty, as restrictive immigration regimes interact with migrants' disorientation, dual frames of reference, and initial temporary and instrumental outlooks (Duda-Mikulin 2018; Anderson 2013; Bauder 2006). The lack of access to unions (analysed extensively in subsequent chapters) and wider representational and informational institutions (Alberti, Holgate, and Turner 2014; Connoly, Marino and Martínez Lucio 2014) further accentuates these feelings of disempowerment. Additionally, structural socioeconomic features based on cultural processes of distinction, such as de-skilling through the non-recognition of qualifications, social isolation, and essentialisation (McDowell 2008; Bauder 2006), exacerbate migrant workers' feelings of loss of control. Finally, all of the above is filtered through the overarching socialisation of precarity which further fortifies these feelings of resignation and powerlessness; all these elements are interrelated, combining to simultaneously produce and aggravate migrant workers' exploitation as their confidence to challenge their circumstances is diminished.

"Before I came here, I didn't know nothing. And I was trusting a person, in this case my sister: that she knows more, that she can provide me this, that she can help me, and then I found out that she is in the same situation, she knows nothing. She can't help with this. So, then I started thinking what is best for myself. So is also difficult just in relation to, she is my relative and I trust her, I feel like it must be a good shot, and then it is like OK, she also gets mistreated and maybe even more, because she is here longer, and just because I am here new, I can notice it faster. And if I can't deal with it, I will say "OK I will go back to my country" because it is just a few months. Even like this, it's different, because if you live here longer, and you are getting this, treated like this all the time, I think you can just get used to it. Like, "I am just a foreigner here, an immigrant, so who cares"?

Q: Is that something you feel? Like, "I am just a foreigner here, so…"

A: Yeah, at this point, a little bit! Because I was thinking "OK, I have education, I could do it better", but then my confidence… it's like, I don't know, I am not sure… I am losing it or maybe I didn't have it at all when I come here, it's like… so I had confidence to make a move forward but I find myself in this place and it's not the best place to be in, you know?"- Irene, Lithuanian female, mid-20s, hospitality.

Apart from illuminating the complex ways that structural constraints interact with subjective traits and features stemming from the migrant condition, this excerpt is also important because it signifies a break from the teleology present in Anderson (2013) and Piore (1979). They argue that these initial feelings of powerlessness and disorientation tend to dissipate as migrants become more embedded in their communities and gain confidence. This was, indeed, often the trajectory that was described to me by participants in my research. However, Irene inserts a crucial caveat that disrupts this neat linearity: she argues that "treated like this all the time, I think you just get used to it". She argues that the subject may reach such deep levels of resignation, combined with an uncritical adoption of the essentialising discourses directed towards them by mainstream society, that they are likely to uncritically accept their exploitation as a quasi-natural by-product of their 'foreignness'. This realisation further supports the assertion in Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti (2015) that sees agency labour as constituting a form of migrant worker socialization in the new country's labour regime; it is a socialization which, for some, may reach deep into the recesses of subjectivity. Inequality is naturalized as labour exploitation is associated with the wider experience of migration: as Berger and Mohr (2010: 115) write, "tragedy is more real than explanations".

Finally, migration regimes perform a critical function alongside labour environments in socializing vulnerable workers towards specific directions (Anderson 2013; 2010; Bauder 2006). Following Mezzadra and Neilson's idea of "differential inclusion" (2013: Chapter 5), it becomes possible to examine the productive dimensions of borders and bordering - a productive process that extends to subjectivities. These ideas are mirrored by Anderson, Sharma, and Wright (2011: 6), who argue that "national borders are better analysed as moulds, as attempts to create certain types of subjects and subjectivities". For EU workers, this is mainly expressed through their inability to access benefits before working for three months, introducing extra pressures to accept the quickest jobs available (Angry Workers 2020). When it comes to non-EU workers, all the characteristics outlined above are superimposed and exacerbated by the migration controls they find themselves subjected to, the most debilitating ones being their dependence on an

employer to guarantee their right to remain (Anderson 2013) and their not being allowed recourse to public funds (Angry Workers 2020). Temporariness, instrumentality, and insecurity thereby assume an overwhelming weight in the definition of workers' priorities.

> "It's what I told you before, they don't want to be in dispute with the employers. They are more concerned, most of the people who are migrants, they are concerned about the payments. Their main concern is that. If they lost their job, it would be a big problem for them. Like, a person like me. I am still not settled. I do not get any benefits. What I earn is what I eat. Majority of the people who are like me, I will do all things to save my job rather than to move to another job. That is the main reason, financial insecurity."- Arjun, Indian male, late 40s, care sector.

2: Subjective Understandings of Migrant Workers' Migration Experience.

The process of naturalisation of suffering described by Berger and Mohr (2010) is connected to migrant workers' partaking in the reproduction of the discourses that function to essentialise them, described in the previous chapter and analysed by researchers such as Lever and Milbourne (2017) and Gomberg-Muñoz (2010). In an economy that is structurally reliant on artificially devalued, precarious migrant labour, where multiple overlapping economic and cultural forces combine to create and maintain migrant exploitability, it is important to understand how migrant workers themselves perceive their migration and their status as migrants. I wanted to understand whether migration had the potential to develop into a "politicized identity" as described by Bradley (2016)- an identity encompassing political understandings that lead to organised action. I wanted to investigate whether the accentuated xenophobia and social marginalisation experienced by EU migrants after Brexit had the potential to forge links between them and other exploited and historically racialised migrant groups. However, I also wanted to find out simply whether the naturalisation of their inferiority as 'migrants' played a role in migrants' accepting of exploitative conditions. My findings on these fronts are tentative and an authoritative conclusion on these questions would necessitate supplementary research; nevertheless, I argue that they can be useful in further understanding migrant subjectivities.

2.1: The "Good Worker Paradox" re-visited

Whenever a researcher attempts to analyse the subjectivities of a wide range of people, they must be prepared for contradictions. One of the main ones that I encountered is that many people were conforming, and reproducing, an exclusive narrative that is

essentially an evolved internalisation of the "good worker paradox"; yet, at the same time, they remained conscious of their exploitation as migrants. Anderson (2013) forcefully argues that collectively accepted binaries between citizens considered "bad" and others considered "good" combine to produce nationally bounded "communities of value" (2013: 2). In these collective representations, "the Good Citizen is the liberal sovereign self: rational, self-owning, and independent […] firmly anchored in liberal ideas about the individual, autonomy, freedom, belonging, and property". In contrast, "failed citizens" are those who are seen as not conforming to these characteristics. Anderson (2013: 6) writes that "migrants and their supporters are usually eager to differentiate themselves from failed citizens with whom they are often associated. Assertions that refugees are not criminals, or that migrants do not claim benefits, are attempts to counter these associations by affirming the community of value. Migrants and refugees are fit to belong because they have the right kinds of values, unlike criminals and benefit scroungers […] Contingent acceptance turns tolerated citizens, who must often struggle for acceptance into the community of value, into the guardians of good citizenship".

These cultural processes reproduce hegemonic ideas about which groups and individuals are "worthy", thereby masking deep structural processes of inequality. Importantly, they do so *within* and *through* the processes by which people contest and negotiate their own structural and symbolic marginalisation. For example, a migrant worker performing the "good worker" stereotype while simultaneously not accepting benefits will be applauded as a model migrant. This applause will mask the fact that this worker is structurally and culturally compelled to perform the "good worker" stereotype in order to keep their precarious job (Gomberg-Muñoz 2010) in an unequal economy which is based on differential inclusion (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Crucially, migrants' reproduction of these discourses further fortifies the wider structure that produces their exploitability.

For example, Agnes had an acute awareness of how employers use migrant workers in ways that exploit their vulnerabilities and disorientation. As will be shown below, she also has a class-conscious approach to work. Nevertheless, once asked about how she thinks Brexit will impact her, she reproduced a "good migrant" discourse. This is not in itself problematic, as she is rightfully proud of her individual accomplishments in the face of adverse socioeconomic conditions. However, it is an indication precisely of the individualising socialisation that migrants experience, as well as of their desire to be included in Anderson's (2013) "community of value".

"Right now, I feel secure. For the next 2 years, I feel really really secure because basically I'm untouchable. If they touch me, other European countries are going to touch their citizens, and they are not that stupid. I have clean tax history, I have no record, I have never taken benefits or anything, so for that country, for that economy, I am a "good immigrant". And because I am staying there, I make money here and I spend money here so the balance is the same, I'm not sending my money abroad like a lot of other immigrants do. I am not saying that bad but I am making money here and spending money here so for them is the best situation. I'm really secure. The only thing is that after Brexit I have to remember to book my flights on my passport instead of booking my national identity card"- Agnes, Polish female, mid-20s, hospitality.

Nicole, on the other hand, displays a more complex understanding of her role as a migrant and her connections with other migrant workers. She views herself as a strong woman who has gone through many precarious occupations, has proudly fought her share of battles, and has a critical understanding of how the migrant status of workers is used by employers in exploitative ways. However, her statements are an example that one's migrant identity does not immediately equate with solidarity towards all migrants; Nicole seems to form relations of affinity with those conforming to Anderson's (2013) "community of value", since she herself proudly reproduces these characteristics. Nevertheless, she is fully aware of the contradictory positions that are engendered by one's status as a migrant.

"A: We are treated well; you don't feel a risk of being here. So, I am saying, there are too many immigrants in terms of other countries. And we know that some of them, immigrants, are building a life here, whatever they are doing, some of us we are paying our taxes, and some don't pay but stay on benefits or whatever. And I understand that UK citizen, maybe they feel insecure with the jobs, which is not true [laughs]. They don't wanna work, they don't wanna do that jobs, they only want to do from supervisor and above. So, we don't take any jobs. And it's true without us, without immigrants, nothing would work here and most of the company would be closed down. So yeah, they need us, but in the other point, I said there are too many. I said so because Angela Merkel, when ask the British government to take more immigrants, because from here everything started, when they said that UK have to take, I don't know what number of immigrants…

Q: It was 20 thousand, it was not that much….

A: But comparing to the numbers of immigrants from Germany, I understand that. Because in Germany there are not too many immigrants, first of all, and I think the biggest community is the Turkish community, and it took a long, long time to be accepted there and have some rights. In Romanians they say, "you have to take this number of immigrants". What the hell, you know! Why, not me, because I am not living there of course… well I am still paying taxes because I have my house there, but, I have my family there, why my family has to pay to support these ones? But then I turned, and I was like "hmmm, I am one of them, hello!" It's a tricky thing. But I understand both positions. I need to be honest, you know."- Nicole, Romanian female, mid-40s, hospitality.

In the above quote a range of characteristics relative to migration subjectivities can be observed. Primarily, there is a clear understanding that the UK economy structurally depends on immigration ("without us, without immigrants, nothing would work here"). However, Nicole also understands why British citizens might be against migration. This is partially connected to her Romanian nationality and is evidence of the reproduction of political ideologies towards migration which are well established in Romania, an importation which uneasily coexists with her new status as a migrant (Sayad 2004). Consequently, she says that she understands why her family should not have to pay taxes to support refugees; at the same time, she understands that she benefits from a tolerance similar to that which her family rejects in her daily life as a migrant worker in Scotland. Nicole seemed to have resolved this contradiction by developing an identity as an empowered woman who is an excellent worker. Once again, this is a confirmation of her active participation in the "community of value" (Anderson 2013).

These inclinations towards positioning oneself firmly within the "community of value" can lead to migrant workers adopting and reproducing explicitly racist narratives regarding other groups. As Anderson (2013) argues, "the community of value" is most closely policed by those on its outer borders; disregarded, marginalised and exploited, migrant workers may internalise the competition inherent in capitalism and proceed to externalise it in the form of racism towards other groups who are firmly positioned outside the "community".

"I had a brief conversation with Eni, an Albanian worker in the kitchen. He asked me where I live, and I responded that I live close to Victoria Road. "You live in Victoria road? Lots of Romanians there! Drugs, selling children, I never go there". This is a further depiction of the racism and the divisions between workers and immigrants in Scotland. The interesting thing is that Albanians in Greece and Macedonia (where he is from) are

racialised in almost the same way that Roma people are racialised in Scotland. They are considered *essentially* dirty, unworthy, untrustworthy, primitive. This experience of marginalisation however is clearly not enough to foster understanding and solidarity towards other members of marginalised communities. It would be more accurate to argue that the marginalised may, in the absence of political projects aiming at unity and common struggle, seek incorporation within the mainstream community of value by partaking in the demonization of those collectively defined as beneath them."- Fieldnotes, 21st June 2019, Kitchen Porter.

These findings indicate that migrant workers are involved in participating and reproducing the discourses that compose Scotland's "community of value" in diverse and contradictory ways. My research is squarely in line with Anderson's (2013) discussion of the issue. She writes that "the Migrant (hardworking, legal, and a taxpayer) must distance herself from the Illegal Immigrant, and her impressive 'work ethic' (disciplined by deportability and the figure of the illegal) is a reproach to the lazy and lacklustre benefit dependent" (2013: 6). However, I would argue that it is more than simply a "reproach"; in line with Gomberg-Muñoz (2010), I suggest that it is also an almost necessary subjective manoeuvre in order to maintain their tenuous, precarious balance in the social and labour hierarchy. Absent a viable, trustworthy, alternative collective narrative, in the desert of individualism and the socialisation of precarity, one's aspirations for inclusion in the "community of value" seem like a one-way street. Nevertheless, these cultural narratives may assume deep subjective authority, interacting with other subjective traits such as the "good worker paradox" or the tendency to participate in one's own essentialisation as a migrant, to ultimately produce subjects that are firm supporters of society's existing boundaries. This might contribute in explaining the difficulty in establishing lasting, organisational solidarities between different groups of migrant workers.

2.2: Subjective Understandings of Migration

How migrant workers perceive their status as migrants, and by extension their power as subjects in a foreign society, directly impacts their choices and behaviours. The interviews conducted in the course of this research indicate that perceptions of difference and powerlessness function to constrain migrants' oppositional practices regarding labour exploitation. However, powerlessness, or the perception thereof, stems from the intersection of subjective and structural factors. I wanted to find out how people's perception of their status *specifically as migrants* contributed to shaping their understandings about what they could or couldn't do *as workers*. The case of EU citizens,

who- at the time of the interviews- were not subjected to such strict immigration controls as people from outside the EU, is particularly enlightening in this respect since their relative privilege offers a glimpse of migrant subjectivities unconstrained from the debilitating, overhanging spectre of imminent deportation.

"A: I am a European citizen, but, in my job, I feel like an immigrant. Yeah. When I was chef, it was different. I was feeling like a European citizen, my chef was British but he really enjoyed everything about French food, French culture, so he really wanted to just, change the menu, just to make me happy, "yeah do you want to try to make a French dish, South of France, yeah, you feel more comfortable towards that". But, no. The other place, they just want to feel you like you are an immigrant because they give some privilege to kids and not for you. You are more skilled than anyone and, yeah, you feel like a fucking immigrant. I was talking with some people from Peru who was working in the kitchen, and sometimes we speak in Spanish, and each time some people came, some Scottish people, with just, not my friend but they are friendly with me, and all the time say "yeah, what do you say", I say "yeah, I am just, I will be a little bit rude but, I am like in the 17th century in the South Virginia, I am like a fucking black slave on a plantation".

Q: You feel like that?

A: Yeah, yeah. I feel like a fucking slave. I say, you know what, I know slavery existing here. In India. Is not in there. It's in Scotland. [inaudible]. Respect basic of this worldwide company, and after that, maybe yeah, I will feel more comfortable with you. But yeah. In that job, I feel like an immigrant.

Q: isn't it weird that there is like… one very interesting thing is how you say, how there is a difference between, "I feel like an immigrant"- it basically means that you don't feel respected. And that shouldn't be the case, even if you are an immigrant, you should be respected. The word "immigrant" right now, in our times, has taken a very negative connotation.

A: Yeah, yeah. They make that."- Felix, Guadeloupean (French) male, early 30s, hospitality.

The most glaring aspect of this excerpt is that Felix, a black male from Guadeloupe, compares his situation in Scotland to slavery in the United States. The first question that must be asked is, "where are the chains?". It emerges that the "chains", in this case, are formed purely from the sustained and unjust disrespect Felix is subject to by management, which he attributes to his being an immigrant and to the management's practice of

privileging local Scottish "kids". Felix has significant experience in hospitality in France, and he was initially hired in the Scottish hotel he with promises of a rapid rise up the labour hierarchy. Instead, he has been confined to duties well below his promised contractual status, in a process of de-skilling that has left him feeling disrespected and undervalued. But he compares his situation to that of slavery because *he attributes all of this to his status as an immigrant*; the injustice he experiences *is founded on his difference* from the more privileged and more local members of the workforce. Furthermore, the fact that he is a black male potentially enhances the discriminatory practices that he is subject to daily. Contrary to white European immigrants in Scotland, in this case it could be argued that his discrimination is founded on ethnicity, class *and* race.

The second point that merits discussion is that he contrasts feeling like a "European citizen" to feeling like an "immigrant". Being an "immigrant" is therefore perceived as different from being a "European citizen"; being an immigrant has been equated with exploitation, poverty, and mistreatment, whereas being a "European citizen" is associated with respect and opportunity. In Roediger's (2007) analysis of how white workers in the United States became complicit in systemic racism and slavery, he argues that complex sociocultural processes resulted in whiteness being associated with liberty and autonomy, whereas blackness became connected with subjection and exploitation. As has been repeatedly stated, the characteristics of the jobs that groups of people perform, over time, become associated with the social group performing them (McDowell 2008; Davis 1981). These theoretical analyses offer reasons as to why Felix would reproduce the rhetoric that connects "immigration" with exploitation and vulnerability: according to this schema, a rich French banker working in the City of London would be classed as a "European citizen", whereas a working-class French hospitality worker would be considered an "immigrant". Crucially, Felix notes that "they make that"; the emergence of such understandings is not a natural process, but an outcome of specific policies enacted by employers that result in the devaluation of migrant identities.

Over time, the migrant condition is naturalised as one that intrinsically involves exploitation and precarity. The socialisation of precarity works together with the existing cultures and narratives around migration to exacerbate migrant workers' feelings of powerlessness and disorientation: at worst, the conditions they encounter are a debilitating shock (see Eleni's interview excerpt above); at best, they are merely a daunting confirmation of their expectations. In a few years in Scotland, Emma has gone from one precarious job to the next, experiencing varying manifestations of precarity, mistreatment,

and (in)security. Having already experienced her parents' migration to Spain as a child, she had already naturalised the connection between migration and exploitation:

> "Q: What did you expect when you migrated to the UK? What sort of jobs did you expect to find?
>
> A: Well, I'm just like, waitress and bartender to be fair.
>
> Q: And you expected these difficulties, with the contracts and stuff like that, you were aware of that?
>
> A: Yeah. Like, not like I was aware of them, but, if I would come up to that, like, it doesn't surprise me. I think it was because in Spain I was already an immigrant, and I could see that is the situation that my parents would face. They would like to find a job and everything. So, I'm like 'ok, if I am going to be a migrant that is what will happen'."- Emma, Lithuanian female, early 20s, hospitality.

How do these feelings impact workers' confidence to speak up in work? Felix offers an indication when he describes an incident that occurred in the hotel. When the managers decided that everybody's tips would go in a common pot and be used to celebrate another manager's birthday, Felix wanted to respond. However, he felt that his position as an immigrant in his workplace did not afford him the necessary authority to confidently speak out. Even though he eventually did, and his action of resistance was successful in that everybody else also refused to give up their tips, he nevertheless expresses his discomfort at asking Scottish workers to follow his lead.

> "A: The day, the week after I worked, and it was the assistant manager, and she just asked, she asked "we want to donate the tips". I just look at her and say "you know what, last weekend you stole my money, this weekend, even for one penny, I take my tips. I don't care. I will take all my money tonight". That's it. And finally, at the end, because I was the first one to say that, everyone took their money. Everyone took.
>
> Q: So, nobody liked this, but nobody spoke, you were the only one.
>
> A: Yeah, yeah. And I say sometimes you just need a first call, and then people just follow you. And in my mind, I was thinking, "yeah, that's how team leaders work". So, you say something, people follow you, some will not, just that. Who wants to follow you? "We Scottish, we wanna follow a French guy?" Eeeeeh… [makes hand gesture symbolising how strange an idea this appears to be]

> Q: So, you have felt a little also like…
>
> A: Yeah!
>
> Q: OK. can you talk about this a bit more?
>
> A: What to say… [laughs resignedly].
>
> Q: Do you feel like, hardcore racism or do you feel more like a little bit of, you know, small discrimination?
>
> A: it's small discrimination, you know… I can call that, like, day to day racism. Yeah."- Felix, Guadeloupean (French) male, early 30s, hospitality.

This dimension of the "everyday" is crucial in the long-term establishment and perpetuation of all the aforementioned subjective characteristics in this chapter. In his discussion of how the "everyday" informs wider systemic racist and racializing realities, Smith (2016: 6) suggests that racism "is enacted in and through everyday situations including, of course, the 'backstages' of formally public contexts such as workplaces and political institutions"; the comparatively insignificant and mundane behaviours, comments, passing sights, that collectively form our experience of daily life play as much of a role in reproducing the wider structure as the structure plays in producing them. The "everyday" is the glue that connects the spheres of structure and subjectivity to produce intelligible totalities - it is where structural elements such as precarity and exploitation and sociocultural factors such as hostile media and discrimination connect with the "dual frame of reference" or migrants' disorientation to collectively produce subjective characteristics such as the "socialisation of precarity" or the negative connotations associated with being a migrant. Felix's account is indicative of the cumulative effects that the combination of discrimination, exploitation, and disrespect can have on migrant workers' understandings of themselves, their condition, and migration/migrant work as wider social phenomena. In many cases, these experiences can further feelings of disempowerment *in the workplace* that are intimately connected to one's self-perception *as a migrant*.

2.3: The emergence of a politicized migrant identity

While the cumulative effects of the various intersecting oppressions migrant workers are subject to can have debilitating effects, there are instances where they can also result in a politicised, assertive adoption of the migrant identity. Chapter 1 attempted to show how, historically, groups of migrant workers in the UK have organised themselves on the basis of their marginalisation; they connected their oppression to their status as

"outsiders" and proceeded to take direct action to address the inequalities they experienced (Ramdin 2017; Virdee 2014; Rocker 2005; Sivanandan 1983). Recognising that racialisation and marginalisation were crucial components of migrant exploitability, itself an inseparable requirement of the UK economic structure, these groups connected their grievances as migrants with their grievances as workers, joining or forming trade unions and powerfully inserting themselves as subjects in the wider labour and social struggles of their eras (Virdee 2014; Gill 2013). The combined pressures experienced by migrant workers in Scotland indicate that this process of forming political identities (Bradley 2016) is underway.

"I think I would definitely say I am a migrant here, and I think that is identified by other people, not me. Because of the jobs I've done, so I would say, because I am in an environment, since I've been here, with, like, Glaswegian working class, people working in care, yes, I am a migrant. Because to them, it doesn't matter where I am from. Before they meet, some of them they don't give a fuck if I am Greek or Polish or whatever. And I think I would say I am a migrant because I don't really have the same rights! I mean, I don't know, I have to give more papers to prove myself. For example, I am trying to recognise my degree, and I cannot recognise it because I don't meet the requirements of the Scottish services, so I can't practice. I have to give like, a reflective account of everything I have done in the UK to prove I belong here and I can do skilled labour. A Scottish person that studied exactly the same thing as me never has to do that. And the fact that I have studied a field that is more social focused, social science focused, not like, not program developing or whatever, it's even worse because I have to be part of like, this culture, and this culture "others" me. And this culture, the moment they see my name, my accent, I'm not the same. So I guess I could not be a "migrant" if I came here and I didn't have to interact a lot, or like, I decided, you know, I could just go back and forth on vacation, but I am a migrant because other people identify me as a migrant"- Eleni, Greek female, mid-20s, care work.

In this excerpt, Eleni is connecting various threads that have been analysed in this and the preceding chapters. The identity of a "migrant" is a relational one: it is extrinsically imposed on migrants on the basis of what they are not (i.e. Scottish or British), and it is then used by migrants to conceptualise the totality of conditions they find themselves in. Eleni recognises the various structural and cultural barriers that create and sustain her "otherness": initially she refers to how she is being treated by Scottish people, but she goes on to cite de-skilling, in this case the non-recognition of qualifications, as an integral

component of this process. Then, she focuses on the pragmatic juridical effects of her structural and cultural othering: "I am a migrant because I don't really have the same rights". These overlapping categories that create and sustain difference and marginality mean that "the moment they see my name, my accent, I'm not the same". Eleni proceeds to add a class dimension to this understanding: she recognises that if she were a tourist, if she didn't need to work and live in this country as a precarious migrant worker, she probably wouldn't feel like a "migrant". However, the combination of her everyday experiences in labour and society have coalesced into a strong identification as a "migrant". In contrast with Felix's quote above, in Eleni's case this is not a purely negative identity: it seems more like a reflexive realisation of the results produced by the intersection of migration, economics, state policies, and culture.

> "Q: Is "migrant" a political identification for you?
>
> A: Now, yes.
>
> Q: Now, yes. OK, that is very interesting. Why now and not before?
>
> A: Because before I was in Spain, and that is my mother country.
>
> Q: So, there is a lot of people who are migrants but they don't have it as a political identification. What made you have it as a political identification?
>
> A: I started to have that identification when I noticed that I have a lot of things in common with other people from other countries that came to Scotland to work. I know that before, but I didn't thought a lot about that before I came here. When I came here, I…. just repeating the same again [laughs].
>
> Q: It's fine, don't worry.
>
> A: For me, I considered myself, "I am Spanish in Scotland, so they are exploiting Spanish people". But then, it doesn't matter if you are Spanish, you are Italian. You are migrant. That is the reason because they exploit you. That is the reason because I identify with the word "migrant". Because the reason is, you are a migrant. Is not just because you are Spanish.
>
> Q: Fair enough. And do you think that this identity can be a basis for organising?
>
> A: Yeah, of course. It is very important actually. If the people are not conscious about that, then it is more difficult to build a…. net of people, of support, of people in the same

situation. They need to be identificated with the same ideas to work together."- Manu, Spanish male, mid 20s, hospitality- Active in Clydeside IWW Migrant Workers' Network.

Like Felix and Eleni, Manu notices that the exploitation he experiences is connected to his difference. However, in this excerpt he expresses a further, more politicised analysis: he connects his experience as a migrant worker to that of other migrant workers in precarious and exploitative occupations. He recognises that "it doesn't matter if you are Spanish, you are Italian. You are a migrant". In doing so, he directly alludes to the complex of social relations that sustain migrant exploitation. Furthermore, he argues that identifying as a migrant is a crucial component of empowerment, in order to create a "net[work]… of people in the same situation".

The formation of a political subject can only proceed based on a common understanding of oppression. Far from enforcing extrinsic processes of essentialisation (as, for example, is argued in Fraser 2000), this process of subjectivation departs from an analysis of the structures that perpetuate the real, material manifestations of oppression (Young 1990; Butler 1990). In so doing, oppressed groups are empowered to directly confront both symbolic and structural sources of their oppression, rallying around "the unifying power of a word" (Bourdieu 2010: 483). Manu's reclamation of the migrant identity is therefore not a decision that conforms to the existing hegemonic discourses that essentialise migrant workers; rather, it is viewed as a fundamental first step in overturning the complex of social relations which this essentialisation participates in. It is a recognition that, in order to work towards the empowerment of migrant workers, they need to struggle *both* as workers *and* as migrants (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013).

Nevertheless, it is important to note that relatively few of the migrant workers I interviewed could be considered as having adopted a politicised migrant identity (about 8 out of 21). This adds a crucial caveat to the aforementioned discussions: all those who strongly identified with the "migrant" identity had existing histories of political participation. Some became politicised through the Occupy movements of the early 2010s; others were, and are, active trade unionists; and others had long trajectories in autonomous, grass-roots projects, both in the UK and in their countries of origin. This resonates with Smith's (2016: 6) assertion that "the ways people make sense of their lives are necessarily shaped, not just by context, but by the availability or otherwise of intellectual, cultural and political resources". The migrant workers adopting the assertive "migrant" identity were already equipped with various theoretical and political resources from their participation in social movements. Most were already actively engaged in political projects in their

countries of origin; as discussed in Section 1.2 of this chapter, they imported a set of ideas with them and then proceeded to filter and re-work them through their experiences of the socio-political realities in Scotland. This does not necessarily mean that the other interview participants consciously decided *not* to adopt a politicised migrant identity; rather, it is more an indication of the relative absence of a widely disseminated oppositional political narrative in the communities and workplaces they inhabit (Angry Workers 2020; Smith 2016), an absence which reinforces the solidarity-destroying and atomising tendencies fostered by the socialisation of precarity . Indeed, as will be extensively analysed below, all the interview participants who were asked whether they would support a trade union or similar organisation led by migrant workers, for migrant workers, replied affirmatively.

3: Subjective Understandings of Migrant Workers' Labour Experience

In contrast to the complexity surrounding how the migrant workers interviewed negotiated their status as migrants, my findings indicate that there is a large awareness of class inequality and of their disadvantaged position as workers. This is perhaps attributable to the very direct way that class inequality is experienced in precarious occupations, as analysed in Chapter 7. Hierarchical injustices, working in unsafe conditions, informality and abuse, and alienation all coalesce in producing clear, unambiguous feelings of class inequality. Regardless of how participants rationalised this inequality or their position within the wider social structure, participants nevertheless firmly referred to it and identified it as a key source of injustice.

> "This zero-hour contract, I think, is, how could I say, it's not very fair for people. It's not natural. If you hire someone, you need to give them something, to be more secure, his life and his income, so he knows what to do. Doesn't bother me that much because I have different things to go on. I am not planning to buy a house, or… I am staying there for a couple of months and I am leaving, change a job and place and everything, so doesn't bother me that much, but is not fair for the others. Is not something normal, is not something that supposed to be. You can make a day contract or whatever, but not zero hour. Is not a contract, basically. In my opinion. In a matter of human rights, I don't think it is something that should exist, zero hours contract. If you need someone, hire him! Hire him for a time, give him that time, so he knows what he is earning, more or less."- Nicole, Romanian female, mid-40s, hospitality.

In this excerpt Nicole dissects the essence of the inequality that is contained in a zero-hours contract when she says that "it's not natural" and that it's "not a contract,

basically". This is because a zero-hour contract bypasses the very foundations of mutuality that are inferred in the word "contract". Nicole talks about some of the problems outlined above; she acknowledges the detrimental effects of instability and precarity on workers' ability to organise their lives; so much so, that she considers it a "matter of human rights". The statement's seriousness is indicative of workers' understanding of the depth of the injustices they are subjected to.

> "She [the boss] always saying to us that we are not employees and boss, we are friends. But in my opinion, you can't be friends with your boss. The only thing that you can be friends in a business is when you are business partners and you are in the same position. And you can be friends because anyway, you gonna make the same amount of money, and your friend can't sack you. You have the same power. And it's even better to be a friend with your business partner because you can make more money together, being friends. But is no friendship with your employer as boss, they are already in the hierarchy; they are higher than you and she can sacked you."- Agnes, Polish female, mid-20s, hospitality.

These realisations are the same that unions and other social justice movements have been trying to disseminate for centuries: "you can't be friends with your boss". This is predicated on the fundamental awareness of inequality: "they are already in the hierarchy; they are higher than you and she can sack you". Agnes is not politically active and is not a member of a trade union, yet her experiential awareness of injustice is enough to nurture class consciousness. This is consistent with Wu and Liu's (2014: 1404) analysis of Chinese migrant workers in the UK, who argue that "there is no doubt that ethnic and social connection, which is based upon kinship, place of origin, family and dialects, remains an important element in linking Chinese migrant workers abroad […] However, as time evolves, shared sentiments among workers, including class consciousness, are increasingly becoming a demarcation in the social and cultural lives in the migrant communities". Therefore, even though migrant workers may be argued to represent a distinct class fraction (Miles 1982) due to the particularities associated with being migrants, my findings indicate that they nevertheless have a developed class consciousness as *workers*.

This was also repeatedly confirmed during my participant observation. Instances of what Berntsen (2016) terms "re-working", or small acts of resistance that do not directly challenge the employment relation but nevertheless are evidence of workers' attempts to navigate its inequality, were observed daily. For example, in every workplace I was in, other workers initially rushed to help me perform my duties in what were subtle

manifestations of solidarity based upon a common awareness of the constantly overhanging threat of our dismissal. Another example is to be found with the use of mobile phones- in one of the kitchens I worked in as a Kitchen Porter, the contract strictly stated that unauthorised use of a phone would result in instant dismissal. However, I was quickly informed by other workers that the kitchen is a separate world, with its own rules and solidarities; even though there were two cameras constantly observing us, workers had located their blind spots and we could all use them to check our phones without fear of reprisals (Fieldnotes, 7th of July 2019). Other obvious manifestations of class consciousness emerged from workers' exasperated utterances at various management actions: for example, when the management left sweets out for us in the radiator factory, Kris, a Polish worker in his 30s, told me, "here, grab one. This is what they pay us for our work" (Fieldnotes, 25th October 2018). Once again, this is indicative of an acute awareness of the inequality of the employment relation and the exploitation it creates.

While migrant workers do have a critical awareness of class-based injustice, the content of this class consciousness is related to their personal degrees of political activity. Unsurprisingly, migrant workers who were involved in political projects expressed more nuanced, politicised perspectives of class relations and class conflict. For example, the 2 members of the Angry Workers collective I interviewed were comfortable delving into deep Marxist analyses on a variety of issues beyond the strict domain of the contractual relation (Interview with Angry Workers). In contrast, other migrant workers expressed their dissatisfaction using less specific terminology. Nevertheless, the two poles can be bridged: as will be discussed below, this usually requires the involvement of unions or other social movements. Mateusz, a Polish worker in his mid-40s with no previous political activity contacted the Baker's, Food and Allied Workers Union to resist his manager's abuses of authority in his factory. After a successful union campaign, he proceeded to become a paid official and is currently engaged in helping precarious workers organise themselves all over the UK (Interview with Mateusz).

Despite the difference in degrees and content, this project's findings indicate that, in contrast with Piore's (1979) reductive arguments around migrant workers' initial blind economist outlook, there is a high degree of personal awareness of exploitation as well as acts of solidarity and organising. While migrant workers are differentially positioned in labour hierarchies and societies, and while they do have to navigate complex webs of subjective impediments to organisation that locals don't have to deal with, it is wrong to assume that their degrees of class consciousness are somehow diluted. In some cases, it

could be argued that migrant workers' differential experiences in the Scottish labour market may, in fact, make the underlying exploitative nature of their labour relations more apparent to them than it may be for 'local' workers, whose investment other hegemonic ideological constructs (such national belonging or Whiteness) may obscure or dilute this awareness. Migrant workers, like all workers, are reflexively aware of the socioeconomic landscape they inhabit; their actions, and in-actions, are results of agentic decisions made in accordance with the context that surrounds them and the opportunities, or lack thereof, that are available.

Conclusion

Migrant subjectivities are complex, contradictory and heterogenous. Despite this, migration scholars and social movements have identified some basic characteristics that stem from the experience of migration which are commonly shared amongst migrant workers. My findings align with other existing studies to indicate that subjective features such as an initial economistic outlook, disorientation, the dual frame of reference, and feelings of disempowerment are prevalent traits in migrant workers in Scotland. However, they are not enough to, by themselves, be classed as the main barriers preventing these groups from organising against exploitation. Contrary to Piore's (1979) strict, linear understandings of how migrant workers become socially engaged in their new countries, my findings suggest that the "dual frame of reference" works both ways and can sometimes foster political action rather than exclusively operate to stifle it. Nevertheless, the majority of my interview and participant observation findings indicate that these subjective factors do play a significant role in fostering feelings of disempowerment, which, when combined with a variety of other elements such as the socialisation of precarity, the agency arena, and the wider marginalisation migrants experience, become further exacerbated.

The second component of my research into migrant subjectivities focused on how migrant workers in Scotland experience and interpret their lived realities as migrants. I wanted to examine whether the emergence of a politicised migrant identity could be detected. My findings suggest that migrant workers' subjective attitudes and understandings towards their migration are extremely heterogenous and contradictory. For example, migrant workers may have a strong class analysis on the exploitation they experience, but may nevertheless be fully invested participants in the narratives that make up Britain's conception of the "Community of Value" (Anderson 2013), thereby accepting

and reproducing the mystification of the conditions that enable that exploitation. Some might try to empower themselves by investing in the development of strong personal traits; others feel that their status as migrants essentially disempowers them relative to their peers. All subjective characteristics are mediated by the available contestational resources in migrants' workplaces and communities, their everyday experiences playing a foundational formative role in developing their understandings and framings of their lives as migrants. It is no surprise, then, that in the absence of strong and socially embedded migrant workers' movements, the only migrant workers expressing a politicised migrant identity are those already politicised and active in such movements. It is therefore possible to argue that, in contrast with previous historical epochs of migrant struggle, and despite sustained attacks on migrant workers by the government, employers, and the far right, a politicised migrant identity is *not* strongly developing in Scotland. However, this can swiftly change depending on (inter)national events and on the actions of local social movements.

Despite the significant contradictions and inconsistencies in how different migrant workers viewed their migration experience, they presented a much more uniform approach to their status as workers. Borne out of an experiential reflection on labour inequality, all the migrant workers interviewed were acutely aware of the hierarchical difference between them and their employers. This class consciousness was also manifested in my everyday experiences working in precarious occupations, with many instances of "re-working" attesting to its existence. Once again, however, the content of this class consciousness was directly related to people's wider politicisation. Nevertheless, the interviews and participant observation strongly problematise the rigid teleology found in Piore (1979), where migrant workers are depicted as the ultimate expression of *Homo Economicus*. While it is true that many have an economistic outlook (especially in the first stages of their migration), it is also true that they are critically aware of the exploitation they experience and operate agentically within the confines of the socioeconomic system they are in.

These conclusions mean that subjective traits connected to migration are not enough to explain the relative lack of migrant workers' mobilisations. Indeed, those migrant workers who had experiences with social movements tended to present more politicised accounts of both migration and class relations. While the subjective factors analysed in this chapter play a significant role in shaping people's mentalities and actions, more attention needs to be focused on the lack of widely-available and accessible

contestational narratives and organisations in Scotland aiming to empower migrant workers. This issue will be extensively discussed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 9: Workplace relationships and precarious solidarities

Introduction

The multiple intersecting subjective and structural factors that collectively permeate and influence migrant workers' experiences in precarious occupations analysed in the previous chapters are also reflected in workers' interpersonal relationships within the workplace. While a plethora of sources exist that tackle different aspects of migrant workers' experiences in the workplace, comparatively few writers have delved into precarious occupations to document and analyse the conditions therein (Bloodworth 2019; Alberti 2014; Holmes 2013). Even fewer have done so with the explicit purpose of examining and uncovering the hidden potentialities of workers' power, a question which necessarily requires an analytical consideration of workers' daily relationships to each other (Angry Workers 2020). However, understanding workers' interrelationships is a crucial step towards understanding issues such as workers' power, barriers to union organisation and barriers to empowerment in general.

Drawing on some fundamental concepts introduced in the previous chapters such as the socialisation of precarity and the agency arena, this chapter will focus on interrelationships in precarious occupations in Scotland. It will do so by elaborating three main themes. The first section will examine the relationships between different migrant workers, including between those in different rungs of the labour hierarchy. The second section will examine relationships between migrant workers and non-migrant workers, focusing on instances of discrimination. The third will highlight the various forms that solidarity assumes in such workplaces, illustrating how, in the face of overwhelming pressures towards individualisation (Berrardi 2017; Baumann 2001), workers still retain instincts of mutual aid. However, my findings indicate that a major barrier that prevents these instincts from being oriented towards more structural, class-based goals is precisely the individualising nature of precarious labour, which, when combined with the added pressures of being a migrant worker, significantly disrupts the requisite development of bonds of trust and mutuality. Furthermore, in the rare cases that these bonds can develop, the socialisation of precarity was found to be overwhelming, with emergent solidarities usually being themselves precarious and unstable.

1: Relationships between migrant workers

1.1: The Socialisation of Precarity: Stress and Isolation

The socialisation of precarity was extensively analysed in Chapter 6. Its impacts in terms of workers' interrelationships stem from the overarching knowledge of everyone's replaceability (Berrardi 2017); *contractual precarity thereby results in interrelational precarity*, as people are rarely comfortable investing in the development of strong bonds with others who probably will not be there in a few months. The language barrier in workplaces that employ different groups of migrant workers further exacerbates this tension (Angry Workers 2020; Fieldnotes, 28 November 2018). Finally, the organisation of labour is another barrier to workers' communication: the strict compartmentalisation of tasks prevalent in many workplaces prevents close association between workers. In some jobs this is further enforced by managers preventing workers from speaking to each other in the name of "productivity" (as reported to me in interviews with Suzan and with Lois). Everyone has a specific task to do, and usually this task must be done within a very strict timeframe. This pressure is combined with the overhanging threat of dismissal due to contractual precarity to compel workers to overexert themselves as much as possible, thereby foreclosing all avenues towards any interactions not strictly related to getting the job done.

This was most clearly experienced in my time conducting covert participant observation in warehouses and the logistics sector. As I mentioned above, the radiator factory had a relatively supportive culture; nevertheless, every worker was positioned in a specific sector of the production process that was spatially distant from other workers (Fieldnotes, 23 October 2018). In the canteen, which provided the only real opportunities for communication, the socialisation of precarity was still operative: most of the time, everyone was focused on their phones, quietly eating without saying much to each other, the TV constantly blasting inane talk shows. The smoking shelter was not much better: while there was some conversation, it was mostly between older Glaswegian workers who had been there for years, with migrant workers either listening idly or, more frequently, checking their phones (Fieldnotes, 30 October 2018). Based on my experiences, I would say that this is a relatively positive environment compared with most factory settings. Below is an example of the most alienating conditions I encountered during this research:

"There are signs everywhere about 'productivity' and 'keeping costumers happy'. Some simple mistakes, such as momentarily placing a crate on the floor, can lead to instant dismissal. In general, many things could lead to instant dismissal. I was placed on a production line in the packing area, working with the finished product (salmon fillets). The socialisation of precarity is omnipresent- in more than eight hours of work, I never saw

While the fish factory is an example of some of the most raw and unforgiving conditions that one can encounter in terms of alienation between workers, similar environments are by no means exclusive to this workplace. For example, the logistics warehouse I worked in achieved an equally penetrative diffusion of individualisation while at the same time maintaining a veneer of solidarity and care.

"The job is developing uneventfully due to its intensity and atomised nature. You are alone with your handheld scanner, running the aisles or stacking shelves, and there is almost never enough time to exchange words with others. Even the breaks are completely atomised- you only get 15 minutes of break every 4 hours and you can take them whenever you want, essentially ensuring that people are spread out and kept separated. There are cameras everywhere except in the chiller, which enforces the perception that you are constantly watched. Alongside the requirements to maintain your 'pick-rates' from your machine and the constant atomisation which combine to make you feel as if you are trapped in a virtual reality videogame, you are pushed to work ever harder. I found myself getting stressed about my performance without anybody having told me anything bad about it, and without even knowing what my pick-rate is (that is another factor that maintains the anxiety to perform: the pick-rates are only visible to the managers).

Essentially, the system is perfected to the extent that it does not require coercion or mistreatment by the managers. You are already pushed into this position because of your class or migrant status, and you want to maintain a job which is in a clean environment with comparatively fewer stressors than other similar occupations. The managers are always polite to you, the walls are covered with 'motivational' slogans such as 'Customer Obsession' or 'Never be afraid to ask'; however, you are compelled by the atomization, precarity, and strict mechanical regimentation to continually over-exert yourself. Of course, this leaves no time or energy to care about your co-workers. Most of us are hired for the holiday period, and we know that we will be lucky to have a job after that. We have two objectives: to make as much money as possible, and to try to secure the job."
Fieldnotes, 30 December, 2018. Logistics Warehouse.

While the wider organisation of labour in warehouse settings results in very specific, identifiable barriers to workers' socialising with one another, the hospitality industry presents a different facet of the socialisation of precarity. Here, workers are necessarily in

close proximity to one another, and have to collaborate intimately in order to perform their duties. Despite this, the intensity of the jobs combined with the precarious contractual relation results in the constant turnover of a considerable section of the workforce. Either workers are fired for underperforming or they leave by themselves once the first opportunity presents itself. Those that remain either rise up the occupational hierarchy and assume some degree of authority over the newcomers or they accept the current labour regime in the hopes that they eventually *will* rise up the ladder.

My observations while working in the kitchen of a large Mediterranean restaurant in Glasgow further illustrate the above conclusions. The kitchen was overwhelmingly staffed by Albanian workers: all of them had arrived at Scotland, and to this job specifically, through familial connections with one of the head chefs who was also Albanian but had grown up in Glasgow and therefore had excellent English skills and a recognised college degree. Between them I observed an intricate sociality based on ethnic and familial ties which will be further analysed below. The comfort arising from their intimate knowledge of each other resulted in a more inclusive and less alienating workplace; however, our contractual precarity was always a barrier between us. Furthermore, the shared mentality of valorising overwork and internalising the "good worker" discourse seemed to unite long-timers on the basis of their suffering, not on the basis of their collective bonds and power to overcome this suffering: in essence, even sociability takes an individualised form. This was most clearly expressed in my last day at that workplace:

"This was my last day in work, another 14.5- hour shift. One of the most striking elements of the day was that there was barely any reference made to the fact that this would be probably the last time they saw me. The socialisation of precarity, the indeterminacy of social bonds forged in work which make it so hard to build solidarity have become so deeply engrained that it is just a part of life to see someone leave. There is a specific culture amongst the people who have been here a long time. This culture is one of the "survivor", who has incorporated the habitus of overwork to the fullest in their personality- references made to people being "one of us" or "this is [name of company], get used to it", or semi-sarcastic comments along the lines of "aaah, I love [name of company], this would only happen here", attest to habitus being virtue made of necessity, and to an attachment to each other and to the place forged through the necessity of working there but also through the reality of having found a stable, relatively secure job and then having internalised and analysed its difficulties as unavoidable and preferential to the alternatives. Therefore, when they found out that I was leaving, there was almost no reaction other than the acknowledgment of my action as a

rational act by a worker looking to improve his situation. They are used to people leaving and they know that someone else will come to work as KP." Fieldnotes, 28th July 2019. Mediterranean Restaurant.

Figure 3: Rota for one of my first weeks in the Mediterranean restaurant. The exertion required of workers is visible in the length and organisation of the shifts. Some people have back-to-back 13-hour shifts; others have 14.5-hour shifts. These are the conditions that breed the socialisation of precarity.

1.2 The Socialisation of Precarity, Competition and Conflict.

The ways that fostering insecurity benefits employers, and the resultant socialising processes, were analysed in Chapter 6. This socialisation is mostly directed inwards, towards the subject, gradually sculpting comportments, attitudes and behaviours mediated by the experiences of precarity and migration. Migrant workers in precarious occupations are thus structurally compelled to adopt and perform "good worker" attitudes, indirectly (but consciously and constantly) competing for the limited amount of secure jobs available in a market intentionally oversaturated with de-skilled and insecure workers. This form of socialisation, rupturing organic and/or class bonds of solidarity, is liable to also turn outwards; the pent-up frustration, anxiety and competitive strain are difficult to contain under conditions of stress, giving rise to conflicts in the place of solidarity.

"There were certain jobs on that table, and they would ask us at the end, every time we would do 100 books or whatever- 100 of something- to put a piece of paper with our name on it and stack it all together. By the end of the shift there was this anxiety that you needed

to have many packages done under your name, to prove you are a "good worker", working sufficiently in a fast-paced environment and everything. There was this indirect competition, who would do the most packages."- Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality/ freelance journalist [speaking about the conditions in a print factory].

Primo Levi's "Grey Zone" is a useful conceptual tool to begin understanding these conflicts. Obviously, one cannot fathom comparing a precarious workplace to the Nazi concentration camps; however, his analysis is relevant insofar as it describes a situation where "survival imperatives overcome human decency as inmates jockey desperately for a shred of advantage within camp hierarchies, striving to live just a little bit longer" (Bourgeois and Schonberg 2009: 19). Levi's "Grey Zone" is one where morality and solidarities are eroded due to the immediacy of survival in a structure which is designed to foster and exacerbate their mutual destruction. My findings suggest that this is the case with precarious occupations, although to a much smaller extent: competition is indirect, but it is nevertheless constant. I wish to once again stress that I am by no means comparing precarious labour to the conditions of concentration camps; I am simply using this concept in order to illustrate a social context which fosters mentalities where one's personal survival is consistently juxtaposed to the collective interests of the group they are a part of. Every single worker knows that there are two possible outcomes for the months ahead: either they will be made permanent, or they will be fired. To make matters worse, their sacking does not necessarily have to stem from unsatisfactory productivity: they could simply be made redundant due to having completed the work they were required for. Rather than investing in developing bonds of trust with one's co-workers, it seems wiser to simply work as hard as possible and strive for a permanent contract, which then enables a firm grounding in the labour hierarchy. One's subjectivity and habitus in work are thereby fully individualised.

Concurrently with these overarching pressures towards individualisation, workers must also face the contradictory fact of the interdependence of their labour functions. Contractual precarity results in labour regimes that are set up in such a way that a workers' personal aspirations directly contradict the interests of workers in general. Excluding intensely atomising jobs such as courier driving (Bloodworth 2019; Interview with Alexander), most occupations require some form of coordination between workers. This fact has been extensively drawn upon by revolutionary theories of working class emancipation such as Marxism and anarchosyndicalism which heavily invested in the belief that workers' proximity and interdependence can lead to feelings of mutuality,

solidarity, and common struggle. However, in the modern workplace, absent collective agreements and with intensely precarious contractual relations, this interdependence conflicts with the fact that workers are assessed and managed individually, their labour security constantly hanging by a thread (Standing 2010). For example, in the logistics warehouse, we were assessed individually based on how many items we "picked" per minute or how many we stacked in the shelves for others to later pick. One very efficient way of increasing our "pick rate" was to stack the shelves as quickly as possible, without really caring about placing everything in the correct location- after all, someone else would have to find the items. However, this created enormous problems for that "someone else", because they would have to significantly damage their "pick rate" by searching for items incorrectly positioned by another worker (Fieldnotes, 12 December 2018- 3 January 2019).

A similar contradiction was observed in hospitality: the precarious waiters of the Mediterranean restaurant were in a hurry to serve customers. Their anxiety resulted in them carelessly throwing all the leftovers, together with dirty plates and cutlery, on a tray and shipping it down to the kitchen where I was supposed to put everything in the washing machine. However, I couldn't simply throw everything in the machine: it would jam. I had to carefully separate the plates from the big chunks of leftover food and separate the cutlery from everything else because they were washed separately. In busy periods these tasks significantly slowed me down, with the frenetic fear of underperforming leading to deep cuts, burns and bruises.

Figure 4: Burn

To make matters worse, this situation would have a domino effect over the entire kitchen, since I was not only responsible for washing plates but also pots, pans, and other cooking utensils. These were left in a different sink, and I would have to run between sinks to complete everything; if I didn't find time to wash a necessary pot or pan, the chef would be late in cooking the food, which would then also reflect badly on the waiter. Sometimes the entire labour process would come to a standstill and would damage everybody's

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prospects of job security, simply because some individuals felt compelled to put their short-term security over our collective interests. Of course, all this would have been easily avoided had the boss employed more workers; however, the socialisation of precarity was key to directing our energies towards personal competition and overexertion instead of towards finding collective solutions to our problems (Fieldnotes, 6-28 July 2019).

These ceaseless, overlapping and cross-pollinating pressures may erupt in moments of overt hostility towards other workers. My interview participants spoke of several instances of conflict with other workers, all underpinned by the environment fostered by the employment relation. These conflicts are of a highly variable nature and are also largely impacted by workers' personalities, positions in the hierarchy, etc. However, the impact of precarity is central: for example, Agnes spoke of a worker from Bangladesh who, due to her intensely precarious position as a deportable worker, often sided with the boss and developed what she termed "Stockholm syndrome", leading to her experiencing resentment and isolation from other workers (Interview with Agnes); Felix was constantly aggrieved by his relationships with his co-workers, who he felt were disrespectful and benefited from preferential treatment (Interview with Felix); and the Angry Workers (2020) write about the lack of trust and blame-game taking place between groups of migrant workers in precarious warehouses in London. These incidents further suggest that, in the "grey zone" of precarious employment, the shared experience of migration on its own is not enough to counteract the ensemble of structural and subjective pressures that stifle solidarity and alienate workers from each other.

"A: I had unimaginable, unimaginable difficulties in the hotel. Looking back, I wonder how I survived, since I now have psychological problems […] now I was there for a long time, many months, and I found girls that were looking for jobs and I was helping them get the job through a connection. It was bad luck. They were 3 girls. After a month they were all against me and they were betraying me to the manager. They were Romanian. And they started causing trouble until…. Basically, I entered the job with a manager I knew, and she was a proper and good person, so at some point when this story was happening she came to me and said: "look, you are my friend"- this is a small girl, 10 years difference between us- she told me "I admire you, I like how you work and all that, but I want to tell you that this and this is happening. You try to help them but you know how people are, you know how Romanians are, you know what happens and this is what is happening, and you are lucky that I love you and I appreciate you, but you should not do these things and you could lose your job". I was shocked. How is it possible? But I knew that she was not lying, because

she was telling me things that I had myself said. So that is how a war began."- Suzan, Romanian female, late 40s, hospitality and logistics [translation mine]

1.3: Hierarchies, Ethnic Networks and Abuse of Authority

Despite the various structural barriers to personal advancement and security in precarious occupations, some migrant workers manage to rise up the ranks and become managers, supervisors, and team leaders (Vasey 2017; Parutis 2014). In order to do so, these individuals usually have to demonstrate their long-term commitment to the values that comprise the "good worker" schema (Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015): they have to be demonstrably "flexible", eager to accept the roles they are allocated in, and perform their willingness to engage in hard work. Although their privilege relative to other migrant workers is not enough to secure substantial power and control over their labour experience, it is enough to exert various levels of coercion on those immediately below them. These migrant workers thereby perform a "buffering role" in the labour hierarchy (Vasey 2017), standing between the mass of the workers and the- usually ethnic British-levels of the upper management.

My findings indicate that, in environments thoroughly saturated by competitiveness and the individualisation of the socialisation of precarity, these minor increases in the authority of individual migrant workers are more likely to lead to a fortification of the existing labour regimes' dominance, rather than to enhanced power in the hands of the migrant workforce. This is consistent with Virdee and Grint's (1994) argument that the inter-ethnic hierarchical differences that exist between and within minorities mean that ethnicity-based organisations and affinities cannot be substitutes for class-based solidarity. This conclusion is further echoed by the Angry Workers collective (2020) in their discussion of "organic leaders". In an influential book discussing union strategies, McAlevey (2016) asserts that unions need to locate, train, and work through "organic leaders" in migrant and marginalised communities and workplaces in order to achieve substantial union participation. However, the Angry Workers collective write that, in their six-year trajectory of organising in London warehouses, "these people tend to be the ones that are bought off by management and the sex/race/class hierarchies tend to be reproduced in their elevated role as shop-floor union organiser" (2020: 111). This does not mean that individuals with relatively more resources will exclusively function to the detriment of the interests of other migrant workers. It does however mean that the assumption of authority

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in contexts structured by intense individualisation and precarity gives rise to complex and contradictory actions and interests.

The relationships between the group of ethnic Albanians working in the kitchen of the Mediterranean restaurant where I was employed as a kitchen porter illustrate this uneasy symbiosis of support and exploitation. Every Albanian in the kitchen had secured this job through their familial connections to the family of one of the head chefs who, for the purposes of anonymity, will be referred to as Drago. Some were originally from Albania, others from Macedonia, and others from Greece. Drago had significant resources of symbolic and structural capital: he had arrived in Glasgow as a child, and therefore had excellent command of the English language; he had finished college and secured a diploma as a chef which is fully recognised in the UK, thereby avoiding the process of de-skilling; he had fully secure citizenship status; and, most importantly, he had worked for the same employer for more than 10 years, gradually rising up the occupational hierarchy and assuming an authority that was only second to that of the owner. In fact, he was the most important piece of the company's infrastructure: a worker, a manager, a head chef and an administrator, Drago jumped between the various restaurant branches, organised every kitchen worker's rota, and was the quintessential authority of our labour experience. He was the god of the kitchens and hiring and firing were almost exclusively left to his authority (Fieldnotes, 6- 28th July 2019).

"This is perhaps the only full day that I will work alongside Drago, and I pay close attention to the interactions that unfold. The first thing I notice is that he runs a tight ship, but with compassion and a desire to make everything easier and more efficient. For example, he is the only head chef I have ever seen who drops on his knees to clean the floor. When he isn't working, he cleans around him to make it a better environment to work in. He tells me sometimes "please, Panos, can you brush here, can you mop here when you get a minute", but always with respect and never as an order. I notice that John, another Albanian who is already an extremely fast worker, works even harder and faster when he is around Drago- this could either be a desire to impress him so he benefits from preferential treatment regarding his aspirations of upward mobility, a sense of fear that he has to perform for his 'benefactor', a competitive/performative depiction of the 'good worker' habitus, or a combination of all these. Whatever it is, the reality is that the kitchen does works better with Drago than with anyone else. Everything is smooth, there is no stress, and we all do our best. I even find myself working harder and trying to impress him, simply out of respect that he partakes so many of the kitchen's activities when he could

> have a completely different attitude."- Fieldnotes, 24th of June 2019, Mediterranean
> Restaurant.

Drago generally behaved in a supportive fashion towards the workers beneath him. Having risen up the labour hierarchy himself through hard work, he fully thought of himself as a "good worker" and respected those who he thought also conformed to these standards. With the other Albanians he had deeper and more intimate relations than with the rest of us, permeated by a sort of supportive paternalism founded upon his authority and various forms of capital. For example, he would support Albanian newcomers to Scotland in all the stages of their migration experience: he would pick people up from the airport, help them get their housing and migration status sorted, and, obviously, find them a job. However, the support was not unidirectional: these migrant workers, who often spoke very little English, were largely dependent on him in various ways and repaid this indebtedness whenever it was required. For example, after working a gruelling 8-hour shift, a young Greek-Albanian worker told me that he was going to Drago's house to help him paint the walls for free. This would be understandable amongst friends, but the relationship seemed more transactional. These workers, faithful to their ethnic ties and thankful for Drago's support, reciprocated by working 14.5 and, occasionally, even 16-hour shifts and making themselves available to Drago for everything he required. Essentially, despite his good intentions, Drago had succeeded in using his authority to create a highly dependent, precarious, and loyal migrant workforce capable of working in gruelling paces for the profits of the Mediterranean restaurant.

> "At some point later on in the night, when only the two of us had remained (John had been
> sent home) George, the Scottish head chef, speaks to me about his concerns with Drago.
> "The guys are indebted to him for getting them the jobs, and he exploits them". I ask him
> whether he is certain of this and he responds that he is." Fieldnotes, 22nd of June 2019,
> Mediterranean Restaurant.

The final conversation I had before leaving that restaurant sheds further light to the complexity between the relationships of paternalism, solidarity, and exploitation that may emerge between migrant workers of different hierarchical positions in precarious occupations. While helping migrant workers in various, extremely important ways, Drago is ultimately the main beneficiary of these relationships; far from simply aiding his position in the hierarchy, it emerges that his privileges inherently depend on the disempowerment of his co-ethnic inferiors. What follows was revealed to me by the

Scottish head chef, George, who was probably only comfortable in opening up in this manner because he knew that I would never enter the kitchen again:

"There is a box where all the workers' amalgamated tips are kept. This box includes tips from other restaurants owned by the same owner (around 5 or 6 in Glasgow). These are meant to be shared amongst everyone in the business, according to how the manager chooses to distribute it (which is problematic in itself because this decision can be completely arbitrary: for example, I get £10-15 of tips a week whereas the waiters get a lot more, so we again have indications of preferential treatment). Every worker immediately pays (loses) £1.5 a day for the food that they consume in the business, which I was not aware of. Indeed, many times I didn't eat anything due to the work and the stress. Had I known that I was paying for it, I would have made a point to eat.

However, the situation gets much worse. When we were discussing all these petty injustices, I told George that he could make the situation better if he brings his union in (he is a member of a union for chefs). Despite being high in the hierarchy, he also experiences the difficulties of the labour-intensive job: for example, he was always complaining about back pains. George was completely honest and open with me, and he told me "look, for the KPs and the kitchen staff the situation is bad, but for me and Drago it is very good. The boss pays us half our wage in the bank, and half of it in an envelope. The cash from this envelope come out of your tips!". This means that our hard-earned tips are used as an untaxed, under-the-table payment to the two head chefs, allowing them to make hundreds of extra pounds a month.

This is extremely exploitative for many reasons, but what is most striking is that the business takes the people that are the top in the hierarchy to its side by creating a division between them and the other workers through the provision of such an immense privilege. The chefs are constantly aware that their privilege depends on stealing the hard-earned tips of all the other workers in the business. This is a prime example of how divisions are created and manipulated by bosses and the management to further workers exploitation while shoring up their own privileges. Most importantly, Drago, the great benefactor of his fellow Albanians, is complicit in this! It begins to look more like a pyramid scheme than any type of normal relationship. It is in his direct interest to bring in workers who are loyal to him and will not leave, because this guarantees more tips which then come to his pocket in the form of untaxed wages. This obviously has grave implications for solidarity, and it resembles more closely a dystopian pecking order where each superior exploits their inferiors ad infinitum."- Fieldnotes, 28th July 2019. Mediterranean Restaurant.

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These complex structural, subjective and interpersonal relationships in the restaurant exemplify the problems of establishing solidarity across unequal class and authority positions. Certainly, many relations between migrant workers in management and their subordinates are more clear-cut: for example, Eva thinks that the manager of her hotel treats her preferentially precisely out of a sense of solidarity towards another migrant (Interview with Eva). In stark contrast, Anna, a Black Muslim woman from Guadeloupe, experienced intense, overt racism from her white, South African manager in a Scottish hotel, exemplifying claims found in McDowell (2008) and Young (1990) who argue that discrimination can be practiced within social groupings on the basis of various other markers of difference. Their shared status as migrants did not prevent her racist manager of using both his racial and hierarchical privilege to deeply impact Anna's professional and psychical life (Interview with Anna). My findings thereby indicate that solidarity between migrant workers is by no means guaranteed; crucially, it emerges that, for many migrant workers in positions of relative authority, class and positional differentiations might be more important in the formation of subjective affinities than a common experience of migration.

2: Relationships between migrant and white Scottish workers

As migrant workers navigate the precarious landscape of employment and society, they inevitably encounter white Scottish workers. Racism and discrimination in Scotland are increasingly the subject of academic scrutiny (see Davidson, Linpaa, McBride and Virdee 2018). However, as far as I am aware, not many studies have been conducted researching their emergence in precarious workplaces; this is perhaps symptomatic of the general distance between academia and the daily realities of less privileged social groups. Nevertheless a study investigating this issue as it relates to the experiences of BME women found that "around three-quarters (72 per cent) of survey respondents reported that they had experienced racism, discrimination, racial prejudice and/or bias in the workplace" (Close the Gap 2019). My findings concur with this study in indicating the existence of multiple forms of discrimination and marginalisation of migrant workers in the workplace, ranging from subtle exclusion to overt racist abuse.

Since Scotland has a long history of migration (Virdee 2014), it is important to clarify why I am using the term "white Scottish". I intend to encapsulate a specific socioeconomic and cultural positionality-, one that does not have a recent experience of migration, speaks the language with fluency and ownership incorporating all the idioms and other signs of full cultural integration, is fully immersed in what is considered

'Scottish culture', and is a firm participant in the dominant conception of those making up Scotland's "community of value" (Anderson 2013). Of course, Scotland still experiences instances of anti-Catholic and anti-Irish discrimination (Walls and Williams 2003), and the 'white' Scottish are still internally divided by the issue of Scottish independence and by class, gender, sexuality, and various other markers of difference; however, they have the privilege of negotiating these differences through a shared entitlement to the tools of common discourse and participation as citizens, stemming from their incorporation in Scotland's community of value. As will be shown, migrant workers experience discrimination that is precisely founded on their perceived distance from these aforementioned characteristics. This adds a further layer of complexity to the already established conclusions: simply put, if migration *on its own* is not enough to establish affinity between workers, *then neither is class*.

Habitus and cultural performativity play a crucial role in fortifying the disconnection between migrant and local workers. Bauder (2006: 48) writes that "immigrants who enter an unfamiliar habitual terrain will be denied full and equal participation in the social and economic game until they either assimilate and learn the rules or the rules are re-written". These "rules" involve a multiplicity of actions and comportments: from accents, to words used, even to body posture. For example, in the radiator factory, I was caught by another Scottish worker resting with my hands on my hips, a common action for men in Greece; he promptly informed me that, in Glasgow, this posture is considered a marker of femininity, and that I needed to "lose it" if I were to be accepted in this hyper-masculine setting (Fieldnotes, 25th October 2018). All these markers of "embodied cultural capital" (Bauder 2006) significantly impact the ways that migrant workers navigate a socioeconomic environment in which they have already been marginalised and essentialised.

My interview participants expressed a variety of experiences of exclusion and discrimination in relation to white Scottish workers. Frequently, the cultural and linguistic distance between workers is enough to hinder their communication and connection. This is expressed by Manu through two main factors: the first is that, even if they speak English, immigrants are not acquainted with Scottish expressions. The second is that locals feel that they have to take extra care in expressing themselves to migrant workers, which is perceived as destroying the spontaneity and carelessness that is required to develop more intimate personal connections: "they must repeat, speak slowly, and that is not funny".

"Q: So, it's only you and the other person who is a migrant and the rest are Scottish?

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A: Yeah.

Q: Have you noticed any difference in how are they treated, what they do, their responsibilities?

A: mmmm… there is like, the treat is good in general, and there is sometimes, little difference between the Scottish people and we, because they try to check if we are doing right our work more than for the other people. Just a little more. But is not problematic, is not a big difference like, "you are racist". Just maybe, because for example I cannot speak English very well, and sometimes there are mistakes because I understood something wrong. I don't think that is racism.

Q: No worries, I'm just asking to find out generally the situation. So how is the relationship between the Scottish and you guys?

A: It is good. The only problem is that they don't talk standard English. They talk more between them than between us, within us. Because we try to talk with them, they must repeat, speak slowly, and that is not funny. They do that, but not too much." Manu, Spanish male, mid-20s, hospitality. Member of Clydeside IWW Migrant Workers Network.

While Manu was not seriously impacted by this awareness of ethnic and cultural difference, some interview participants recounted more complex and troubling experiences.

"A: Healthcare assistants, usually, the moment I open my mouth, I'm Polish and I'm there to take their job. And they ask me shit like, "where are you from, is your family here, do you claim benefits"?

Q: They asked you things like that?

A: Yeah of course, of course they ask you things like that.

Q: So, all the stereotypes that we have seen from the Sun, we are expressing them to you…

A: Yeah, it doesn't matter. The moment I say that I am Greek, it's a bit better, because like, people go for a wee holiday in Greece. […] A good example of this is when I worked for the [job], I had the support, and we were like 3 people in one support. Two 50- plus old people from Paisley, Glasgow and me. And we were talking, and I said, "I live in Ibrox". And I said, "I want to move out but I still want to stay in Cessnock", and they said, "No, no, don't stay in Cessnock". And I said, "why not", and they said, "you know, it's not

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really safe there". And I was like, "you talk about Rangers [fans], right?", and they are like "no, no, there is lots of ethnic people there". And I'm like… You do understand I am "ethnic"? I am not Scottish, and you know, I'll never be Scottish. And they're like "no, you're European and you're from Greece, so you are not the same". And for me that really hurt me, because I don't know, at the same time they accepted me but in a really weird way.

Q: In a really exclusionary way…

A: Yeah, like fuck, what should I say? And that happens all the time. I was in the NHS, and I speak, they see my badge, and they are like "what's your name", I say my name, and "where are you from", and I'm like, "I'm from Greece", "AH! Alright! I thought you're Polish and I don't want to work with Polish people". – Eleni, Greek female, mid-20s, care sector.
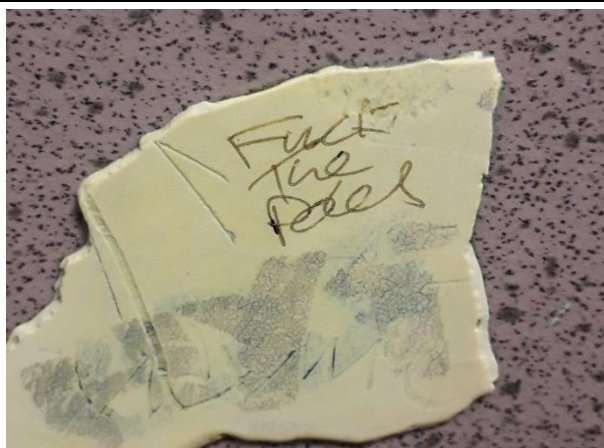
Figure 5:"Fuck the Poles" etched into the bathroom of a fish product manufacturer in Glasgow. Discrimination is an everyday occurrence, quietly present in most precarious workplaces.

In the above excerpt, Eleni recalls being immediately targeted with media-induced stereotypes and fears relating to locals' perception of migrants as competitors over perceived scarce resources such as benefits and jobs. This fits squarely with Miles' (1982) argument that this perception is an important factor that sustains working-class racism. Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy (2012: 686) write that "although East European migration to the UK is a relatively recent phenomenon, the tabloids' reporting on it makes use of extant cultural tropes and racialized plotlines from previous migrations", building on existing racist and discriminatory cultural foundations and adapting them to the present conjuncture. In this complex process of essentialisation, white European migrants' shared

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whiteness is further qualified by characteristics extrinsically ascribed to specific groups of migrants, with some being perceived as more desirable than others (Anderson 2013; Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy 2012). Eleni experienced this first-hand: initially the victim of aggression because of her perceived Polishness, she was then brought back into the "community of value" through her Greekness, established in stark contrast to the non-European "ethnic people". Indeed, Anderson (2013: 45) writes that "the whiteness of Eastern European is racialized: it is not a simple marker of privilege but revealed as contested and unstable, unsettling and subject to internal hierarchies". The extent to which this racialisation has become part of everyday life and common parlance is exhibited by the ease with which Eleni's co-workers said that they "don't want to work with Polish people". These mentalities are so deep that some workers prefer to hide their true origin in order to avoid discrimination from their colleagues, as Eva attests:

> "Q: I am finished with the interview. Do you want to add something else?
>
> A: Maybe, I was just thinking, it also depends what kind of immigrant you are. Because, for example, I have noticed that if you are Italian, you know, I was born in Moldova and I was raised in Italy and I speak Italian… Moldova isn't really my country, so when they ask me, "where are you from", I just say Italy in general. It depends on the purpose, but usually people ask me just out of interest, and I tell them Italy. And of course, there is a difference. If you are from Italy, they will treat you much, much better. Just because it is a country that, you know, they like and, whereas if I said "Moldova", or "East of Europe", Poland for example, no. Don't say that. It is better to say Italy. And I know it is a bit bad to not recognise my country, but I was just trying to say Italy, just because I know that Moldova is not an advantage. I have to do it, because yeah… [laughs]
>
> Q: Have you ever had the experience of saying you are Moldovan and seeing a negative reaction? Or is it just instinct?
>
> A: People don't even know where the country is! So, they are like "wow, where is that"? That is just the reaction I get. If you say you are from Italy, they will probably love you! [laughs] [….] Italian, pizza pasta, whatever [laughs]. Very stupid. They don't know what Italy really is. For example, they asked me "why did you leave the country". They have no idea what is going on in that country, they just think that is food and beaches, they don't know that there is an economic crisis. I think this is why they don't really discriminate Italians, because they don't realise that Italians are coming here because their country is… is poor.

Q: So, you think that if they realised it, it would be different? They would be negative towards Italians?

A: Yeah, because the kind of stereotype they have when they think about Italy is about a very rich country. If they knew that it isn't, um, yeah. They will probably be like, "you are coming here to steal our jobs". they think that we are coming here as tourists, basically, to get more experience, to travel, etc." - Eva, Moldovan female, early 20s, hospitality.

In the above excerpt Eva encapsulates the aforementioned analyses quite succinctly: if a migrant worker is thinking about identifying themselves as Eastern European, "don't say that. It is better to say Italy". This perception is premised on ideas inculcated by popular culture and the tabloid press, characterised by the contradiction in the treatment of different groups of migrant workers. Eastern Europeans are strongly stereotyped in British press, whereas other European ethnicities are not (Fox, Moroşanu and Szilassy 2012). Nevertheless, this essentialisation is fundamentally premised on the perception of a competition over resources between migrants and locals (Miles 1982): if the white Scottish worker perceives that you are "coming here to steal our jobs", further barriers are raised. This means that discrimination extends beyond the ethnicities that are vilified in the popular media to include all those who are perceived as economic competitors (Bradley 2016). These mentalities are founded on a long history of British colonialism and are continuously reworked and adapted to modern contexts (Virdee 2014); especially in the light of the intense racial and ethnic polarisation exemplified by the politics around Brexit, internalised colonial and racist world-views emerge, once again, as fundamental structuring factors of the British subjectivity (Virdee and McGeever 2017). It should be of no surprise, then, that especially in precarious occupations in which relationships are mediated by the socialisation of precarity, migrant workers are likely to directly experience the full ferocity of these sociocultural structures. Moreover, my research findings indicate that essentialisation and racialisation are processes that, far from being confined to the representational sphere of mass media, culture and stereotypes, are rooted in, and continually reproduced through, the material relations of labour that workers operate in. These findings therefore firmly position ideology as a force that is both structured by and structures workers' everyday lived realities in work.

"I remember at some point though, I was treated in a racist behaviour. There was an old woman, she was definitely in her 60s or 70s. She was a contract worker, I think she was Scottish. And she was very grumpy and all the time very in a bad mood. At some point they asked me to do a job in a specific position and I was working with her. There was

another girl with me, a black girl. And she was I think from Ethiopia. I don't remember correctly. And this lady decided to shout every second at us for no reason; we were doing our best to be fast. She would shout at me and ask things in a very fast way and I would say "I don't understand", and she would say, "oh, you don't understand English, how it is possible?", and she would shout at me. And she would be very, very… she would treat us in a very undermining way. And she shouted to the girl as well, in a much worst way.

So, I reported this behaviour. Now I'm summing up the situation, but it was a very bad experience. I was being shouted at for hours and treated like rubbish, and the other girl as well. So, I reported that to the agency and I said, "listen, this is not normal, I was treated in a very racist way in that factory and I won't tolerate that. Also, I witnessed this behaviour towards a black woman". […] And when I said this to my agency they said, "Oh, this is very bad behaviour, please let us know if that happens again". So, they accepted what I said, they didn't challenge my word or something. The funny thing is that when I called them and said everything- and it was a very bad day for me, that day, I was very shocked after my shift- I receive a message just a few hours later and the message was saying, from my agency, "please, next time you go back to work make sure you are properly cleaned and tidy", something like that. "Make sure you are clean and tidy and that you don't argue with your co-workers". Exactly a few hours after I reported what I reported. And it was like, "what the fuck, is it a coincidence or what".

So, I go back to work the next day, and everyone is so pissed off from the agency workers. There was a woman who was Estonian and she was dressed as if she was a model- she was very properly and nicely dressed- and she would tell me "look, I am wearing perfume, if they tell me anything I don't know how I am going to respond". Why are you wearing perfume in the fucking factory? And she was like "because we received this message yesterday, every one of us, and honestly I am very pissed off. How can they send a message like this? Make you feel like you are dirty, this is so disrespectful". I was like listen, "listen what happened yesterday; secondly, what they did was completely wrong" I said to her. They shouldn't have sent this message to everyone, I don't know if it was because of what I said, they tried somehow to punish me for trying to report an incident or something, but obviously *it made us feel like we were less than the other people in the factory*. This was a completely, a behaviour that makes you feel like you are completely excluded, like you are less than someone else. That you are less important. Exclusive, it was an exclusive behaviour."- Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality [speaking about her experience in a print factory] [*Italics mine*].

This excerpt encapsulates the force of the various interconnected, multi-scalar pressures that migrant workers are subjected to. The exploitation, precarity and essentialisation that structure their labour experience has been extensively covered in previous chapters; these experiences are made even more distressing by the covert or overt manifestations of discriminatory and aggressive behaviours. The interests of labour agencies and other employers are not to avoid racism; indeed, it is the existence of a discriminatory and racializing socioeconomic and cultural system of distinction that enables their exploitation of migrant workers (Bauder 2006). Their interests lie purely in the maintenance of profitable workplace environments: so, in Lois's case above, when a migrant worker complained of racism by a Scottish co-worker, the agency's solution was to stifle all manifestations of anger by humiliating its entire workforce (who were predominantly migrant women). These realisations suggest two interrelated conclusions: primarily, that migrant workers cannot exclusively rely on the establishment of bonds of solidarity with local workers. Secondarily, that, in a system that intrinsically relies on their essentialisation, migrant workers cannot exclusively rely on top-down, formalised approaches to address manifestations of discrimination. This is further evidence of the fact that the intersectional barriers to their empowerment in precarious workplaces can be addressed only by a struggle as migrants *and* as workers (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013).

3: Precarious Solidarities

Despite the overwhelming pressures towards individualisation enumerated in these chapters, migrant workers nevertheless enact daily performances of solidarity. Various instances of this have already been described (see, for example, Chapter 8, Section 3). These actions are testament to the fact that the socialisation of precarity and the entirety of the socioeconomic and cultural structures that nurture and reproduce migrant worker exploitation are not able to completely eradicate actions of mutuality and care. Nevertheless, my findings suggest that, in the absence of a wider collective political project or narrative these actions remain overwhelmingly atomised, in line with the dominant social structures shaping our collective reality (Berardi 2017; Bauman 2001). Simply put, these manifestations of solidarity are confined to the interpersonal realm as exchanges between individuals and do not, in themselves, represent a movement towards more politicised activity.

For example, as briefly touched upon above, Eva feels a specific affinity with one of her managers who is also a migrant. Amid an environment that essentialises, patronises,

and generally disregards her as a human and as a worker, she thinks that her shared experiences of migration and exclusion in that specific workplace function as a bridge of support and understanding. Of course, even this affinity is qualified by Eva's work performance- the determining factor of securing the manager's solidarity seems to primarily stem from her satisfaction with Eva's performance, with migration being a secondary, albeit important, contributor:

> "A: She is from Lithuania. And in fact I think this is why me and her have a good relationship. Because she is not very liked in my workplace. So I think she needs someone to be friends with. And she likes the fact that I am very hard working.
>
> Q: ok, so you have, is this also… so you have a good relationship with her, you think because you are from countries which are close to each other?
>
> A: Yeaaah…
>
> Q: Or because you are also immigrants? There is a small difference in the two.
>
> A: I think because I'm immigrant… is because I am hard-working, but I suppose we are both immigrant. And she doesn't actually know that I am from Moldova, because I grew up in Italy and Italy is my country, so she thinks I am from Italy. She doesn't know how close we are."- Eva, Moldovan female, early 20s, hospitality.

The other significant manifestation of solidarity I observed, and which was also referred to by multiple interviewees, were daily instances of providing assistance in work. The only workplace in which I felt completely isolated and helpless was the fish factory, wherein it seemed that Fisher's (2009) "capitalist realism" and the socialisation of precarity had completely penetrated and conquered every manifestation of humanity. By contrast, in the radiator factory I was consistently assisted by all the other migrant workers (all of whom were Polish).

> "Despite the lack of any union presence, there is a certain conditional, contingent solidarity: when I asked to help him with a risky job he was doing, Kris said "no, you are new so you have more risk if you fuck it up, I will do it". He does not want someone else to experience the brutality of precarity and dismissal, especially if he can help avoid it using his comparative privilege."- Fieldnotes, 25th October 2018.

This form of assistance is particularly pronounced in the initial stages of one's employment: conscious of the interdependence of our labour functions, workers have a direct interest to properly train new arrivals in order for the entire process to be smooth and

productive. As I discussed above, one's chances of being considered a "good worker" are intimately dependant on the performance of their peers. However, this form of assistance can go beyond raw instrumentalism: despite the socialisation of precarity, a common predicament, in specific conditions, can foster genuine feelings of mutuality and care.

"Manos (always greeting me in the most friendly and warm way possible) is supposed to finish his shift when I arrive, but he stays for a bit and does odd jobs to help (moving this plate there, carrying this bucket here, wiping down some surfaces). I ask him why he stays, even though he does not get paid for this time, and he responds, "it's not for the boss mate, I don't give a shit for the boss. It's for you, to help all of you". Another example of solidarity. Earlier, he has told me that all the Albanians had gone to a club recently and had taken drugs together. This is a significant difference from the other workplaces I have done observation in, since here, the socialisation of precarity is less explicit, less violently atomising. There is a lot of camaraderie, bolstered by: 1) pre-existing ethnic and familial networks which are translated into the workplace, and 2) the proximity, cooperation and communication fostered by the tight workplace environment where we all work together and necessarily help each other. The absence of a manager directly above our heads further enhances the opportunities for the development of social bonds through banter and discussion. The separation that is observed in other places doesn't exist here, and presumably these bonds have the potential to translate to actual united labour action."- Fieldnotes, 15th July 2019, Mediterranean Restaurant

This is consistent with Gomberg-Muñoz's (2010) study of Mexican migrant workers in hospitality in Chicago. She notices that there is an acute awareness amongst workers of the interconnectedness of their labour, and that they develop a specific habitus of support and coordination to make sure no one is left behind. In a workplace where people are sufficiently coordinated and have respect towards each other, this initially instrumental manifestation of solidarity may develop into genuine human connections. However, this support depends on each worker in the circuit being able to pull their weight: as analysed above, one 'bad', 'careless', or overly individualistic worker is objectively harmful to the job prospects of every other worker in the circuit. The clearest manifestation of this was observed in the Mediterranean Restaurant when they fired Jonathan, a black man, for underperforming (discussed in Chapter 6, section 3). It is testament to how, even in supposedly supportive environments, in the absence of unions and strong foundations of workers' power, the ultimate determinant of people's

interactions remains individualist survival. This is further mediated by existing networks of affinity, empowered to operate by the workplace's informality:

"Some notes on the issue of Jonathan's firing. First of all, it highlights the intense precarity of this workplace. Under the veneer of a primitive solidarity, under the helpfulness and the smiles, hides the dark reality of working in entirely insecure conditions in a cut-throat capitalist environment that is centred on quick service of the hungry, demanding customers and also on a performance of this urgency through the good worker habitus. Jonathan had no rights in that place. As long as we were there for less than 2 years, and we weren't overtly discriminated against, labour legislation in the UK holds that it is perfectly legitimate to dismiss us immediately. As soon as someone came who worked 'better' than Jonathan, they found their chance to get rid of him. However, blackness and age (he is in his 40s or 50s) might have played a role- my identity as a white straight male from the Balkans was better suited for the kitchen dynamics than Jonathan's, and this privilege might also have been the reason that I could get off with some mistakes that in Jonathan's case were potentially detrimental (I also left the washing machine open on my first day). All in all, the bottom line is that an African black man lost his job to a young white man in an environment where hiring and firing is decided by a white, Albanian chef. He was not given a chance to rectify the perceived problems with his behaviour and was, of course, not given the opportunity to be represented by a union. As I understand it, there wasn't even a disciplinary- everything was entirely informal. The fact that the rest of the kitchen workers simply shrugged their shoulders at this injustice is further testament to the precariousness of this solidarity."- Fieldnotes, 24th June 2018, Mediterranean Restaurant.

Conclusion

My findings suggest that, in precarious workplaces, the socialisation of precarity permeates almost all interactions migrant workers have with each other and with their local Scottish colleagues, significantly disrupting the potentialities for the formation of substantial bonds of affinity, mutuality and trust. The stress associated with precarious occupations where one can be fired without any protection induces anxiety and competition amongst workers. Their interdependence and coexistence, instead of being tools of solidarity as envisaged by classic Marxism, can instead be a source of added pressure that distances workers from each other. In these contexts, ethnic ties are complex and conflictual and are not, in themselves, a reliable source of solidarity. In contrast, the assumption of additional power by individual members of the migrant workforce can lead to a reproduction of hierarchies and the further disempowerment of those below them

(Angry Workers 2020; Vasey 2017). While these structural constraints are not enough to completely diffuse manifestations of solidarity between migrant workers, this solidarity is itself precarious and is usually immediately revoked once it conflicts with another workers' labour security. As analysed in the previous chapter, existing racist and discriminatory attitudes within the migrant workforce further exacerbate these barriers.

In addition to the divisions created within the migrant workforce, migrant workers further must contend with discrimination on the part of their Scottish colleagues. This discrimination assumes multiple expressions and can range from subtle indifference to overt racist aggression. Whatever the form it takes, my findings suggest that it permeates many precarious workplaces, subtly impacting migrant workers' subjectivities. My findings align with the positions of a variety of scholars that position racism, discrimination, and the exclusionary mentalities fostered by colonial nostalgia amongst local British workers as powerful forces of oppression in the lives of migrant and other marginalised groups (Virdee and McGeever 2017; Anderson 2013; Miles 1982).

It therefore emerges that the socialisation of precarity, and the additional pressures resulting from hierarchical divisions from within migrant communities and discriminatory attitudes from without, act as powerful barriers to manifestations of solidarity. Unsurprisingly, relationships fostered in conditions of precarity tend to also be precarious-the threat of dismissal seems to be much stronger than individual workers' desires to collaborate. Under this light, the operation of unions or similar networks, intimately connected with both the interior and the exterior of workplaces, presents itself as a fundamental requirement for rectifying the atomisation that is continuously cultivated in precarious workplaces.

Chapter 10: Trade unions and workplace resistances

Introduction

The preceding chapters have examined the various intersecting and cross-pollinating factors that structure and reproduce migrant worker disempowerment and exploitability in precarious occupations. It has been argued that these include both subjective and structural causes, all of which coalesce in the creation of workers' everyday realities; crucially, the operational demands of the UK's economy align with and complement elements that are associated with the immigrant condition such as an initial temporary outlook or a dual frame of reference. Stereotypes associated with linguistic, ethnic, and corporeal markers of difference significantly influence migrant workers' distribution to, and association with, specific sectors; these are frequently further cemented by the concurrent formation of ethnic networks which continuously attract more migrant workers to these specific sectors. Individual and collective experiences in precarious occupations amalgamate into a wider socialisation of precarity that contributes to the naturalisation of exploitative conditions, a naturalisation that is always intrinsically dependant on the fear and disempowerment engendered by precarious contractual relations. This naturalisation is closely related to the retrenchment of social movements and unions, a reality which significantly inhibits the dissemination of counter-hegemonic collective narratives and the establishment of counter-hegemonic practices. All these aspects combine in fostering precarious interpersonal relations within migrant workplaces, thereby precluding the formation of the bonds of trust and solidarity that are necessary to nurture collective action.

These conclusions are mostly consistent with the literature surveyed in Chapter 3. The economic and political determinants that structure migrant labour have been analysed, for example, in Virdee (2014), Moore (2011), Adler, Tapia and Turner (2014), Bradley (2016), Anderson (2013), Però and Solomos (2010), and others. Subjective factors that influence migrants' attitudes in the new country have similarly been addressed in Piore (1979), Miles (1982), Sayad (2004), Recchi and Triandafyllidou (2010), etc. In addition, multiple studies exist that specifically analyse the problems unions face when attempting to organise migrant workers (for example, Kranendonk and de Beer 2016; Marino, Penninx and Roosblad 2015; Marino 2015; Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013). However, they tend not to base their analyses on the first-hand accounts of migrant workers themselves (Alberti 2016). I have argued that this is problematic for two reasons: primarily, it is a tendency that reproduces the disempowerment of oppressed groups by excluding their

voices from the analysis and resolution of issues that directly concern them (Freire 1993 [1970]); additionally, it is theoretically problematic in that it ignores the invaluable analytic resources that can only emerge from migrant workers' first-hand accounts of how they view their lives. The literature that does incorporate migrant voices tends to focus on successful examples of migrant mobilisation (Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017; Lagnado 2015; Lopez and Hall 2015); however, much less scrutiny is dedicated to speaking with migrant workers in order to understand why these examples have not proven generalisable.

Building on the previous chapters, this chapter will utilise interviews and conclusions drawn from participant observation in precarious workplaces to further understand the barriers migrant workers face towards collective action. It will be argued that the individualism which permeates social and labour relations, most directly expressed in the socialisation of precarity, is a key factor in directing workers towards individual solutions to their labour problems. Many instances of migrants' utilisation of agency as a means of resisting exploitation (for example, those analysed in Alberti 2014) are themselves individualistic in form and preclude collective action. Despite this, collective cases of resistance occur, and some examples will be offered in order to counteract the tendency to reify migrant vulnerability. The analysis will then investigate how migrant workers view trade unions, which in the UK and Scotland are the dominant vehicles for collectively challenging labour exploitation. Interviewees' personal experiences of unions are overwhelmingly negative, with some participants reporting an increase in feelings of disempowerment and exclusion rather than their rectification. However, it emerges that the most significant barrier to migrant workers' substantial, empowered participation in unions and other oppositional social movements is precisely those movements' complete inexistence in the lives, communities, and workplaces of migrant workers. I will argue that this lack of presence enables and enforces the socialisation of precarity, ultimately fortifying the sociocultural and subjective conditions that produce and maintain migrant workers' disempowerment and exploitability.

1: Individual Exercise of Agency

Berntsen (2016), Wu and Liu (2014), and Alberti (2014) have all examined migrant workers' agentic use of their contractual precarity to switch jobs when confronted with significantly problematic employment conditions. Reversing discussions that posit migrant workers' precarity as a source of weakness, Alberti (2014) argues that migrant workers can use their precarious labour status as a means of resistance. Migrants' awareness of the temporariness of a specific job, combined with a wider subjective temporariness, fosters a

sense of detachment which in turn could make them "more prepared to leave their insecure job and dis-identify with it" (2014: 874). Similarly, Berntsen (2016: 482) argues that, for migrant workers in the construction sector, "the common pragmatic response to exploitative terms of employment is to change jobs instead of trying to get an employer to change the conditions". Mobility between precarious jobs therefore emerges as one of the main ways migrant workers attempt to "re-work" (Berntsen 2016) the labour conditions that they view as intensely oppressive or exploitative.

Many of the migrant workers I interviewed expressed similar attitudes towards switching jobs. For most, this was the definitive way to counteract strongly negative conditions. 11 out of 21 participants interviewed had consciously chosen to leave their jobs in response to experiencing injustices. Strikingly, it was much more common for workers to leave jobs by themselves than it was for them to be fired. As was analysed in previous chapters, migrant workers have a clear consciousness of how the employment relation depends on their exploitation; they therefore have an equally clear understanding of how deeply their bosses depend on their labour. The confidence with which they switch jobs attest to this knowledge: they know that they will most likely find something else easily. This is especially true for migrants who have lived in Scotland for longer and have therefore developed some familiarity with the labour market. For example:

> "I was closing [the café] with another person, and also something wasn't done properly, and because everybody wanted to go home, we were exhausted. And I got back to work, and I was the first person who came, and I got told, "if you do this a second time you are not working here any more, start looking for something else". And I'm like, "it's not my fault, how dare you say that", and I give the same explanation. And then I just decided that I'm going to change my workplace because it's no point."- Agnes, Polish female, mid-20s, hospitality.

> "I don't have limit. No. I can't speak about my colleagues. But if you ask me, I have no limit. I am not scared [of speaking out]. This is the thing. You have a limit when you have something to lose. I have nothing to lose, so I have no limit. If I lose my job, so what? I find another one like that [snaps fingers]."- Nicole, Romanian female, mid-40s, hospitality.

The wide availability of precarious jobs in Glasgow was confirmed during my participant observation. Between September 2018 and January 2019, I worked for 3 different companies in their warehouses. Similarly, between June and August 2019 I accessed the kitchens of 3 different restaurants as a kitchen porter, eventually opting to

remain in the Italian restaurant. The first stint was accessed through multiple labour agencies, who swiftly found precarious occupations that needed workers. The second stint in hospitality was accessed by simply walking around Glasgow and handing in CVs. In most cases, I secured the job within hours; the maximum I had to wait was for 3 days.

At this point it is important to note that, despite the ease with which some workers can switch jobs, it nevertheless remains a relatively privileged choice that many can't afford (Alberti 2014). Even for those workers that are confident of finding new work, switching jobs means exposing themselves to high levels of stress and anxiety. Migrant workers whose right to remain in the UK is tied to their sponsorship by specific employers are at the top of this list (Anderson 2013; Interview with Arjun). Anderson (2013: 89) therefore writes that "compliant migrants can feel unable to challenge employers, and in some instances, employers have taken advantage of immigration status as a means of exercising control over work permit holders". Similarly, workers with caring responsibilities, children, and debts are much less likely to risk a protracted period of unemployment for the sake of switching jobs- in some cases, stability can be more important than comfort (Interview with Nicole). Finally, one's ability to navigate the labour market is closely connected to one's possession of various forms of embodied and cultural capital (Bauder 2006). For example, the Albanian workers in the kitchen of the Italian restaurant, who had limited command of English and whose entire social life revolved around the small community that made up the kitchen staff and their families, were essentially tied to the restaurant. When I gave my notice to leave the job, another worker simply asked me "if you can find another job, why were you here in the first place? This place is horrible" (Fieldnotes, 22nd July 2019). Nevertheless, my findings generally concur with Berntsen (2016) and Alberti (2014) in that mobility can, and frequently is, used by more established migrant workers to bypass intensely exploitative or dehumanising conditions.

While highlighting such exercises of agency is important in counteracting sensationalised perspectives that reify the disempowerment of migrant workers, I concur with Angry Workers (2020) that these individualised forms of resistance are by themselves not enough to substantially alter the unequal relations that lie at the root of migrant workers' exploitation. The same conclusion is reached by Berntsen (2016: 476), who writes that "the impact of individual job jumping on changing conditions of exploitation, unless collectively performed, is generally minimal". Switching jobs could therefore be seen as another, more agentic expression of the socialisation of precarity. Migrant workers

operate within the confines of the structures they find themselves, and they act upon the limited opportunities introduced by these structures. However, the overall framework that conditions their available choices is far from liberatory, especially when it directs workers to select individualised avenues for the rectification of the injustices they experience (Barnard, Ludlow and Fraser Butlin 2018). In her critique of some aspects of postcolonial theory, Majumdar (2017) argues that "choosing between two options that have been generated by an oppressive social structure is not resistance — it is acquiescence to that order". Migrant workers' glorification of their opportunities to switch between precarious jobs can therefore ultimately be seen as a glorification, or at least an acceptance, of the structurally-induced 'flexibility' and 'fluidity' that underpins workers' insecurity and exploitation in precarious occupations (Berrardi 2017; Lazzarato 2015; Bauman 2001). Without powerful collective responses targeting the foundations of socioeconomic precarity, migrant (and all) workers are condemned to a continuous, Sisyphean search for Parutis's (2014) "dream job", which, for many, will most likely remain a dream (Angry Workers 2020; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010).

2: Collective Resistances

The crushing combination of the structural and subjective factors outlined above can seem daunting and inextricable. This has caused Berntsen (2016: 485) to pessimistically write that migrant workers "are reluctant to challenge the boundaries of the system. This implies that if regulators, enforcement authorities and trade unions want to protect these workers from the deteriorating effects of cross-border recruitment and market competition, they need to take a more proactive stance, as the initiative for change on a broader level is unlikely to come from the workers themselves". While it is true that trade unions need to take a more proactive stance (as will be extensively discussed below), it is also true that such statements partake in the reification of migrant workers' supposed vulnerability, ultimately reinforcing their oppression. Indeed, migrant workers have historically been on the frontlines of social struggles, as was illustrated in Chapter 1. Moreover, migrant workers are currently engaged in a plethora of autonomous groups and trade unions, directly refuting such sweeping generalisations such as those made by Berntsen (2016). While such instances of collective resistances remain small and localised, they are nevertheless important in that many migrant workers recognise that they have collective power, and that, despite the overwhelming pressures towards individualisation and isolation, many select to operationalise that power through collective actions.

Suzan's case exemplifies the dormant power that migrant workers possess. It is a particularly illuminating because her and her group of Romanian friends decided to collectively withdraw their labour spontaneously, without the input of a union or any other social movement. The relevant literature tends to operate based on a strict binary opposition: most either see individual, de-politicised actions (for example, Alberti 2014) or they focus on grander collective actions organised through formal institutions such as unions (for example, Lagnado 2015). However, the power contained in existing ethnic networks, groups of friends, and wider "spaces between unions" (Sullivan 2010) is left unscrutinised; this is particularly problematic when it is precisely such networks that might be best equipped to challenge the atomisation of the socialisation of precarity. I don't want to disproportionately glorify the subsequent story; however, it is striking that, in most movement and academic literature, people's already existing human bonds with one another are not appreciated as the source of power, confidence and solidarity that they really are. Recognising their power and overcoming their "fear", Suzan and her friends were able to engage in informal collective bargaining and even withdrew their labour against an injustice experienced by one of them.

"A: After 3 or 5 weeks, we had the chance to make a permanent contract. We were very good at our job, we were a team of 5 Romanians and we had taken the machines, and we had lifted the production targets to the roof, which no one had done, so since they saw that we are good they offered us a permanent contract. We said that we accept a permanent contract, but we were not willing to work week-ends, and if we work 6 days, we will never work Sundays since you don't pay us double. And what else? Oh! We also asked for more money. Because if nobody meets the target, and we are hitting it at 200%, it means that you can fire someone else, because I am working for 2 people. You are happy and I am happy, and I can keep this rhythm up. Because they told us, "fine, if I pay you more money, can you keep this target up". And we said, "we will keep up the target as long as we make more money".

Q: All of you said this, together?

A: Yes, because every so often they were pestering us, "permanent" and "permanent". We knew that there was no fear there anymore. And we said, don't pester us anymore, if you don't give us more money and Sundays off, we don't accept a permanent contract. We will stay with the agency for as long as they want to keep us, and then goodbye! Jobs exist! And we learnt then that better days do exist for immigrants, and if you do your job and all these things, you can have something extra. Because a team of supervisors and managers

came from Birmingham, Manchester and London to see how I was working- because they have the same factory in these cities- and they said "where did you find them? How is this possible? Why are you not giving them more money?". But the general manager in that place was a Frenchman, and he said, "sorry but we only give more money in France, not England [by 'England', she means the UK in general]. In England you will work with the minimum". Alright, you do the work then! I will never work for you for the minimum. And so, we stayed until December, until he pissed me off. Because of him, all 5 of us left the job.

[*Suzan then begins explaining what the general manager did that contributed to them leaving the job*]

[…..]

That week, I was working part-time. My husband was full time. This was the reason that they wanted me to stay at home, but was it so hard to tell me: "Suzan, you will have a week off"? It would be fine, I'd be happy. But anyway, this is the problem. At 11 o'clock I send him a message. Nothing. At around 13.30 I go to work. I arrive to the factory, enter at 15.00. In the entrance of the factory they tell us our post. But we were always going straight to our machine because that was the system. And he tells me "Suzan, you aren't working today". I say "what? I only worked on Tuesday and Wednesday. Today is the third day I am not working". He tells me that I am not on the rota today. The manager comes over, he knew nothing. A Polish guy comes with a list and he says, "there is this list and you are really not on the rota". I tell him "there is no way!". My husband's cousin, another couple, everyone was there, I was the only one not working. Anyway, I tell the supervisor: "If I leave, I am taking everyone with me!".

[*She went to the canteen to wait until this issue was sorted out, since the manager of the factory told her that it was the agency's responsibility to organise the rota and he couldn't help*]

"I was in the canteen and I texted him [the agency manager], "this is what has happened, if you don't call me back immediately, I am in the canteen and I am waiting like a fool and you aren't picking up the phone, I will take everyone and leave". After 2 minutes, he calls me, "what happened Suzan". I tell him, "you tell me what happened". "Did I speak to you yesterday about the rota? Yes! Did I text you today, did you have the chance to inform me that I am not working today so I don't travel like a fool from Wishaw to Glasgow? You know full well that I came with my husband, with the car, taking with us the couple and his

cousin, we need to take them. From the minute that I must leave, I have to take them with me because these people will stay here and do what?" He tells me "look, I will pay for 2 hours, so you take a taxi". I told him, "with £14, you go to Wishaw on a taxi, because I can't go". Even with a bus, probably this money wouldn't be enough. Imagine the journey I had to face! So, I told him "Peter, this is impossible. I am not a beggar for two hours. The only thing I can suggest is the following: that you speak to the manager of the factory and have him put me in work, at least until the break which is half an hour, so maybe my husband finds a way to take me home. He may be late, but this has happened, and you have to clear it up". He tells me, "these things don't happen Suzan, you can't just do whatever you want". I tell him, "Peter, it's not your choice at this point. You either do as I say, or I take these 5 people and I leave". He tells me, "no, this is impossible, they have to stay at work because they are on the rota and you should go home". I tell him, "alright, goodbye!". I go back in the factory. In the meantime, they were texting me, "where are you, where are you, what are you doing" and things like that. About half an hour had passed. I enter the factory and I tell them "Guys, I'm leaving! Who wants to come with me?". And they respond "Are we crazy? Of course, we aren't staying"! And we left all together!"- Suzan, Romanian female, late 40s, hospitality and logistics [translation mine]

This excerpt highlights the power that migrant workers have when they collectively pursue their interests. As has previously been discussed, such confidence can only arise after a certain amount of security in various aspects of life has been achieved (Però 2014); from that point on, workers can have the confidence to issue demands of their employers, especially when they have become crucial components of the labour process. Here, it is important to repeat a word of caution issued by the Angry Workers (2020): when separated from larger collective narratives, such exercises of agency may ultimately lead to further hierarchical demarcations between the working class, as power is contained within specific groups instead of being collectivized. This is observable in the above story, where Suzan mentions her group asking for other workers to be fired so they can receive higher wages for their productivity. Nevertheless, this demand must be viewed in the context of the "agency arena" where competition between workers is already an established and widely acknowledged fact and forms a foundational component of the socialization of precarity. Despite the political and theoretical problems, Suzan's account remains an important example of the power that migrant workers can wield, a power that is frequently disregarded in academic and movement literature.

Mateusz's story represents another instance where existing ethnic networks interacted with a formal union structure to directly challenge, and eventually alter, labour conditions. While such stories have not yet proven generalizable in Scotland, they remain strong indicators of the potential empowerment that is currently lying dormant in migrant and other marginalized communities. Once Mateusz got settled in his new job and community, he contacted the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union to address issues of discrimination and disrespect in his occupation, particularly expressed through the behavior of an aggressive manager. This led to a strong union structure in the factory and to his subsequent activity as a community organizer in the UK. The story below is further testament to the dormant power that workers have and to the eruption of confidence that may ensue once they become cognizant of it. Mateusz mentions a qualitative shift in attitudes amongst the workforce, from accepting an alienating social order that sacrifices life for the sake of survival, to an attitude that fights for dignity. What is visible in the subsequent segment is the gradual formation of narratives that question, oppose, and propose alternatives to the overarching socialization of precarity.

"A: So basically, our colleague said, "I know a guy who is in the union. I'm in the union". So, people said, we understand what is a union because in Poland we have Solidarnosc and stuff, but a lot of people think that it is not for us. Is only allowed for Scottish people or citizens of the UK. So, some people think that, even me, I think that I am not allowed to be in a union on that point. So, we have a meeting with our colleague from the union, he explained for us everything, and we slowly slowly start sign members to the union. On a start, that was like a slow process. But my story was that I have enough of this situation with my boss. And I said, "I'm going to join the union and I'm going to do something about it". So, basically, I put a grievance with another guy, but because the bank was on administration of our company, they couldn't do nothing. When the company take over our company, they said, "look that's the past, we can't deal with that". But in the meantime we have started shaping the union, bringing more people. Accidentally people come to me and start speaking to me.

Q: How did people get interested in the union? You started the union….

A: No, it was difference. Because we was on administration, we don't know what is going to be with us. We need to find some protection. So when our colleague tell us "there is a union, they can help us, just in case", we start chatting. We don't have the money to hire the solicitors, or we don't have any ability, we don't know the law. We don't know how everything works. What are our rights. So we start chatting and we have a meeting with [a

union official] and people start joining. But when I was on a position, I put my case in the union, I was on a stage that I was on my nervous breakdown and I have enough. So the biggest change was when I challenge my manager. So, he attacked me on production, he was shouting, humiliating, aggressive, red face, 20 centimetres from me shouting in my face. I was like "I have enough I need to go out because I could do something wrong and I don't want that". So, I left the production, but for his bad luck he followed me. So when I stop on the corridor, I look around, nobody there when he approached to me, I jumped to him and I be exactly the same as he was. So I told him that if he came to me again I'm gonna break his leg, I'm gonna fucking rip his head off, I'm gonna find him in house and I'm gonna burn his house. I know it doesn't sound good, but on my stage, in my head, that was the only way. Nine months, every day. I just have enough. The guy said, "oh oh, don't be nervous, don't be nervous" and he ran. And when I see that he is just a coward, I change. So, everything change in my head. Because I was 100 percent sure that he would do a disciplinary, because I was giving him life threats, but he didn't. Never. So, after this situation he never showed up for one week when I was on a shift. So, when I spot this that he is just a coward and that he is easy to challenge, I start challenge him. When he attacked anyone, I started speaking out. Because of that, people see that I not afraid of him and they started coming to me. That is how I became the guy who start to create the union, I convince people to join the union and then we go for the recognition.

Q: Nice. So how, specifically, I am interested in this space between when the workers knew that 'there is Mateusz and there is the union', and, what happened between that point and when they actually joined?

A: I approached to them. I told them "look, no matter what you think, if we don't protect ourselves we will not have any chance to win with them". And I think 2 things was in our favour. One, is the money, the wages they owed us. So, I said "look, you allowed someone to take from you nearly £800". One month living. I said in that time, "you allow someone to steal the money from you". People said "no, is not fair". Because they have a family, they have mortgages and stuff like that. £800 for some people that work on a daily basis is a lot of money. And second thing is, a simple question: what they have to lose? Did they want to be treated like shit constantly? Did they want to be treated worse than a dog, or did they want to come over for 8 hours, do the shift, and after the shift go back home? Because that is the way it should be. We live for work, we no work for live. So, that was 2 ways I spoke with them. I know them. I see how they are treated. Why you allow for something like that? On that time, we don't have any rights. If they want to remove you from the

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company, there was no investigation. There was no proper processing. And second, the most important thing was that you don't have, ability to have representation. Even the colleague can't be with you in any disciplinary. So, you, manager, and supervisor. So, what kind of chance do you have against 2 managers? Nothing!

[…]

Q: So, slowly things got better?

A: On the start, you know, people have, that's a big learning curve. Sometimes people have too many expectations. They want everything in one day. But some things you are not going to be able to change them right away. But some things changed. The general manager was put in a lower position without access to the people. We start slowly changing health and safety. The company had a priority with the safety. Then other changes. It's a long process. One of the things that the union official promised the people was that he would remove this guy who was harassing them. Its going to take a while but he will be removed. And a year later he been removed, but in the same way how he removed the people. He was throw from the door like a dog. They don't allow him to speak with anyone, only to take the key to the car, not to speak to anyone. Karma come back."- Mateusz, Polish male, mid-30s, union organiser with BFAWU.

Suzan and Mateusz's experiences of collective action represent two exceptional cases of workers recognizing their power and organizing themselves to resist exploitation and disrespect. While such cases are rare when compared to the wider socioeconomic landscape in Scotland, they nevertheless strongly suggest that migrant workers are not as weak as is made out in most of the academic literature as well as in statements by social movements, wider civil society, and mass media. And, while the ground may not yet be adequately fertile for a generalization of such grandiose oppositional activities, smaller actions of resistance still occur. For example, Lois, already a member of the Industrial Workers of the World, contacted her union when she was unfairly suspended for challenging her boss's disrespectful attitudes in a café largely staffed by migrant workers. By accessing union support for her disciplinary process, she managed to be paid for all the hours she lost due to her suspension and secured enough money to carry her over until she found a new job (Interview with Lois). This action is significant in itself; however, its most important aspect in terms of migrant worker unionization is to be found in the impression it left upon her colleagues, who previously had never encountered a union.

"Q: In your jobs, have you ever come into contact with a union or another social movement fighting for better rights?

A: See, that's the thing, I didn't have any experience, I didn't know anything about it, until the café.

Q: So, you had no experience…

A: That situation, I seen one of my colleagues using the service.

Q: And, without talking to much about that other situation because it involves somebody else, could you describe briefly what you saw, how you perceived it?

A: What I've noticed is that… when it was, the union was involved, the worker was treated differently and she was, she was taken seriously. But again… she, I'm not sure if she got fired or she just quitted. Either way, it was a difference in the reaction of how bosses treated.

Q: What changed?

A: So, what happened after she left, the boss changed the management, all the structure, the system changed. So instead of paying weekly, she started paying monthly, she started doing payslips, she says that we will get payslips after each month. So, this is what I am expecting.

Q: Was there any change in the way that she was treating workers?

A: So the thing is, the manager changed and there is a new manager and she is treating everyone nice and she is behaving nice in front of the manager. So now the atmosphere changed."- Irene, Lithuanian female, early 20s, hospitality.

These examples of collective action, beyond simply demonstrating the power migrant workers possess, indicate something deeper: they illustrate the extent to which employers in precarious occupations intimately depend on the artificially produced disempowerment of migrant workers. As has been discussed previously, employers rely on migrant workers' lack of knowledge to enhance their exploitation; for example, the fact that some workers don't know if they are entitled to holiday pay makes it easy for employers to simply avoid payment. Furthermore, the daily abuse that is frequently enabled by the combination of workplace informality and migrant workers' disorientation also depends on those migrant workers' lack of access to tools of empowerment, whether they are through the mobilization of ethnic networks (as in Suzan's case) or through unions

(as was described by Mateusz and Lois). In an influential contribution to the discussion of migrant labour, Castells (1975: 52) wrote that "the utility of immigrant labour to capital derives primarily from the fact that it can act towards it *as though the labour movement did not exist*" [emphasis mine]. This section attests to how easily the scales can tilt.

3: Interviewees' Experiences of Mainstream Unions

While unions are largely non-existent in most precarious occupations, 3 of my participants recounted experiences that are illustrative of the difficulties migrant workers experience in accessing and acting alongside mainstream unions. I use the term "mainstream" loosely to refer to the three biggest unions in the UK: Unite, Unison and GMB (Connolly and Sellers 2017). While they have at times been involved in a variety of initiatives aiming at establishing connections with migrant and other workers experiencing precarity (for example, see Holgate 2018), they remain for the most part strictly hierarchical and controlling of their initiatives, with Connolly and Sellers (2017: 240) writing that they are "cautious about working outside their own structures and have been actively opposed to organisations setting up 'alternative' worker initiatives for migrants". Based on their experiences in multiple labour struggles in London, the Angry Workers (2020: 13) report that "the union framework is built to stifle initiatives on a rank and file level." Crucially, while some localised initiatives aiming to organise migrant workers have at times taken place in the UK (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013), there does not seem to be a specific overarching strategy, or outstanding desire, to organise migrant workers in precarious occupations (Connolly and Sellers 2017). The initiatives that do occur seem confined to attracting migrant members by providing learning opportunities, but do not extend to substantial empowerment and inclusion of these members (Tapia 2014).

The few contacts that the participants I interviewed had with these unions were overwhelmingly negative and exemplify some of the aforementioned criticisms towards them. For example, Lois encountered one of the three big unions in her time as an agency worker in a printing factory; according to her, absolutely no attempts were made by the union to establish contact between the local, unionised workers and the non-unionised agency migrant workers.

> "What I learnt was that the contract workers in [company name] were unionised with Unite, and that was it basically. But even when I asked them, "OK, did you ever feel that want to use your rights against your employers, defend yourself as a worker", they said that they haven't faced any problems.

> Q: OK. Did Unite make any attempt to organise the agency workers?
>
> A: No, not as far as I know.
>
> Q: Do you know who the rep was at that place?
>
> A: No.
>
> Q: They didn't make any contact?
>
> A: No. The agency workers were in the worst situation. They didn't have any clue.
>
> Q: But there was a Unite rep in that workplace, or for that region…
>
> A: We didn't learn it though."- Lois, Greek female, late 20s, hospitality/ freelance journalist [speaking about a print factory]

This account fits with one of the main criticisms made by the Angry Workers collective (2020) towards unions, in that they tend to respect and reproduce a strict split between agency and permanent workers. The former are frequently seen as "unorganisable" due to the temporary, transient nature of their contractual status (Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013); the Angry Workers collective has reported multiple instances of unions shutting temporary workers out of meetings that were of concern to them, or even sabotaging temporary workers' efforts to self-organise outside their structures. This exclusionary attitude is captured in Leila's experience, whose contact with Unite left her feeling hopeless and disempowered:

> "So, I joined this union. I never requested any help from them, they've never phoned me to tell me, "hi, this is us, would you like to join this meeting, so we can provide you some briefing about your basic rights and entitlements and all that". Although, to become a member, you need to give lots of information. So, they knew I was in a precarious job- that is why I was paying less money, because I was getting minimum wage. They never gave me any information. They have once invited me to a massive gathering, but it was more about, a general union gathering than a session to fucking empower people and tell them, "even though you are in a shithole because you are working in hospitality without a contract, these are your rights". That was never provided. So then when I was leaving, when, once they told me I was going to, they offered me a place in the [different job], I was like "now is the critical moment when I know that they gonna fuck with my holidays". And I wanted to go for holidays before I started the new job. So I phoned them and I just explained over the phone, "look, I took these days, and I think I am entitled to

these days, bla bla bla". I left a voice message to him, to the union representative that was for my area in my job. Because they split, they split up like that, it's for areas and the sectors.

So, I called this guy, it was meant to be my representative, and then he phoned me after, it was completely disempowering, like, you know. "You will be lucky if they don't charge you for the holidays you owe them, because you basically took too much, and the law says this, and". I told him, "well, you know, I am not paying whatever, £8 per month, for you to tell me what I already know, I am not stupid and I don't need you to explain to me what I already know". What I wanted to do is to help me, like, how to empower me to see other possibilities in order to face this, and to get my holidays, and what I could do, and how can I face this, and what other possibilities I had. So the guy was like, "yeah, you don't have right to anything, and you be lucky if they don't charge you money for that, because you have already taken everything". So I've been with you six months, you never gave me any training or information session about rights and entitlements in the workplace, I phoned you one time to request your support because, because of these assholes not only I don't have money but also my holidays are very arbitrarily given, so I am asking you to give me some help in the ways that I could challenge this in case that they make it difficult for me and they don't want to pay me, and you tell me that not only I don't have the right, but maybe I should… just telling me what I already know in such a disempowering way?
So I left."- Leila, Spanish/Tunisian female, early 30s, hospitality

Most criticism of mainstream unions tends to progress along these lines: mainstream unions are seen as detached, not sufficiently involved in the lives of communities, not particularly keen to help precarious workers organize, and overwhelmingly rigid, bureaucratic, and faceless (Angry Workers 2020; Bloodworth 2019; Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017; Ness 2014; Tapia 2014). However, mainstream unions also have a darker history, characterized by racist and colonialist positions towards migrant workers (see Chapter 1). In recent years, these tendencies have been significantly marginalized; however, they occasionally reemerge on the forefront of public discourse, as occurred, for example, in the course of the wildcat Lindsey refinery strikes, where British workers rallied against migrant workers in their workplaces under GMB and Unite flags (Connolly and Sellers 2017) or when Unite general secretary Len McCluskey came out in favor of restricting freedom of movement for EU workers (*The Guardian* 2019). Both cases reproduced the hegemonic xenophobic rhetoric which sees immigrants as parasites and tools in the hands of employers against the British working class (Virdee and

McGeever 2017; Anderson 2013). The effects of these mentalities were directly experienced by Arjun, an Indian worker who trained as a union representative. His involvement had the effect of permanently alienating him from union participation in the UK and is testament to how deeply discriminatory attitudes have pervaded British society and the trade union movement: he claims to have been racially discriminated against by both the representative in his job and by his employer, with the union doing little to help.

"A: Yeah, it was quite serious allegation. They considered as grave misconduct and suspended me. So I approached the UNISON, but there was no help because my service there was less than 1 year and then the law was that you need 1 year employment to raise an issue. But then I also raised my dispute in a tribunal, but because of this limitation I couldn't go through.

Q: Maybe the law has changed, now it's 3 months.

A: Now its 2 years, you need to be 2 years in work to raise an issue.

Q: Yes, but if it is a claim about an equality issue….

A: Yes, that's what I told the union. That it's related to being a union rep. So I have been discriminated. Nobody listened. What I found was, in UNISON, there was no person from ethnic minority in the high post. There were all these people, even in the low post also, there were no representation of somebody who can understand or who can represent that ethnic minority. They don't listen. I feel just alone there and I left everything. I lost, I just moved on.

Q: Just to sort of, dissect it. For me this is extremely important. You have said a few things that I want to look at. You have said that there were a lot of ethnic minority people in this work. First of all, were you directly employed or though an agency?

A: Directly.

Q: So there was a lot of people under the same contract but the rep was white British, even though he was a minority in that job.

A: Because he don't want me to be the rep.

Q: Why?

A: Because the thing was that he, there was only one rep. They don't want that other person to come there and represent ethnic minority. They were doing jobs which they were not supposed to do, it wasn't in the job description, but because they were not heard of, and

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because they were scared of their jobs, what would happen if they raise their voice, say something to manager. What I realised at that period… we still have the mentality that "these people they have ruled us", we are still scared of it.

Q: So, you think for Indians and Pakistanis it is a direct colonial thought?

A: Yeah, their mindset is like that.

Q: Do you want to speak a bit more about this?

A: The mindset is first of all, our people from the minorities, they are very few in the job sector. Most of them don't work. Must be less than 10%. Most of them have their own businesses. They are with a taxi or a restaurant or some jobs like that. When I ask them why they don't go for the jobs or something like that, they say "it's very difficult to go there", they say that it's like, really hard, we are always scared of our manager, it's very difficult to raise your voice in that situation. If you raise your voice, all the people around you will be against you. Nobody will stand in favour of you or give you anything. So that's the major problem.

Q: Some of the other stuff you said is that afterwards you started a dispute, you started in general complaining, and they suspended you for it with an allegation of gross misconduct and then you went to the union. But the union, what happened?

A: They refused to represent me.

Q: They refused?

A: Yes. They told me, "you don't have a strong case, we won't represent you. If you want to go of your own, you can go".

Q: Wow. So what was the interaction with the union like? Did you feel supported?

A: No, not supported.

Q: They basically left you alone to fight this….

A: Yeah.

[…]

Q: OK, did you try to follow up the case?

A: I followed up with an appeal, but because of the limitation I couldn't proceed. Because the first question they raised in tribunal was "why union is not with you"? "You are representing yourself, why somebody from the union is not representing you?".

Q: And the allegation of gross misconduct, did they have any proof that…

A: There was no, it was telephonic communication only, the thing was that the manager, she, she said that I told her a "bitch".

Q: Really? And that was the case for an entire gross misconduct allegation?

A: Yeah. I never did it, I never told her. And there was no evidence. There was no witness, nobody.

Q: So basically, it was your word against hers and the union basically supported the boss?

A: Yeah, they said the manager is right.

Q: How does that make you feel about unions?

A: I just left, I never joined union afterwards."- Arjun, Indian male, late 40s, care sector.

Alongside the various and blatantly problematic aspects highlighted in Arjun's experience, one crucial factor relating to barriers experienced by migrant workers in organizing with trade unions is the representational gap in their ranks. Arjun felt that it was difficult to find officials who could understand and assist with the issues faced by ethnic minority workers. It is precisely this representational gap that frequently forms a decisive factor in migrant workers organizing separately from mainstream unions (Alberti and Però 2018; Jayaraman and Ness 2005). Alberti (2016) writes that, when unions have reached out to migrant workers, these initiatives have usually been spurred by a desire to attract new members rather than a commitment to intersectional organization and to the empowerment of migrant and BME workers; furthermore, researchers have noted unions' tendencies to use migrant workers instrumentally in order to achieve specific aims instead of attempting to organize horizontally alongside them (Anitha, Pearson and McDowell 2018; Cappiali 2017). Therefore, despite mainstream unions' formal declarations of internationalism and solidarity with migrant workers, Marino, Penninx and Roosblad (2017; 2015) argue that the translation of these declared principles into real, daily struggles is frequently contradictory and problematic. These combined concerns have led scholars and activists to advocate for semi-autonomous structures of migrant, BME and other marginalized workers

within the union framework in order to ensure empowerment and substantial representation (Virdee and Grint 1994).

My findings thus concur with the aforementioned critical studies of unions to conclude that a superficial establishment of contact between unions and migrant workers is not enough to meaningfully impact the conditions migrant workers experience or the wider structures that enable these conditions. The attention of unions and social movements must therefore extend beyond simple numerical concerns around migrant membership to encompass the more substantial and difficult questions of empowerment, representation, and connection with communities.

4: Union absence

The conclusions that emerge from the preceding chapters and the relevant literature converge in presenting a socioeconomic landscape that is not conducive to the unionisation of precarious workers. Neoliberalism's deep penetration into all aspects of social life can be generally blamed for the retreat of class-based narratives (Bradley 2016; Moore 2011; Wacquant 2008). Unions' withdrawal from precarious occupations is frequently explicated in terms of procedural problems, such as the difficulty of getting union recognition agreements among a workforce that is constantly changing precisely due to the precarious nature of its employment (for example, Gumbell-McCormick, Hyman, and Bernaciak 2017). Other theorists have focused on problems within the union structure, such as how accessible they are for migrant workers and how well they deal with issues of intersectionality (for example, Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013). Finally, as has been repeatedly analysed in the above pages, subjective elements that are frequently associated with the migrant condition have been shown to raise additional barriers for migrant workers in relation to unionisation. However, my participant observation in 6 precarious workplaces in Glasgow and my interviews with 21 migrant workers indicate that all these preceding analyses, while valuable, are examining issues that are already one step ahead of the actual reality on the ground: unions, and similar social movements, are almost entirely absent from the workplaces, lives, and communities of migrant workers. It seems wishful thinking to endlessly deliberate on the shortcomings of unions or engage in deep analyses of the problems raised by language and cultural barriers when unions have not even managed to *exist* in most precarious workers' spheres of consciousness.

Raquel and Charles, a mother and son from Lisbon both working for years in the hospitality industry in Scotland, had absolutely no knowledge of unions or of their labour

rights. Over the course of the interview it emerged that they had been subjected to various injustices which were fundamentally based on them not having access to a union. For example, they mentioned attending disciplinary hearings without being informed of their right to be accompanied by a friend or union representative. The complete inexistence of unions in their workplace had allowed management to cultivate a subtle but powerful environment of fear, further discouraging workers from claiming their rights. Similar situations were regularly reported by interviewees.

"Q: OK, so far from this small interview we have already found some situations where the employers did not respect your rights or they didn't respect employment law. For example, you were invited to meetings without being notified that you can be represented, things like that. These are small things but they happen a lot, it happens all the time. I want to ask you if you have every considered speaking to a trade union. Is there a trade union in your workplace?

R: I don't know.

C: I don't know.

R: I'm OK. I don't have that type of problem.

Q: But still, is there even a presence of a trade union?

R: I don't know.

Q: Fair enough. There has never been sort of, anybody coming to you and saying, you know, "I am the trade union representative for this place", or anything like that.

R: Just the health and security department.

Q: So, have you ever considered, for example with your bullying, did you ever consider speaking to a trade union, trying to find out what your rights are?

R: No, I have never thought about it. But even if I said that, it was my ticket to go out."- Raquel and Charles. Both are Portuguese. Charles is a male in his early 20s. Raquel, his mother, is in her mid-40s. Both work in hospitality.

A similar state of affairs was experienced by Anna. Even though she knew of the existence of unions and had high levels of confidence due to her legal background prior to her arrival in Scotland, she nevertheless felt disempowered by their lack of presence and by the overwhelming pressures of precarity and abuse in her jobs. These burdens, combined with her feelings of insecurity and disorientation as a migrant worker, led to her

having low levels of confidence to act in her job. It turns out that she was correct: when she finally stood up for herself, she was promptly fired.

> **"Q**: So there was, there is a lot of things that you have experienced with bullying, harassment, things like that. Have you ever seen a union?
>
> A: No, apart from you, no.
>
> Q: Before me?
>
> A: No.
>
> Q: You have never seen any sort of presence of a union?
>
> A: No
>
> Q: Not even in the street, handing out leaflets…
>
> A: No.
>
> […]
>
> Q: Why did you not think about contacting a union when all of these things were happening in your working life?
>
> A: Because the rights in the UK are completely different than France. I know that, as an immigrant, first of all, and then secondly as a worker, we don't have the same rights, same protection.
>
> Q: That is false.
>
> A: Yes! But that is what everyone said.
>
> Q: So other immigrants were telling you that you don't have the same rights? This is basically exactly what I'm trying to find out.
>
> A: Yeah. And also, to say that all the employer have such power on us. And that British people just stay quiet and don't say anything at all. So for me I was just, I was thinking that we don't have a lot of rights.
>
> Q: You saw the apathy and the lack of voice of the British and you…. You kinda just fell in step.
>
> A: Yes, yes. And I told them all them, to my co-workers, I said "you so British, you like, you just double-face. You mumbling but you don't stand for your rights". And now I'm

> fired! Because I stand for our rights. And, yeah…"- Anna, Guadeloupean (French) female, late 30s, hospitality.

Apart from further attesting to the inexistence of unions in most precarious workplaces, the above excerpt is important in illuminating the narratives that are allowed to become hegemonic in the absence of the oppositional perspectives provided by unions and social movements. Reproducing erroneous ideas that circulate amongst migrant workers in the UK, Anna thought that migrant workers are denied the same labour rights as UK workers. Such inaccurate views flourish in precarious workplaces because of the combination of the socialisation of precarity, a lack of access to resources, and a variety of management scare tactics. Additionally, Anna refers to the wider socialisation of precarity, expressed through the passivity and docility of the British workers, in limiting her confidence to pursue justice. An analysis of British workers' relationships to trade unions is outside the scope of this project; however, it could reasonably be inferred that the docility Anna experienced, where workers were "mumbling" but not standing up for their rights, is also related to the complete inexistence of unions in that workplace.

This absence was also confirmed during my participant observation. Out of 6 workplaces, only the fish factory had a union presence (Fieldnotes 27th November 2018). In the rest of the locations, including in one of the biggest and most notoriously exploitative companies in the world, unions were nowhere to be seen. As was demonstrated in the above excerpt, this absence nurtured the emergence of a wider culture of resignation amongst the workforce, as the socialisation of precarity was allowed to freely operate without challenge. This in turn allows blatant miscarriages of justice to be naturalised and accepted as "just the way things are", which further enforces the socialisation of precarity.

Based on my experience as a union representative, I know that many of these issues could have become easily winnable campaigns with the potential to significantly improve working conditions. For example, in the Italian restaurant, we were regularly working 14.5- hour shifts, with work finishing after 11 at night and starting again at 9 in the morning. This clearly contradicts the law, which stipulates an 11-hour break between shifts (UK Government 2020); however, there was no visible way of challenging it, or of even starting a discussion about these conditions. Another clear example of the injustices that are allowed to occur when precarious conditions are entirely unopposed was observed in how workers treated the issue of dismissals. It was widely accepted that, if the superiors had a problem with a worker, they were fully within their rights to fire them on the spot.

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Antidiscrimination and equality legislations were completely ignored, and the word "strike" was mentioned only as a joke, its very pronouncement indicating how utterly absurd it seemed as an idea in this context. The prevalent culture among the workforce was therefore one of individual survival; collectively campaigning for structural change in the restaurant's operations was never even considered as a possibility (Fieldnotes, 6-28th of July).

Another factor that has not been adequately covered in the relevant literature, and which is intimately connected to unions' absence from the lives of most migrant and precarious workers, concerns the vast cultural gap between these populations and social movements in the UK. This has little to do with ethnicity and language, and more to do with class, lifestyle, and community. Simply put, the everyday realities of many migrant workers stand in stark opposition to the cultures that dominate many unions and other left-wing organisations. This creates a vicious cycle whereby the distance between movements and workers increases the more detached these movements are, eventually rendering translation across cultures and class positionalities almost impossible. This distance is statistically reflected in the much lower unionisation density amongst precarious workers as opposed to those with more security (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2019). Two examples emerge from my time in the Italian restaurant:

"I overhear George [Scottish head chef] speaking to the main manager about some problems with the outside bins. I make sure to inform my Albanian colleagues, John and Manos, that they need to be careful about how they close the bins because he is complaining about them to the manager. They look scared; the overhanging threat of dismissal is omnipresent. Manos's eyes are wide open, and he is looking at the two much older, Scottish, hierarchically superior men talking in English about him, trying hard to pick up on a few words without being successful. I do my best to overhear, but the noise of the kitchen covers up most of what they are saying. I tell them that if anything happens my union will support them. The truth is, I worry about how accepted and welcome these people will feel as members of my union. We are talking about workers with very little knowledge of English, who work for most of their lives, and in their spare time take drugs, get rowdy, and go to strip clubs. From my experience of trade unions, it seems that they wouldn't fit in with the majority of union members that attend meetings and dedicate time to political action. On the other hand, I could easily imagine British union members feeling uncomfortable with the migrants' differing performativity of masculinity, their expressiveness and their loud, confident demeanour. I have frequently been perceived as

aggressive because of the way I move my hands when I speak, which is something that I am culturally accustomed to from my upbringing in Greece. How would an Albanian male worker with limited knowledge of British people's expectations feel in a union meeting mostly populated by British union members? This distance is something that we need to seriously look at."- Fieldnotes, 15th of July. Italian Restaurant.

"Drago tells me stories about his life as a young immigrant in Glasgow, involved with gangs and the drug trade. It becomes apparent that from the very start of his arrival, he was shunned by most of society ("they called me a black bastard and I was whiter than them"), prompting him to find solidarity and community in local gangs. The young Albanian united with other young people from all over the world and engaged in a variety of dangerous actions. At the same time, he was making sure to "not miss a day of work". These two extremes are not as distant to each other as it may seem: they both represent visions and performances of the same survival-oriented, money-making habitus. He tells me that "we were partying and coming to work with half an hour sleep, and then partying again". I reply that, "you must have been on coke to do stuff like that". "Yeah, that's true, coke kept us going", he responds with a big smile and laugh.

Before anything else, unions and other organisations in the UK need to realise how detached they are from these realities, and secondarily they need to make themselves accessible to these populations. A big part of unions' culture therefore has to change; they must find ways to embrace the vast diversity of social positions in order to advance the interests of a class which is widely divergent in its beliefs and lifestyles." Fieldnotes, 24th of July. Italian restaurant.

My findings therefore indicate that unions and other social movements have a long road ahead of them if they desire to organise with migrant workers. From rectifying their deafening absence to cultivating cultures that are more accepting and tolerant of different backgrounds and socialisations, these changes presuppose deep ideological and organisational reformations (Holgate 2018). However, despite their current overwhelming shortcomings, my findings align with Holgate and Tapia's (2014) conclusions that "immigrant workers both *need* and *want* to join unions" [italics in original]. Visibility and accessibility therefore emerge as the key barriers towards migrant workers' participation. Some examples from the interviews attest to migrant workers' unsatisfied desire to encounter unions:

"Q: In all of these places that you have worked in, have you ever seen a union? The presence of a union?

A: No. in fact, after working in the Russian restaurant, I started looking at unions, but I didn't see anything that was related to my case. So, I am working on establishing a society in the university, which at the same time as a trade union for working students, because I feel like especially in this case for students, they view us as students, so, just like a migrant worker. The same thing: 'I can use you because you are going to leave the job early anyways, so you are looking for something temporal, so I will just use you, pay you like shit and treat you like shit'."- Emma, Lithuanian female, early 20s, hospitality.

"Q: In all of these precarious jobs, was there ever a presence of a union?

A: No, never!

Q: There was never any leaflet or any…

A: No, never! Never! And if there was, I would join! Like, if anybody from any union would have come, I know I would have joined! Unless it was like a Neo-Nazi or super conservative union, but any, even… yeah, Labour.

Q: And you have changed a lot of jobs, so this is very representative. So why do you think that there are so few migrants that are members of unions?

A: For many reasons, because unions are inexistent in our sector. They are never there. I barely see them, I barely see, like, a union member's protest. And any protest in this country about labour rights, and zero-hour contracts and all that, they just, they are just not there!

Q: They are not there. OK. And if they were more visible, and they made more attempts to be inside the community, talk to people, things like that, do you feel that people would actually respond?

A: Yeah! Because the anger is there! People are not stupid, they know that they are taking advantage of them! You know, people don't have a distorted vision of reality, they know exactly what's going on, and they know is not normal that people have to work fucking 52 hours to make a fucking living and to provide for their kids!"- Leila, Spanish/Tunisian female, early 30s, hospitality.

In a study of the US labour movement, Sullivan (2010: 812) asks: "What does that say about the efficacy of a working-class movement if its principal organizations are unable to organize workers in the greatest need?". This question is highly poignant in the Scottish context. The predominant reason interviewees gave when asked why they think migrant workers are less likely to join unions than their British counterparts concerned unions' lack of presence and engagement with them and their communities. Furthermore, all the unionised workers I interviewed stated that they would have been interested in joining a union had one established contact with them. Marino, Penninx and Roosblad (2017: 12) argue that specific union practices are "a much better predictor of membership and active participation of migrant workers than the question of which country the migrant workers came from and whether they had experiences with trade unions before arrival". My findings indicate that they are correct; more fundamentally, it emerges that union *in*action, as expressed through their almost complete lack of presence in workplaces and communities, is one of the strongest barriers to the empowerment and unionisation of migrant workers.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined migrant workers' experiences of labour resistance and their relationship with trade unions in Scotland. The findings suggest that, while instances of resistance do occur with various degrees of tenacity and success, they mostly assume the form of individualised expressions of dissent rather than collective struggle. This is reflective of the wider socioeconomic landscape, characterised by the proliferation of precarity and the absence of a wider collective oppositional narrative. Even though migrant workers hold significant bargaining power (as was demonstrated through the stories of Suzan and Mateusz), the trigger or necessary support that would enable them to access and mobilise this power is either uninspiring, alienating, or outright absent. Of the few workers who have had contacts with trade unions, most recounted intensely alienating and disempowering experiences. However, the most significant finding that emerges from both my participant observation sessions and the interviews relates to the almost complete absence of trade unions from migrant workers' lives, workplaces, and communities. I argue that this absence is directly responsible for nurturing and exacerbating attitudes of resignation and acceptance of the status quo, as the lack of any credible oppositional presence allows the socialisation of precarity to assume hegemony over workers' imaginations.

My findings suggest that the complex interplay of the various structural and subjective factors analysed in previous chapters pales in comparison with the significance of unions' detachment from the lives and workplaces of the populations that are experiencing the brunt of precarious socioeconomic conditions. Many of the barriers to unionisation examined in previous chapters can only be addressed through the presence of unions: for example, workers' fears that they might be fired for virtually anything must be assuaged through consistent engagement and the provision of information by unions. The same applies to other subjective traits connected to migration such as the dual frame of reference or the lack of access to information about labour rights. Ultimately, the more unions are *not* present, the more they do not directly engage with precarious migrant workers, the more the conditions which foster precarity will be allowed to worsen. There is no way around the issue of presence. Simply put, no matter how proficient unions become at using the language of intersectionality (which they generally aren't), no matter how many people from marginalised groups they elevate to positions of power (which most generally don't), and no matter how many resources are dedicated to supporting existing migrant members (which are generally lacking), unions will ultimately have to contend with the fact that a large proportion of migrant workers have never come across a union in the entirety of their working experience in Scotland. Embeddedness thereby emerges as the main priority for unions and social movements wanting to organise with, and empower, migrant workers.

Chapter 11: Discussion and Conclusion

Introduction

The preceding findings chapters examined the many various and cross-pollinating factors that regulate, structure, and reproduce the exploitability of migrant workers in precarious occupations in Scotland. These factors also produce barriers which inhibit the potential of migrant workers to collectively resist exploitation. While various scholars and activists have analysed aspects of this ensemble of social relations, my research has developed concepts that may be useful in further elucidating aspects of migrant workers' existence in precarious occupations, such as the socialisation of precarity and the agency arena. Expanding arguments such as those by Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti (2015) that posit labour conditions as socialising workers into specific labour regimes, I argue that their effects reach deep into the recesses of subjectivity and influence much more than simply workers' expectations of work. They interact with wider social trends of individualisation and the decline of class-based oppositional narratives and institutions to exacerbate personal perceptions of disempowerment and fortify overarching hegemonic social narratives that posit neoliberal economics as unchallengeable and unchangeable. They rupture the potential for the emergence of solidarities, obfuscate the power that workers inherently possess, foster the emergence of individualist, survival-oriented attitudes, and can cumulate in a passive acceptance of the status quo. In conditions of intense exploitation and insecurity, even manifestations of solidarity become themselves precarious.

Importantly, my research suggests that, contrary to narrow Piorean analyses of migrant labour (Piore 1979), migrant workers do not passively accept exploitation, instead being agentic actors within the confines of the given socioeconomic and cultural systems in which they find themselves. I found that migrant worker subjectivities in precarious occupations are extremely heterogenous. While the emergence of a politicised migrant worker identity cannot be said to be a generalised trend, I nevertheless found that migrant workers have an acute, critical awareness of the exploitation they are subject to both as migrants and as workers. However, absent an empowering collective narrative through the activity of social movements, this critical, experiential awareness rarely develops into political action. Finally, I argued that the relevant literature does not sufficiently focus on the absence of unions and other social movements from the workplaces and wider social environments of migrant workers. Most of my interviewees affirmed that they would join a union if one existed in their workplace, and the ones that did not are those that had

intensely alienating, disempowering previous experiences with mainstream unions. My research therefore also contributes to the field of labour sociology in offering additional critical perspectives on the operation of unions in Scotland and the UK. Even more importantly, by expanding the potential scope of political action to include intersectional and community-oriented activity, my research complements existing initiatives both by academics and by social movements (such as Angry Workers 2020 and Roca and Martín-Díaz 2017) attempting to move beyond the strict scope of unions in search for more substantial avenues for the empowerment of oppressed groups of workers.

These findings and conclusions are directly informed by interviews with migrant workers and an in-depth exploration of the precarious workplaces in which they are employed in, thereby counteracting the tendency found in most of the relevant literature to speak about these groups from a position of detachment from the realities being discussed. In sum, I see the potential contribution of this project as lying in that fact that it develops a novel analysis of the intersecting factors that collectively participate in structuring migrant workers' political subjectivities, grounded in a detailed, qualitative investigation that is directly informed by the lived realities and accounts of migrant workers in precarious occupations.

This chapter will attempt to bring together the various threads that have been investigated throughout the previous chapters. It will commence by drawing the connections between the various structural and subjective factors that shape migrant workers' exploitability in precarious occupations. It will then use these ideas to briefly discuss the issue of the social embeddedness of social movements and unions, which emerges from the findings as the main priority for a collective challenge against labour precarity. Finally, the postscript at the end will use the conclusions drawn from the findings to initiate a discussion on some examples of embeddedness from the UK, Europe and North America in order to provide an illustration of what such initiatives look like and how they might be useful in a Scottish context.

1: The Interplay of Structural and Subjective Factors in Structuring Migrant Precarity

My findings generally confirm the arguments of existing studies that examine migrant workers in precarious, highly exploitative, stigmatised and non-unionised occupations (Anderson 2013; Meardi, Martìn and Riera 2012; Anderson and Ruhs 2010; Bauder 2006; Miles 1982; Piore 1979). Inside a wider socioeconomic context already characterised by weakening unions, the retreat of class-based oppositional narratives, and a

governmental assault on workers' rights, migrant workers are more likely than the British-born to experience the brunt of the precarious condition (Jørgensen 2016; Standing 2011). Despite being disproportionately positioned in precarious and highly exploitative occupations, my findings suggest that migrant workers in Scotland are generally unlikely to organise collectively to counteract these conditions. This is conditioned by a complex interplay of subjective and structural forces. However, my findings indicate that the most significant factor impeding the substantial collective empowerment of migrant workers is to be found within the operation of existing powerful unions; indeed, many migrants interviewed stated that they would join a trade union if they had contact with one. Unions' detachment from the lives of migrant workers therefore emerges as responsible for allowing the propagation of existing hegemonic socioeconomic narratives that ultimately entrench and reproduce migrant workers' exploitation, precarity and relative disempowerment in Scotland.

Migrant workers in Scotland experience various contractual manifestations of precarity, including illegal and semi-legal labour, the use of verbal contracts, agency work, and zero-hours contracts. My findings echo those of McDowell (2008) and Bauder (2006) to show that, due to a variety of overlapping and intersecting economic and cultural processes in combination with subjective characteristics associated with the migrant condition (such as an initial need for quick money in order to stabilize one's situation in the new country, a resulting dis-identification from precarious occupations, lack of information, etc.), migrant workers are more likely to staff these precarious occupations. For example, most migrant workers interviewed explicitly stated that in the first stages of their migration they favored the first jobs they could access. The operations of a significant segment of the UK economy are designed in such a way that they intimately depend on "flexible" labour, and employers know that there is a steady supply of willing workers to fill their vacant positions (Anderson and Ruhs 2010); importantly, contractual precarity enables them to dispose of these worker when they are no longer required, and absolves the employer of any long-term responsibilities towards the worker (Heyes and Hastings 2017; Sporton 2013). Indeed, precarious contracts are frequently used as a *management tool*, enabling employers to sort through various workers until they find the individuals that most closely fit their standards.

Over time, populations can become culturally and structurally connected to the occupations they perform in what is a developed process of essentialization that functions to continually reproduce socioeconomic positionalities (Anderson 2013; McDowell 2008).

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A combination of different forces coalesce to produce this reality: for example, ethnic networks become embedded in certain sectors, continually attracting new migrant workers; on the other hand, agencies and employers in certain jobs have an interest to maintain ethnic homogeneity, thereby creating a dynamic where both migrants and employers reproduce migrant workers' association with, and allocation to, specific precarious occupations (Bauder 2006). However, these two poles are not equal participants: while migrant workers may operate ethnic networks in order to secure employment niches that counterbalance their wider labour market exclusion and marginalization, employers have a hierarchically privileged position and their practices are ultimately borne out of considerations aiming to secure and augment profitability. This means that homogeneity is maintained purely where it is profitable to do so: my participant observation in various precarious workplaces in Glasgow indicate that where high levels of communication are needed in the labour process (for example, in the radiator factory or the Mediterranean restaurant I was employed in), there is a tendency for employers to favour a concentration of specific migrant groups, whereas in largely automated and impersonal jobs (such as the logistics warehouse) the opposite tends to occur.

The workings of the national economic structure (juridical impositions such as the permittance of zero-hours contracts, the setting of the minimum wage, etc.) thus combine with employer demands ("flexibility", efficiency, productivity) and subjective features that may be shared by migrant workers (from needing some quick money in the beginning, to gradually becoming socialized in precarity) to create, and reproduce, a complex of social and economic relations that, ultimately, reinforces its own neoliberal foundations (Anderson 2013; McDowell 2008; Bauder 2006). Migrant workers who do not have the privilege of a fully secured status through EU citizenship are further disempowered, as their right to remain in the UK is directly connected with the job that they perform; for them, the risk of losing an already precarious position carries significantly more weight than for relatively more secure workers (Angry Workers 2020; Anderson 2013; Interview with Arjun). My findings thus confirm, and further elucidate, arguments that position migrant workers at the forefront of the precarious condition (Briken and Taylor 2018; Duda-Mikulin 2018; Hardt and Negri 2017; Standing 2011).

2: Migrant Worker Subjectivities and the Socialization of Precarity

Despite the multiple external socioeconomic pressures they face, my findings indicate that it is simplistic to imagine migrant workers as passive objects that merely conform to external economic calculations: people's acceptance of precarious conditions is

nuanced and conditioned by a variety of factors, such as wishes of progression up the job hierarchy or the need to make quick money to support children. However, as the short-term interests of migrant workers coalesce with both the short- and long-term interests of employers, migrant workers undergo a process of socialization which may result in the reproduction of the complex of socioeconomic relations that disempower precarious workers (Vasey 2017; Forde, MacKenzie, Ciupijus and Alberti 2015). When analyzing barriers to migrant workers' mobilisation, I have argued that it is imperative to understand the socialization and thought processes that inform migrant workers' choices.

Migrant subjectivities are complex, contradictory, and highly heterogenous (Alberti, Holgate and Turner 2014). Despite this, migration scholars and social movements have identified some basic characteristics that stem from the experience of migration which are commonly shared amongst migrant workers (Kranendonk and de Beer 2016; Penninx and Roosblad 2015; Moore 2011; Piore 1979). My findings align with such existing studies to indicate that subjective features such as an initially economistic outlook, disorientation, the dual frame of reference, and feelings of disempowerment are prevalent traits in migrant workers in Scotland. However, they are not strong enough by themselves to be considered as the main barriers to collective action. Contrary to Piore's (1979) strict, linear understandings of how migrant workers become socially engaged in their new countries, my findings suggest that, in specific conditions and subject to the positionalities of migrant workers in their countries of origin, the "dual frame of reference" works both ways and can sometimes foster political action rather than exclusively operate to stifle it (See Chapter 8). This corresponds with Roca and Roca and Martín-Díaz's (2017) and Però's (2014) analysis of two separate migrant worker labour struggles, where in both cases, those with experience of political mobilisation in their home countries also became active in their new setting. Nevertheless, most of my interview and participant observation findings indicate that these subjective factors do generally play a significant role in fostering feelings of disempowerment. When combined with a variety of other elements such as the socialisation of precarity, the agency arena, and the wider marginalisation migrants experience, these are exacerbated.

I have used the term "socialization of precarity" to encapsulate the multiple complex mentalities, dispositions and behaviors that may emerge from migrant workers' prolonged interactions with the daily realities of precarious occupations. As workers' interactions are constantly mediated by stress and insecurity, they may become socialized in and through this environment. Eventually, this acclimatization may contribute to them

partaking in the reproduction of its conditions. This socialization stems from the cumulative reflections one makes through being present in precarious workplaces, including aspects such as the "agency arena" (the constant, underlying competition with other precarious workers in the same workplace and across society), the "good worker paradox" (the knowledge that, as one is attempting to be as productive as possible in order to secure a job, one is also simultaneously at risk of reducing one's necessity to the employer), and the constant pressures to perform while knowing that labor security is far from guaranteed. The effects of these factors are exacerbated by the wider retrenchment of oppositional class-based collective narratives (Bradley 2006; Wacquant 2008; Bauman 2000) and the concurrent increase in the hegemony of neoliberal imaginaries (Berrardi 2017; Fisher 2009). The combined effects of these pressures result in behaviors that preclude the formation of solidarities, including workers distancing themselves from each other (Harvey 2019), overexerting themselves (Lever and Milbourne 2017), and internalizing the characteristics required of them by employers (Bauder 2006). These intersect with existing cultural structures such as perceptions and performances of masculinity (McDowell 2008) to further blur the potential horizons of collective action: for example, in the Mediterranean restaurant I conducted participant observation in, workers glorified their ability to survive daily suffering rather than even considering the possibility of addressing it. Gradually, and in the absence of an alternative collective narrative that empowers them as migrants *and* as workers, they may participate in the reproduction of the structural constraints they are forced to navigate.

My findings suggest that, in precarious workplaces, the socialisation of precarity permeates almost all interactions, significantly disrupting the potentialities for the formation of substantial bonds of affinity, mutuality and trust. While various theorists have focused on the impediments to migrant unionisation as a result of how these jobs are structured, many tend to confine themselves to examining the various difficulties raised by precarious contractual relations and transient, heterogenous workforces (Connolly and Sellers 2017; Tapia 2014; Moore 2011). Rather than reproducing these analyses, my findings attempt to go a step further to analyse the deep impacts transience and precarity have on migrant workers' subjectivities. The stress associated with precarious occupations where one can be fired without any protection induces anxiety and competition amongst workers; their interdependence and coexistence, instead of being tools of solidarity, can instead be a source of added pressure which distances workers from each other. A precarious workplace is rarely warm and compassionate, and rarely fosters feelings of trust and solidarity among the workforce.

Rather than leading to cooperation, the assumption of additional power by individual members of the migrant workforce can lead to a reproduction of hierarchies and the further disempowerment of those below them (Angry Workers 2020; Vasey 2017). While these structural constraints are not enough to completely diffuse manifestations of solidarity between migrant workers, this solidarity is itself precarious and can be immediately revoked once it conflicts with another workers' labour security. The understanding that a shared experience of oppression is not enough to foster solidarity is one of the most direct challenges to my own presuppositions that emerged from this research.

In addition to the divisions created within the migrant workforce, migrant workers must also contend with discrimination on the part of their Scottish colleagues. This is consistent with Davidson and Virdee's (2019) arguments that racist attitudes are highly prevalent in Scotland. Virdee and McGeever (2017) write that the racism that already underpinned a Britain built on colonial legacies and institutions has been increasingly normalised, particularly so following Brexit and the intense permeation of racist rhetoric in public discourse. In her study of Polish women's experiences following Brexit, Rzepnikowska (2019) also states that the structurally induced hostility towards immigrants, most clearly expressed by the Government's 'hostile environment' policies, has recently become exacerbated and is increasingly reproduced in community interactions.

Discrimination in the workplace assumes multiple expressions and can range from subtle exclusion to overt racist aggression. Whatever the form it takes, my findings suggest that it permeates many precarious workplaces, subtly impacting migrant workers' subjectivities. For example, Eleni spoke of feeling excluded by her Scottish colleagues in the NHS. On the other hand, Anna experienced a range of overtly racist assaults by her white manager in hospitality, cumulating in her being fired from her job for protesting against her mistreatment. My findings align with the positions of a variety of scholars that position racism, discrimination, and the exclusionary mentalities fostered by colonial nostalgia amongst local British workers as powerful forces of oppression in the lives of migrant and other marginalised groups (Rzepnikowska 2019; Virdee and McGeever 2017; Anderson 2013; Miles 1982).

It therefore emerges that the socialisation of precarity, and the further pressures resulting from hierarchical divisions within migrant communities and discriminatory attitudes from without, are powerful barriers to the formation of spontaneous, organised manifestations of solidarity. Relationships fostered in conditions of precarity tend to also

be precarious- the threat of dismissal, directly impacting one's livelihood, seems to be much stronger than individual workers' desires to collaborate. As was analysed in chapter 9, the effects of these pressures are exacerbated in occupations where the contradiction between the social nature of the labour process and the atomising nature of the contractual relation is particularly pronounced. In the absence of structures that specifically function to foster solidarity, this contradiction frequently results in frustration and enmity between workers, which in turn further disrupts the possibilities for the emergence of solidarities. Under this light, the operation of unions or similar networks, intimately connected with both the interior and the exterior of workplaces, presents itself as a fundamental requirement for addressing the atomisation that is continuously cultivated in precarious workplaces.

My research also focused on how migrant workers in Scotland experience and interpret their realities as migrants. More specifically, I wanted to examine whether the emergence of a politicised migrant identity could be detected. My findings suggest that migrant workers' subjective attitudes and understandings towards their migration are extremely heterogenous and contradictory. For example, migrant workers may offer a strong class-focused analysis of the exploitation they experience, but may nevertheless be fully invested participants in the narratives that make up Britain's conception of the "Community of Value" (Anderson 2013), thereby accepting and reproducing the mystification of the conditions that enable that exploitation. Some might try to empower themselves by investing in the development of a strong personality (interview with Nicole); others feel that their status as migrants essentially disempowers them relative to their peers (interview with Felix). All subjective characteristics are mediated by the available contestational resources in migrants' workplaces and communities, their everyday experiences playing a foundational and formative role in developing their understandings and framings of their lives as migrants. In the absence of strong and socially embedded migrant workers' movements, the only migrant workers expressing a politicised migrant identity are usually those already active in such movements (see chapter 8). It is therefore possible to argue that, in contrast with previous historical epochs of migrant struggle (Virdee 2014), and despite sustained attacks on migrant workers by the UK government, employers, and the far right, a politicised migrant identity is *not* strongly developing in Scotland.

Despite the significant contradictions and inconsistencies in how different migrant workers viewed their migration experience, interviewees presented a much more uniform

approach to their consciousness as workers. Borne out of an experiential reflection on labour inequality, all interviewees were acutely aware of the hierarchical difference between them and their employers. This class consciousness was also observed in my everyday experiences working in precarious occupations. Once again, however, the content of this class consciousness was directly related to people's wider politicisation. Nevertheless, the interviews and participant observation strongly problematise the rigid teleology found in Piore (1979) that depicts migrant workers as the quintessential expression of *Homo Economicus*. While it is true that many have an economistic outlook (especially in the first stages of their migration), it is also true that they are critically aware of the exploitation they experience and operate agentically within the confines of the socioeconomic system in which find themselves.

3: The Absence of Unions and the Need for Community and Workplace Embeddedness

These conclusions suggest that subjective traits connected to migration are not enough, by themselves, to explain the relative lack of migrant workers' organisation against exploitation. Indeed, those migrant workers who had experiences with social movements tended to present more politicised accounts of both migration and class relations. While subjective factors clearly influence shaping people's mentalities and actions, it seems that the lack of widely available and accessible contestational narratives and institutions plays an even stronger role in enforcing the cumulative debilitating effects of the complex of social relations. Combined with the overarching socialisation of precarity, this absence can result in a fortification of the conditions that hinder the development of grassroots mobilisations by migrant workers.

While my research discovered that instances of resistance do occur with various degrees of tenacity and success, they mostly assume the form of individualised expressions of dissent rather than collective struggle. My findings confirm the arguments of Alberti (2014) and Bernsten (2016) that cite occupational mobility as a main technique that migrant workers use in order to improve their labour conditions; rather than focusing on changing a structure that is deemed unchangeable, migrant workers, especially those from the EU with some relative security in their right to remain in the UK, prefer to search for a "better" job. Some also mentioned using the Citizen's Advice Bureau to regain stolen wages or access advice on injustices they experienced. Nevertheless, escaping precarity, for most, remains an unfulfilled dream (Sporton 2013; Recchi and Triandafyllidou 2010).

By contrast, a few of my interviewees attested to the significant bargaining power that migrant workers hold, even in the contexts of precarious employment and without the presence of a union inside their workplace (Interview with Suzan; Interview with Lois). Despite this power, it emerges that the trust and contact with organisations that can assist migrant workers towards accessing and collectively mobilising it on a large-scale basis is either uninspiring, alienating, or outright absent. Amongst the few workers I interviewed who have had contacts with trade unions, there were numerous reports of intensely alienating and disempowering experiences. The bottom-line conclusion is that cases of collective resistance such as those described by my interview participants remain rare and cannot be assumed to be generalisable.

The most significant finding that emerges from both my participant observation sessions and the interviews relates to the almost complete absence of trade unions from migrant workers' workplaces and communities. I argue that this absence is directly responsible for nurturing and exacerbating attitudes of resignation and acceptance of the status quo, as the lack of any vocal and credible oppositional narrative allows the socialisation of precarity to assume hegemony over workers' imaginations. The more the class imbalance between the employers and the employees is allowed to skew towards the side of the employers, the more inequality is solidified as a "personal" struggle in the minds of workers. By consequence, personalised solutions to labour problems are increasingly viewed as the only feasible alternative. These avenues, however, leave the foundations underpinning migrant worker exploitability untouched.

Ultimately, the weight of the complex interplay of the various structural and subjective factors that collectively produce migrant workers' experiences pales in comparison to the significance of unions' detachment from the lives and workplaces of the populations that are experiencing the brunt of precarious socioeconomic conditions. There is no way around the issue of presence. Unions must contend with the fact that a large proportion of migrant workers have never come across a union in the entirety of their working experience in Scotland. Embeddedness thereby emerges as the main priority for unions and social movements wanting to organise with, and empower, migrant workers.

Postscript: Intersectionality and Community Embeddedness

This research has argued that the reasons that migrant workers in Scotland are less likely than white, British-born workers to engage with trade unions specifically and collective action more generally are complex and multi-faceted. They cannot simply be summarised by an analysis of the economic underpinnings of precarity on its own, and

neither is it enough to examine general traits associated with the migrant condition on their own. Rather, the main factors preventing migrant workers from collectively organising to resist the conditions of exploitation that they are structurally directed towards are deeply social and political. A detailed analysis of the various methods that could be employed to overcome these barriers is outside the scope of this research; however, the conclusions outlined above foreground the importance of positioning community embeddedness as a foundational pillar of future union and social movement activity. By way of a conclusion, I will briefly survey some arguments that posit intersectional frameworks of collective struggle as critical prerequisites to migrant worker empowerment; finally, I will briefly discuss some examples of organisations focusing on community embeddedness as a fundamental step in overcoming the objective difficulties around organising migrant workers in precarious workplaces.

Migrant workers enter a context which is already defined by deepening precarity, xenophobia, and the weakening of collective organisations such as unions. Directed towards the most precarious jobs due to a combination structural processes, subjective tendencies, and the operation of ethnic, racial, gender stereotypes, their precarity is further entrenched by the almost total absence of unions in most migrants' communities. The barriers to migrant worker unionisation and wider political activity include the temporariness associated with precarity, which prevent the establishment of long-lasting relationships in specific workplaces. It is hard to organise for union recognition when significant sectors of the workforce are almost completely different every few months. Additionally, the overwhelming impact of fear fostered by precarious contractual relations is crucial in curtailing individuals' drive to resist their conditions. Furthermore, within workplaces that have established unions, my findings indicate that migrant workers are often excluded- this reflects the xenophobia and racism they also experience in wider society. It may also be attributable to the fact that many union branches do not consider these workers as worth the effort of organising. On the other side of the spectrum, subjective traits associated with migrant workers make it even harder for these social groups to prioritise collective action. The combined effects of these forces result in the reinforcement and exacerbation of the mentalities of resignation and acquiescence to the status quo which amalgamate in the "socialisation of precarity".

To overcome these multiple barriers, scholarship examining migrant-focused union campaigns foregrounds the need for migrant-led strategies that are closely connected with migrant communities (Lopez and Hall 2015; Fine and Holgate 2014; Alberti, Holgate, and

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Turner 2014; Alberti, Holgate and Tapia 2013; Moore 2011; Jayaraman and Ness 2005). For example, Alberti, Holgate, and Turner argue that campaigns have higher chances of success where they engage migrants specifically as migrants, operationalising an intersectional analysis of the multiple oppressions that regulate their exploitation, rather than as members of the wider working class; they cite the CLEAN campaign in the US, where "a broad understanding of oppression opened up the framing of the campaign and allowed organizers to talk about workers' rights alongside immigrant and social rights" (2014: 120). In Però's (2014) examination of the Latin American Workers Association (LAWAS), an intersectional approach connecting ethnicity and class emerges as central to collective action, with LAWAS alternating between workplace organising and the pursuit of wider demands around social recognition and rights. Significantly, LAWAS's strength fully matured only after people had solved more immediate issues such as housing, immigration, and benefits. Furthermore, various studies (Alberti and Però 2018; Lopez and Hall 2015; Alberti, Holgate, and Tapia 2013; Jayaraman and Ness 2005) attest to the success and value of bottom-up, participatory organising methods for attracting migrant workers and directly empowering them.

These approaches resonate with Virdee's (2000) writings on the unionization of racialized workers in the UK: together with Miles (1982), he identifies racialized workers as a class 'fraction' that experiences similar but also divergent realities in comparison to white British worker. Virdee (2000) argues that these structural and subjective differences mean that the adequate representation of racialised workers requires the formation of semi-autonomous structures within the wider union framework. In addition, Marino, Penninx, and Roosblad (2015: 10) write that the entire remit of unions must change to encompass concerns that are not exclusively tied to the workplace: unions must begin acting "as a civil society actor in favour of immigrants rather than as a strictly labour-related interest body". These calls for unions to expand their spheres of operations recognise that migrant workers' relative disempowerment is not an exclusively economic concern, since the economy, culture and wider society intimately influence each other (Collins 2000; Butler 1998; Young 1990). The engaged incorporation of intersectional ideas by trade-unions and other social movements in solidarity with migrant workers is therefore a precondition for empowering and organising with migrant workers (Holgate 2018; Moore 2011).These conclusions resonate with historical examples of migrant workers' movements in the UK, where the requirement of establishing a theoretical connection between race, ethnicity, and class as a foundation for subsequent practical action emerges as the bare minimum of migrant worker's collective empowerment (Narayan 2019; Virdee 2014).

While the tactics of foregrounding intersectional approaches, participatory methods, and the autonomy of existing groups of migrant workers in trade union structures potentially address some of the barriers to migrant worker unionisation, they nevertheless encounter logistical problems when confronted with the issue of worker transience in precarious workplaces. Simply put, they presuppose a relatively stable workforce, and they largely rely on the existence of homogenous groups of migrant workers in specific workplaces. Nevertheless, it has been established that many precarious occupations in Scotland and the UK employing migrant workers are not characterised by these conditions. These realisations have led a variety of scholars and social movements to foreground community embeddedness as the chief priority of social movements aiming to contact and organise alongside migrant groups. Sullivan (2010) calls for a departure from traditional outlooks that consider trade unions as the constitutive organisations of labour struggles and urges us instead to focus on the actions and potentials of the spaces "between" formal union structures.

For example, Roca and Martín-Díaz (2017) propose the term "interstitial trade-unionism" to describe formations that resemble trade unions in their ultimate function but, rather than focusing on specific workplaces, are organised in the form of networks that span multiple worksites and neighbourhoods. The case study they use is that of Solidarity Federation in Bristol and its Hospitality Workers Campaign which successfully organised migrant workers. Characterised by de-centered, non-hierarchical and democratic structures, these networks "operate in the margins of national systems of labour relations" and "can have a variety of dimensions, relationships with existing trade unions and other civil society organisations, ethnic composition, and degree of formalisation. They can also perform multiple functions for their members and pursue different ends. In some cases, these networks do not pursue an explicit labour goal, but in addressing the needs of their members, they end up carrying out some sort of industrial action" (2017: 1201). Another similar example can be found in London, where the Angry Workers group attempts to organise with precarious and migrant workers by purposefully targeting jobs that are considered precarious and unorganisable. They circulate a newspaper aiming to connect and publicise dispersed experiences of class struggle in order to combat the socialisation of precarity and they operate weekly, neighbourhood-based open meetings connected to a "solidarity network" which encourage workers to engage with each other and try to look for collective solutions to the problems they experience (Angry Workers 2020). Eschewing traditional trade union formations, these groups prefer to immerse themselves inside the class and the communities they aim to work alongside; the use of formal trade union

structures emerges as epiphenomenal and purely based on the circumstances at hand, while their main priorities converge around embeddedness and mutual empowerment.

In other parts of the West, the establishment of autonomous social spaces and workers' centres has been a significant development in social movements' attempts to counteract the multiple barriers that existing in organising alongside precarious, and often undocumented, migrant workers (King 2016; Choudry and Henaway 2016; Martínez López 2012; Milkman 2011; Fine 2011; Jayaraman and Ness 2005b). These realisations hark back to those reached by historical migrant workers' movements, such as the Jewish workers' movement in London in the 1900s (Rocker 2005). In discussing politically oriented squats in Europe, Martínez López (2012: 882) writes that they "constitute accessible, free and independent meeting spaces for many individuals, groups and movements", enabling the cultivation of participatory, community-oriented political activity. Autonomous community spaces, whether they be squatted or not, are central components of social movement infrastructure in Europe, particularly important in organising with populations such as migrants and refugees who have unstable living conditions (Raimondi 2019; King 2016).

In North America, the emergence of workers' centres provides examples of how such structures embedded in migrant communities could operate. Fine (2005) defines workers' centres as "community-based and community-led organizations that engage in a combination of service, advocacy, and organizing to provide support to low-wage workers. The vast majority of them have grown up to serve predominantly or exclusively immigrant populations". These centres are largely heterogenous and can be directly connected to trade unions, be tied to NGOs, or be completely autonomous institutions. However, they all share the central characteristic of community embeddedness. Their strong physical presence in the community significantly ameliorates the atomisation fostered by the occupational precariousness and transience migrant workers experience (Choudry and Henaway 2016; Fine 2011). Furthermore, these centres engage in a range of activities that addresses the various intersectional oppressions migrant workers experience: whilst the reclamation of stolen wages is a key concern (Fine 2005), they also operate language and other types of classes and engage in a variety of services such as assisting people with their immigration forms (Fine 2011) or providing classes of political education (Sullivan 2010). Member participation and empowerment, as opposed to passive acceptance of assistance, is a key goal that guarantees sustainability and engagement (Jayaraman and Ness 2005b). The example of the Immigrant Workers' Center in Montreal, which was the catalyst in

conducting a large-scale campaign encompassing trade unions, migrant advocacy organisations, and wider left-wing social movements with the aim of organising transient agency workers is illustrative of the potential power of community embedded autonomous structures that prioritise migrant worker empowerment (Choudry and Henaway 2016). Crucially, such examples demonstrate that community embeddedness may assist with the formation of wider bonds of solidarity between the migrant and local sections of the working class, thereby laying the foundations for wider class-based collective struggles.

The examples of community networks in the UK and workers' centres in North America attest that, despite the overwhelming weight of the intersectional forces that coalesce to produce and maintain migrant workers' exploitability and disempowerment, social movements have already begun searching for, and operationalising, solutions. Community embeddedness emerges as a foundational prerequisite to addressing the structural barriers of precarity (such as the socialisation of precarity and worker transience) and the various subjective barriers associated with the migrant condition (such as the dual frame of reference and the language barrier).

I am not arguing that these initiatives should be uncritically replicated; indeed, scholars such as Frantz and Fernandes (2016) and King (2016) have demonstrated how even such community spaces may become complicit in the reproduction of neoliberal governmentality, eventually entrenching disempowerment rather than radically organising to overcome it. However, they are presented here as potent examples of the possibilities that emerge when social movements establish a steady presence in the communities they aim to organise with. The initiatives briefly outlined above go beyond the domain of traditional trade unions, instead implementing multi-scalar, intersectional approaches that are attentive to the multiplicity of socioeconomic forces that collectively oppress migrant workers. The ideas, and the blueprints, already exist. While further research is necessary in order to coherently analyse how these would be operationalised in a Scottish context, my findings suggest concrete avenues of action for trade unions and social movements wishing to organise alongside migrant workers in precarious occupations. On a theoretical level, these begin with a firm commitment to intersectional analyses and methods. On a practical level, the importance of community embeddedness and presence emerges as indisputable.

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Appendix 1: Demographic details of interview participants

Pseudonym	Industry	Citizenship (place of origin in brackets)	Gender	Age
1. Agnes	Hospitality/ events	Polish	Female	Mid 20s
2. Irene	Hospitality	Lithuanian	Female	Mid 20s
3. Suzan	Manufacturing/ hospitality	Romanian	Female	Late 40s
4. Emma	Hospitality	Lithuanian	Female	Early 20s
5. Alexander	Courier	Spanish	Male	Early 20s
6. Takis	Hospitality/ logistics	Greek	Male	Mid 30s
7. Arjun	Care	Indian	Male	Late 40s
8. Mateusz	Union/ manufacturing	Polish	Male	Mid 30s
9. Anna	Hospitality	French (Guadeloupe)	Female	Late 30s
10. Raquel	Hospitality	Portuguese	Female	Mid 40s
11. Charles	Hospitality	Portuguese	Male	Early 20s
12. Felix	Hospitality	French (Guadeloupe)	Male	Mid 30s
13. Anastasia	Unemployed/ logistics	Greek	Female	Early 40s
14. Leila	Charity/ hospitality	Spanish (Tunisia)	Female	Early 30s
15 + 16. Angry Workers	Manufacturing	British (India), German	Female, Male	Early 30s, Mid 30s
17. Eva	Hospitality	Italian (Moldova)	Female	Early 20s
18. Eleni	Care	Greek	Female	Mid 20s
19. Nicole	Hospitality	Romanian	Female	Early 40s
20. Manu	Hospitality	Spanish	Male	Mid 20s
21. Lois	Hospitality/ manufacturing	Greek	Female	Late 20s